



January 2025

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year!

As this is the first parent newsletter of 2025, we hope you enjoyed a lovely Christmas and New Year. Thank you for all your Christmas good wishes, gifts and cards. They have meant so much to us and we have valued them all! Thank you also, to those who came to St John's Church to see 'the Greatest journey'.

What a wonderful start to the new term! Your children are already so settled, and we are all grateful for your encouragement and engagement. We are excited to welcome back our existing families alongside new families too.

This term we are celebrating the transition of the season to 'Spring'. We will be noticing the changes happening in the outdoor environment, so please remember to arrive at nursery with your child dressed suitably for the weather (warm wellies, coats, gloves). Children can then begin their day outdoors if they choose, before continuing their day indoors. The outside is a rich learning environment for young children. Please make sure that all personal items are named.

World Book Day

Thursday 6th March, we will be celebrating **World Book Day** and invite children to dress up as book characters. Children are welcome to dress up on other days too if they do not attend on a Thursday. Perhaps you would like to share a story with your child and upload it for us all to see on Parentzone?

School Applications

A reminder that applications for school need to be completed and submitted by the national closing date of 15th January 2025.

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions-to-essex-schools-for-the-next-school-year>

Potty Training

If your child is starting school this year and is not yet potty trained, please speak to a member of staff who will give advice. Please see attached for our 'help your child at home leaflet on potty training'. Also, you can check the website for more 'help your child at home leaflets'.

Facebook pages

Please check out our Facebook page, [Oaklea Montessori Colchester St John's | Facebook](#)

Holidays and Absences

Although nursery attendance is not statutory, it is important for parents/carers to report their child's absence to nursery on the first day. Nursery has to follow guidelines set out by the local authority regarding the regular attendance of all children. Please report all absences on our landline number **Oaklea St John's: 01206 589995 / Oaklea New Town: 01206 587448**

Funding and Sessions...

All codes need to be renewed every 3 months. You can find out more information regarding funding available and tax-free childcare at: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

The dates for making requests for holiday bookings are set out below:

The final day to book sessions in the February half term (Monday 17th – Wednesday 19th February) will be Friday 7th February. Oaklea St John's will be closed for floor maintenance on Thursday 20th February and Staff training day Friday 21st February.

A reminder term time funding ends on **Friday 28th March 2025 and restarts following the Easter closure on Tuesday 22nd April, this is a 3 week break and any sessions for term time children during this period will need to pay in FULL. The final day for booking sessions in the Easter holidays will be Friday 14th March 2025.**

Requests can be emailed. I am sure you appreciate that staffing for holiday periods needs careful planning. For this reason, we remind those of you who wish to book additional sessions in the holidays. Thank you for your understanding.

Important note: If you would like ad hoc sessions, please ensure your invoice is settled as we are unable to cater for ad hoc sessions otherwise.

If you have any questions regarding funded sessions, please do not hesitate to contact the office for the further information.

Consumables rates

Unfortunately, the funded hours are significantly lower than our hourly rate and as such do not cover the rising costs of consumables. The Early Years Entitlement funding is intended to deliver free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is **not** intended to pay for the costs of meals, drinks, snacks, other consumables, extra hours or additional activities. *We have kept the price low, although will keep under review.* Any queries, please contact the office.

To help the nursery remain sustainable, a consumable rate of £1 per 3-hour core session 9-12pm / 1-4pm or £2 for all day 9-3pm. This is automatically added to your monthly invoice.

Bits & Bobs

If you have any spare gloves, mittens, socks they would be much appreciated for Oaklea spares.

Please follow important safeguarding measures and ensure that you are not using a mobile phone in the nursery or outside area.

Please whilst waiting for your child's session to wait quietly outside the nursery, there are other users in the building and we do not want to disturb their sessions.

A reminder that if you wish to cancel meal costs, such as for a planned holiday, please give at least 1 week's written notice.

And finally...

We wish you a wonderful start to 2025 and look forward to sharing your children's learning and development with you all!

Yours sincerely,

Dawn Lewis
Oaklea Director

Carla Gunn
Setting Manager

2025 Term Dates

Spring Term 2025

Monday 6th January – Friday 28th March 2025

Half term: 17th February – 21st February 2025

Thursday 20th and Friday 21st February 2025 - Oaklea St John's Closed (church maintenance)

Staff Training Day – Friday 21st February CLOSED

World Book Day – Thursday 6th March

Good Friday Bank Holiday – Friday 18th April CLOSED

Summer Term 2025

Easter Monday – Monday 21st April CLOSED

Tuesday 22nd April -Tuesday 22nd July 2025

Bank Holiday Monday 5th May CLOSED

Bank Holiday Monday 26th May CLOSED

Half Term 27th May - 30th May