



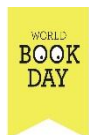
Acorn Playgroup and Pre-School Newsletter

Spring Term 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2025! All the team at Acorn would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year and it is with great pleasure that we welcome our families, both old and new to Acorn.

The children have settled back into the Acorn routine with ease following the Christmas break and have been enjoying a variety of activities in line with our new termly topics, starting our first weeks back with 'The Arctic' and 'Hibernation; Hibernating animals and Bird Watching week'.



Our planned Topics for the Spring Term 2025 are ...

20.01.25 Children's Choice/Children's Mental Health Week

27.01.25 Chinese New Year

03.02.25 Superhero Week (dress up optional)

10.02.25 Valentine's Day/Florists (11th Feb Internet Safety Day)

February Half Term

24.02.25 Mini Beasts/Egg Incubation and Hatching/Ramadan (1st March St David's Day)

03.03.25 World Book Week/Pancake Day

10.03.25 Science Week/Holi

17.03.25 Farm Week (17th March St Patrick's Day)

24.03.25 Easter Week/Mother's Day

31.03.25 Easter/Eid Ul-Fitr



SPRING TERM DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Superhero dress up week – Monday 3rd to Friday 7th February
Sweetheart Valentine's Disco – Tuesday 11th February, 4:00-6:00pm
February Half Term – Monday 17th to Friday 21st February
Parent's Evening - Thursday 13th March, 3:45pm-5:00pm
Mother's Day Gift Shop – Monday 24th to Friday 28th March
Easter Bunny Visit – Monday 31st March to Friday 4th April
Last day of Term – Friday 4th April at 12pm

TERM DATES

Full details of our 2024/25 term dates can be located on our website at acornwelwyn.com

ACORN PHONE LINE AND INTERNET

Further to our communication over the last week, we are sorry to advise that although internet access has now been restored, we are continuing to experience technical issues with our phone line.

If you need to contact us urgently, please can you phone us on our temporary phone line 07483 942247. For all other communication please email us at acornwelwyn@gmail.com.

CHILDREN'S COLD WEATHER CLOTHING

With temperatures reducing, children will need a warm coat, hat and gloves/mittens every day. Please remember to label your child's clothing to ensure we can easily return any misplaced items.

As we play outside everyday, even in the wetter months, please can all children have a pair of named wellies which remain at Acorn. Footwear will be changed for indoor play.



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!

Acorn Playgroup and Pre-school has a Facebook page which we use to share our termly topic activities and events.

To access, simply copy and paste the following link into your browser

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/AcornWelwyn/>

Government childcare funding



The Government has recently expanded their funded childcare allowance for working families. Children from working families are now entitled to 15 hours free childcare per week, during term time, from the age of 9 months alongside the existing 30 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds.

To apply for a childcare code each parent needs to be working and earning the equivalent of 16 hours a week at national minimum/living wage and under £100,000 adjusted net income per year. This means that each parent needs to earn from just over £8,600 per year to be eligible.

To check your entitlement, please complete the eligibility check as soon as possible via the following link <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working> **To enable the allowance to be utilised in the Summer term 2025 (April-July) term, the funding must be applied for and approved by March 2025.**

Where your application is successful, please forward your unique funding code and national insurance number via return email, prior to the end of term.

Other childcare support is available, including two year old funding for families receiving additional government support. Further information is available to parents on the Childcare Choices website at <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>, where you can explore the early education entitlements and other government help with childcare costs.

If your child's weekly hours exceed their government funded hours, the additional hours will be charged at our current rate of £7.70 per hour which will be invoiced half termly via your child's Tapestry account.

GENERAL ILLNESS

If your child requires Calpol or ibuprofen before coming to Acorn, the best place for them to be is at home to recover.

Where children have experienced a case of sickness or diarrhoea, they should only return to Acorn following a 48-hour period following their last episode.

We would like to thank you for your continued support in keeping Acorn safe.

SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF THE TEAM

Drop off and pick up times can be busy, therefore if you need to talk to your child's Key Person please don't hesitate to ask. We will always endeavour to organise a suitable time for you to discuss any concerns you may have. Our door is always open!

TAPESTRY ONLINE LEARNING JOURNALS

We hope you are enjoying viewing your child's observations and photographs within their Tapestry account. Please do continue to send us photographs/videos of any special events, activities and/or outings that your child may have outside of Acorn. This is a fantastic way for your child's key worker to share and discuss these experiences with your child and build upon the connection between their life at home and Acorn.

Did you know Tapestry contains a section called 'All about me' and allows you add up to date information regarding your child including their likes and dislikes which we can use to incorporate into the setting. The information can be updated at any time in line with your child's ever-changing needs.

To access the relevant page; -

- Access your child's Tapestry account via the main web address.
- Select 'Menu' in the top left-hand corner of the page
- From the dropdown menu, select 'Children'
- Click on your child's name
- Select 'All About Me' from the dropdown box
- Select 'Edit about '
- Complete the relevant sections
- Select 'Save' at the bottom of the page.



Finally, if you have any questions about your child's Tapestry account, please contact us via email at acornwelwyn@gmail.com

SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

CHILD COLLECTION

At Acorn, we ask all parents to provide us with a list of authorised adults who have your permission to collect your child from Acorn, alongside a unique password. All authorised persons must be aged 18 and over.

In line with our Safeguarding Policy, we will not allow a child to be released to an unknown person without your prior consent or where we cannot verify the identity of the authorised person.

Please may we ask that where an authorised person collecting your child is not familiar to all members of Acorn's staff, that they have photograph ID (passport/driving licence) and your child's collection password when they come to collect.

In the event of an emergency, where a person not listed will collect your child, please telephone us on 01438 840132 (please use our temporary phone line on 07483 942247 until further notice) prior to the collection time.

ANY SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS?

Roxanne Speede and Linda McLellan are Acorn's Designated Safeguarding Officers.

If you have any safeguarding concerns, regarding yourself; your child or another family, they are available to discuss these with you at any time.

CHANGES TO PERSONAL INFORMATION

In the event of any change to yours or your child's information, e.g. contact telephone number; address; medical information, it is essential that we are advised of these changes as soon as they occur to ensure the correct care is provided for your child. This is best done via email to acornwelwyn@gmail.com

FAMILIES IN NEED OF SUPPORT

We all experience difficulties at some point. Families First can help you find early help and information to prevent issues from getting worse.

If you need more help than your usual support network - for example your health visitor, school, doctor or family centre – Families First can work with you and your family to create a package of support. Please Ask for support.

- You can always talk to us and/or your Health Visitor if you have concerns about your child.
- Talk to your GP if you have health or wellbeing concerns.
- If you need help with any of the following, Families First are likely to be able to help.
 - Parenting
 - Mental and physical health problems
 - drug or alcohol dependency
 - domestic abuse
 - school related concerns – such as your child is not attending school
 - debt problems
 - risk of becoming homeless.



WHAT IS FAMILIES FIRST?

Families First is the term used in Hertfordshire for services that work together to support families who need extra help - also known as early help services.

Families First is available to all Hertfordshire families with children under the age of 18 (25 if they have a learning need or disability) and further information can be found via the following website

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/families-first/families-first.aspx>