

Dear mums, dads and carers,

## January 2016 Newsletter

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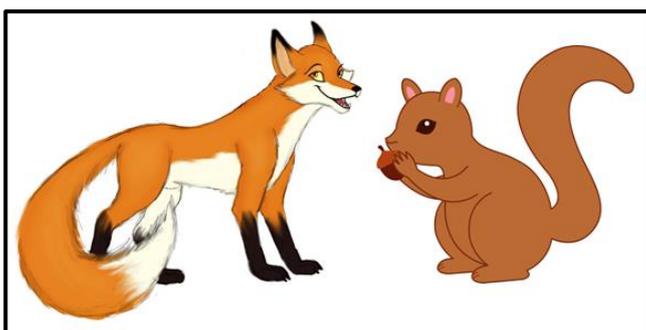
### Welcome to the Spring Term!

Many of our children have changed rooms at the start of the Spring Term, with two year olds moving to Toddler Room and three year olds moving to Nursery. We hope that by now most will have settled into comfortable routines as the final few admissions begin their time at the Centre. We know you will all make any new parents/carers feel welcome... As always please speak to your keyperson should you have any questions or concerns about this transition.

### New staff roles at Ambler

Julia Breda is the new Early Years Teacher in Nursery, having joined the Children's Centre at the start of term. Helen Bowe, who covered this role last term, has returned to working two days a week of planning cover for the Nursery and Reception. We hope you'll all make Julia feel welcome at Ambler and join us in thanking Helen for her hard work last term!

We're also sad to announce that Sabrina Ramsay, who was Baby Room lead, has now left Ambler. However, Asma Ali has already been appointed as her interim replacement. She will take responsibility for co-coordinating care of our under twos, with direction from senior management.



### Is your child a fox or a squirrel?!

We have finally decided to give our Nursery classes more interesting names and are delighted to introduce them as Foxes and Squirrels! The Nursery names were a little dull but Nursery 1 will now be known as Foxes class and Nursery 2 will be known as Squirrels class. Can your child spot any real foxes or squirrels at home?



### **Opening hours and dropping/collection**

Any new families may not be aware the Centre has strict opening times for insurance purposes. Please don't arrive until 8.00am as we are not covered to have parents in the building before then.

Collecting children on time is also important as it makes them feel secure. It also means they get into good routines early on, as punctuality is linked to attainment at school. If children are collected late the parent/carer has to sign a late book to

acknowledge the time. Lateness can have a big impact as it affects ratios of staff needed to look after children safely, means some cannot go on mandatory breaks and - most importantly of all - often upsets the child. Continued late collection results in a meeting with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss what is causing the problem.

### **Entrance and exit gates on Romilly Road**

Now that the main entrance for the Children's Centre is on Romilly Road we'd like to remind all parents/carers to ensure they do not forcibly shut the big silver gates at the back. This is to make sure we are considerate of our neighbours and don't cause any unnecessary noise. The gates on Romilly Road shut automatically, so there is no safety issue...



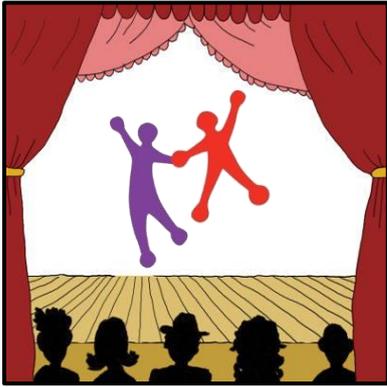
### **Free places for two year olds**

We still have a few 'free' part-time places in our Toddler Room. Your child could be eligible for one of the 15-hour a week government-funded places if any of the following apply: *you are on benefits, earn less than £16,190, your child has special educational needs/a disability, your child is adopted.* Just complete the form online at [www.islington.gov.uk/free2](http://www.islington.gov.uk/free2) and see if you're eligible. We will be particularly keen to take children born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013, but may still be able to take slightly older children if you are quick!

### **Half-term playscheme for Reception**

Playscheme places are available for Reception pupils during the half-term holidays. These provide working and studying families with childcare outside of school terms. We can accept ex-pupils (children who were in the Nursery) and those who currently use our extended day services. Places are allocated first to Islington residents, second to those who work in the borough, and third to other applicants. A week's place from 8.30am-5.30pm costs £120.30 or a week's place from 9.30am-3.30pm costs £90.19. Concessionary rates are also available for those on work-based benefits. Please speak to the Children's Centre admin office for more details.





### **Reception trip to the theatre**

Both our Reception classes are excited to be going on a trip to the theatre next month! Reception Blue and Green will be going to the Little Angel Theatre to see a Rumpelstiltskin puppet show on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February. Please just return the permission slip to let staff know if your child can come. If you can afford it, please also give Lorna, Margaret or Naomi a £7 contribution towards the ticket and travel costs as soon as possible. There are some parent/carer helper places available so speak to the staff if you are interested in joining the trip...

### **Reminder on Reception's book bags**

We ask every child in our Reception classes to have an Ambler bookbag which needs to be brought to school every day. These are available from the school admin office priced at £3.50. This is especially important for children who use extended day services as staff will put as letters and permission slips in there. Please make sure to check your child's bookbag for such items regularly.

We try to communicate in various different ways, and will increasingly use the text service and website...



Cissy, RB student

### **Welcoming Cissy to Reception**

We are sure that every family from our Reception classes will join us in welcoming Cissy back to Ambler. She is a second year student at the University of Roehampton and will be completing a placement with the Reception Blue team this term. Cissy worked in the same class as a volunteer before Christmas so you may have already met her. If not, she'll be working here until Easter, so please do introduce yourself and say hello!

### **Reception's learning journeys**

Reception staff would like to thank all the parents/carers who completed the learning journey page sent home over Christmas. All of them have now been added into the children's special books. If you haven't completed yours or you mislaid the page there is still time to do it! Please just speak to your child's keyperson and they will help you.





### **First Aid course coming up**

The Children's Centre often has upcoming activities that you may be interested in attending and we'd certainly love to see you, so please pick up an activity timetable from the admin office. For example, the Children's Centre is hosting a pediatric first aid course in March. This is designed by St John Ambulance to give parents of babies and toddlers the confidence that they'll know what to do in extraordinary circumstances. It's being held on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March from **10am to 12pm**. Please book a place at the admin office but be aware that no crèche is being offered. Your children are welcome to attend the normal Stay and Play, which takes place at the same time, with another adult.

### **What to do about nits**

There've been a few cases of head lice in our rooms recently. An infestation isn't the result of dirty hair or poor hygiene. All types of hair can be affected, regardless of length and condition. However, please check your child's hair at home. The nits are the egg shells left by the live lice. They are often quite difficult to see because they're so small. A chemist can sell you a special lice/nit comb which will enable you to check more thoroughly. If your child has lice the chemist will be able to give you a special shampoo which will kill the lice but not harm your child or their hair. Children are still expected to attend if they have nits and/or lice. Please don't keep them off!



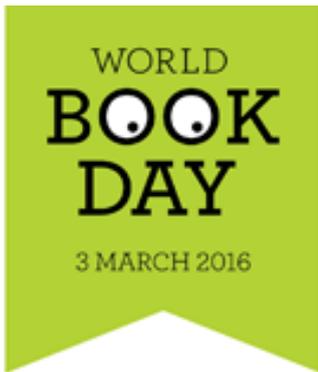
### **Free vitamins available at Ambler**

We distribute free vitamins at Ambler for all Islington and Camden children aged under four, pregnant women, mums with babies under one, and those trying to get pregnant. Just ask at the admin office or speak to one of the Outreach team. Good nutrition in pregnancy and early childhood leads to better health and helps children to grow and develop. Vitamins are essential nutrients that your body needs in small amounts so that it can work properly. It is difficult to get all the nutrients and vitamins you need, even if you eat a healthy balanced diet.

### **Why we are nut-free!**

You are welcome to supply fruit for your child to share with their class on birthdays, but please ensure that no nuts are brought into Ambler at all! The site is nut-free in response to various allergies and this includes any food brought in just for your own child's consumption. We are also a 'Healthy Children's Centre' and want to maintain this from Baby Room to Reception class. Children are happy to celebrate with a range of fruits and it's a lovely idea to buy some unusual fruits for the special occasion!





### **Dressing up for World Book Day**

The Children's Centre will be celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. On that particular day, children can dress up as a character from a book of their choice to show all their friends what they love reading most. Parents and carers are encouraged to get their children involved in the festivities, helping create whole costumes (like Wally from Where's Wally) or single props (like the Cat's Hat from Dr Seuss's series) which come from their favourite books. It is a great dedicated to books and a celebration of reading, so we hope you will all join in!

### **Claim lost property or it will go to charity**

Our lost property box in the atrium is now overflowing again... Please check it as soon as possible if you think your child may have lost any clothing over the last few months. If items aren't claimed by half term then they will all be donated to charity, which should not only help a good cause but also make it easier to find any other lost items in future!



### **Holiday weeks and closure dates**

Just a reminder that all families should be aware the annual two week closure now differs from previous notice. The Centre will be closed completely from Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August to Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. That means we close for the summer holidays at 6pm on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August. There are then two INSET days at the start of the next academic year, making the first day back Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Please check the dates at the end of this newsletter are in your diary and let the admin office know if you have any questions/concerns.



### **Check emergency contacts**

Please make sure that the Children's Centre admin office has your most up-to-date contact details - whether you've got a new mobile number or have changed jobs recently, it's very important that we can reach you by phone at all times. It's also vital that we have the contact numbers of at least two other people who we can get in touch with if there's an emergency. This is in the interests of your child's safety...



### **Who to speak to and governance**

We aim to have open communication. Your child's key person and then the room lead will be the people you have most contact with. However, there may be times when you want more support from the senior leadership team of **Honoria Lukulay**, Assistant Head, or **Lorna Prynne**, Early Years Foundation Stage Co-coordinator.

Our Advisory Board parents are **Christine Langford** and **Ram Deb. Nadine Mellor**, parent of a Reception child, and **Mary Stevens**, parent of a Toddler child, are also on the Governing Body.

### **Communication and feedback**

Each child has a pigeonhole labelled with his/her name. Please check this daily as this is where you will find any up to date communications from us. If you have any compliments, complaints or suggestions to help us improve our services for all our children and families, please fill in a feedback form (available from the foyer).

Very best wishes,

**The Ambler Team**



## term dates and holidays

### **SPRING TERM**

**Monday 15th to Friday 19th February**

Half-term - Open for AYR children in BR, TR and N/Reception Playscheme only

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

Last day for term time only children in BR, TR and N

**Thursday 24th March**

BR, TR and N closed for Inset day

No extended day care for Reception, but school open as normal

**Friday 25th March and Monday 28th March**

Children's Centre and school closed for Easter bank holidays

**Tuesday 29th March to Friday 8th April**

Open for AYR children in BR, TR and N/Reception Playscheme only

### **SUMMER TERM**

**Monday 11th April**

First day of term for BR, TR and N/Reception

**Monday 2nd May and Monday 30th May**

Children's Centre and school closed for Spring bank holidays

**Tuesday 31st May to Friday 3rd June**

Open for AYR children in BR, TR and N/Reception Playscheme only

**Monday 6th June**

First day back for term time only children in BR, TR and N/Reception

**Thursday 21st July**

Last day of term – school and CC closes at 2pm for funded places

BR, TR and N open as normal for paying parents

**Friday 22nd July to Thursday 18th August**

Summer holidays - Open for AYR children in BR, TR and N/Reception Playscheme only

**Friday 19th August to Friday 4th September inclusive**

Closed for two week annual shutdown

### **AUTUMN TERM**

**Monday 5th September and Tuesday 6th September**

Children's Centre and school closed for Inset days

**Wednesday 7th September**

First day of term for BR, TR and N/Reception (as Year One!)