



Dear Parents/ Carers

Warm welcomes all round to all our families, both new and existing.

In this newsletter we say a very reluctant “goodbye” to a couple of our team; to Della who is stepping back at the end of March giving her the time to enjoy her new grandchildren & to Maddie who will be moving on to a full time first responder/health advisor (emergency 999 call taker) role towards the end of April.

Since 2019 Della has been instrumental in driving our speech & language assessments as well as being an invaluable experienced early years practitioner. She has kindly offered to remain on our bank staff to cover odd training/sick days so we are delighted that she will still be in setting on occasions. We are fortunate to be welcoming Dionne back into regular early years practice after a short break as bank staff. She will be making herself known to Della’s key families over the next couple of weeks and has already been getting to know Della’s key children in readiness for the handover.

We also welcome Kerry Simons to the team. Kerry is a qualified Early Years Educator & initially she will be working in setting every Monday & other days to be confirmed. Since joining us in early 2020, Maddie, as full time Deputy Manager, has been pivotal in establishing & leading the setting’s daily routines, organising outings & supporting all our children & staff team throughout the week. Her ability to recognise unnamed water bottles, lunch boxes, wellies & coats is a superpower along with her cheerful pragmatic attention to detail!

Della & Maddie will be much missed, but we wish them the very best for the future and we will keep in touch.

The preschool has a solid plan in place for restructuring & recruiting and we will be able to give more information to parents shortly. Meantime, please rest assured that we will manage any staff changes sensitively to ensure minimum disruption to our children/families.

A collection for both staff members will be in the office for those parents who wish to contribute.

Spring/Summer Activities-Diary Dates 2024 Trips out and about/organised visits in setting

We have been able to start taking some of our older children out of setting - from March, regular visits to the park, beach, village & library are planned. These are in addition to the leavers primary school transition timetable which will be released shortly.

Inver House partnership continues with our visits to see our senior friends in the village – provisional dates:

Friday 19th April, Friday 10th May, Friday 5th July

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Diary Dates (continued)



We will be organising another trip to the RNLI boathouse in the summer term to celebrate 200 years of the RNLI in 2024!

End of Spring Term – Thursday 28th March 24

Start of Summer Term – Monday 15th April 24

Leavers Preschool Trip - either 20th or 21st July 24

Leavers Graduation Celebration – Tuesday 23rd July 24

End of Summer Term – Friday 26th July 24

Front Garden Project & outdoor learning

We are continuing to develop our outdoor environments; we now have free flow at times between our front and back garden which allows the children to explore the new mud kitchen/growing natural area at the front of the preschool while giving more space for other activities in the back garden. All forms of outdoor play make a powerful contribution to a child’s wellbeing, development & learning. Outdoor play benefits include OPPORTUNITIES for:

- Negotiation & collaboration with other children.
- Imagination & creativity to flourish with the children exploring their own ideas & new ways of thinking.
- Challenging their own emotional, social, physical & cognitive abilities.
- To risk take & experiment with confidence.
- Understanding their “world”; the natural, built & virtual environment that surrounds them.
- Promoting inquiry, problem solving, shared decision making & having fun!



Staff Training – updates

Sarah recently attended a full day of Forest School training at Mill Copse, Yarmouth. She has a particular passion

for creative outdoor play & natural environments & has driven the development of the outdoor front garden, enhancing the children’s learning experiences within this space.

- Natalie is embarking on a distance learning 4-month Level 3 Special Educational Needs qualification which will inform practice and support the team. As our Designated Safeguarding Lead, she recently attended her Level 3 refresher on Working Together to Safeguard Children & also has recently achieved a certification in Trauma, Attachment & Therapeutic Parenting.
- Sarah & Natalie have completed a "Maths in the Early Years Foundation Stage" course in March.
- Maddie has had virtual training over 4 sessions focussing on "Terrific 2 year Olds" in February/March.
- Donna is attending her Level 2 Safeguarding Foundation statutory refresher course in March and an ELKLAN (speech & lang) day course in April.
- In early February Stacey completed a "Bucket" group course which concentrates on small group work to build children's focus & attention span.

Funding, Fees & Sessions 2024

Two year old 15 funded hours for working parents – this is available from April 2024. Applications via the Gov.uk site, <https://www.gov.uk/sign-in-childcare-account>. For more information on funding offers check out:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Rachel is available Mon-Thurs for any funding queries.

For those parents with children who will be attending in September 24 please let Rachel know your preferred sessions by 30th April 24 and we will do our best to accommodate on a first come, first served basis, thank you.

Fees – We have held our hourly fees for 2 years. With the increase in minimum wage & ongoing costs of rent, heating & lighting, regrettably, we have had to increase our fees from 1st May 2024. Our new rates will be:

2 year old hourly rate	£6.00 (3 hours, £18)
3-4 year old hourly rate	£5.50 (3 hours, £16.50)

Please note we will not be applying any additional consumable charges.

Housekeeping/Safeguarding

Mobile Phones – Please do not use your mobile phone in the preschool. Keep it out of sight and preferably leave in your car at drop off/pick up, thank you.

Gates and Bolts! - Please remember to close the front gate & small ramp gate and secure all bolts when leaving or arriving at preschool, thank you.

Medication - Please do inform us if your child has been given any medication prior to attending preschool; all medication to be administered here must be prescribed have the correct label. In both cases, forms need to be completed in preschool.

NB: Please remember not to bring your child into preschool if they have been given Calpol, thank you.

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Absences – Please remember to call us as soon as possible in the morning if your child will not be attending preschool. We are obliged to record all absences for the local authority funding records.

Invoice Payments – Prompt payment is appreciated. We are a small educational charity with limited cash flow! Any problems at all pop in and have a chat with Rachel.

Seasonal Clothes Change - Please ensure that your child has appropriate clothing for the changing seasons as we venture out in all weathers, rain or shine.

Please ensure that all clothing & footwear is named! This helps the team immensely, thank you.

Healthy Lunches & Snack donations

We notice a marked difference in behaviour after lunch when our children have foods with hidden sugars in their lunch boxes!

Please remember that we promote the healthy snack and lunch initiative. Where possible please avoid including squash and chocolate but do include lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. Children who eat lots of sugar and salt do find it harder to concentrate and regulate their behaviour due to the resulting rush of short-lived energy. It is better to have natural carbohydrates which are longer acting energy providers. **Donations of healthy snacks** are very welcome.

Choking hazards – **Please chop all grapes, olives, sausages and small foods, thank you. These are proven choking hazards for children.**

Water Bottles Please bring a named water bottle for your child. Water is available all day but having their own bottle encourages independence and helps to avoid bugs spreading.

Please remember to check your child's drawer at the end of each session, thank you.



@WindmillsBembridge. Thank you!

Please like and share our page Windmills Preschool Bembridge



At 36 months...your child shows significant care & concern for living things & the environment & is beginning to see the effect of their behaviour on the environment. Brilliant!

Finally, we would like to thank all our parents for your continued support for Windmills; it is very much appreciated in these challenging times.

We will be distributing our **parent consultation questionnaire (anonymous)** shortly and would be very grateful for your feedback. This helps the team to reflect & action any improvements.

Natalie, Maddie, Sarah, Stacey, Della, Dionne, Donna, Karen, Kerry, Ewa, Sally & Rachel



The Windmills Team