



NEWSLETTER – September 2018

Business Manager (sessions) -

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(Helen Bennett helen.bennett@croftpreschool.com)

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Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers,

Welcome to the Parents/Guardians/Carers of all the new children who are joining us at Croft Early Years this term, and welcome back to those Parents/Guardians/Carers of all the children returning to us after the summer break. I hope everyone has had a fantastic summer spending time with their loved ones and enjoyed the good weather we have had over the summer.

I would like to thank all the Parents/Guardians/Carers and my incredible staff team who returned their questionnaires at the end of last term and provided me with some invaluable positive feedback and suggestions on how we can further improve our services. Consequently, I have implemented some changes to help our setting achieve the best possible outcome for your children and my staff team. Many thanks to everyone who has supported me in this process.

Outdoor Setting

On entering the setting, we have now established a sensory garden and continued to develop the 'Growing Corner' I established last term. Any contributions to these areas, especially spring bulbs, would be gratefully received. The children will have continuous provision of sand, water and soil in the main play area. To complement our indoor facilities, and provide continuous outdoor provision in any weather, we now have a 'Writer's Work-Den,' 'Reader's Retreat.' and 'Sensory Shed.' Again, any contributions to these, especially solar-powered lights or colourful wood paints, would be gratefully received. We have also installed a gazebo to link the latter two structures and provide shelter from the sun and rain.

Indoor Layout

The old office has now been converted into a 'Preschool Classroom' to provide a quieter space for Small Group Focus Activities. This will also be the space where children will hang their coats up. Underneath their named hooks we now have a 3-tier footwear system. We would be grateful if you could support your children in adopting this system whereby slippers are stored on the top of the bench, outdoor shoes on the middle shelf and Wellington boots are stored on the ground level. It would also help us tremendously if you could label all items clearly. To all our new starters, I would be grateful if you could provide a pair of slippers for indoor comfort and Wellies for outdoor play as it can get muddy! We also request you provide your children with a high SPF suncream, a sunhat and a water bottle in warm weather (still forecasted for the next couple of weeks). Also located in the Preschool Classroom is a 'Parent Information Board' and a space for displaying 'Children's Creations.'

In the main play area, we have areas for literacy, numeracy, physical development, role-play and creative arts. The resources in these areas will be changed on a weekly basis to reflect the learning and development plans (see attached for example). The baby area, kitchen and children's toilets remain the same.

Our new office is now located at the rear of the setting. For security reasons, access to the setting will therefore only be from the front of the building, either via the buzzer on the front gate, or on the side school gate when that is open and supervised by staff (before and after school only). Should you have any queries you want to address confidentially, please feel



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free to come through to the office during the day, or knock on the rear exit door before /after school.

Signing-in procedure

On arrival, can you ensure that your child is signed in on the register by a member of staff as this is a legal requirement and for health and (fire) safety reasons. The children can locate their photo stars by the 'mark-making table' and stick them to the rainbow by the front door, as well as try to sign themselves at the mark-making table. You can also hand over any packed lunches in this time before the children go out to play.

Keyperson

Each child is assigned 2 keypeople who will have direct contact with your child and you, the Parents/Guardians/Carers. These have been assigned by corresponding the days that your child attends with the member of staff present on most if not all the same days, as well as any additional needs your child may require. For the children who have already been attending the setting, the keypeople remain mostly unchanged. For our new starters, your child's keypeople will be introduced to you on arrival.

Learning and development information

The biggest response in the parental questionnaires was that there was a lack of information about your children's learning and development. For your information, the weekly learning and development plan will be on display on the wall next to the signing-in table. Throughout September, we will be trialling 'Tapestry,' an electronic learning journal software. The staff team will be familiarising themselves with the software over the next month before we 'go live.' I would like thank you in advance for your patience whilst we implement this. When the team are happy with the software, you will be able to receive live feeds of your child's progress (subject to your approval, you will receive a separate communication regarding this in due course).

My background

To those who are not familiar with me already, my name is Penny Harland and I have been working at Croft Early Years for the past year, initially in a supporting role as Bank Staff, and then as an Early Years Practitioner. In that time, I gained invaluable insights and experience of how the setting was organised and how it functioned.

I feel very honoured and privileged to have been selected by my predecessor Helen Bennett, our Parent Charity Trustees Becki Blakey, Helen Broster, Chantelle Hughes and Paul Sephton, and a panel of our Early Years Practitioners, to be the new Business Manager from 5th September 2018, as we start the new pre-school term. My background / qualifications / experience, thus far, include a Doctorate in Neuroscience, and work as a Neuroscientist and Scientific Editor in the years preceding starting a family.

I have always been passionate about children and have 3 of my own aged 9, 7 and 4. After having my second child, I chose to discontinue my full-time scientific work and registered as a childminder, initially to help friends with their childcare needs whilst being a full-time carer to my own children, but then found the experience so rewarding I decided to continue to respond to other parents' childcare requirements.



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I have been an Ofsted registered childminder for over 6 years now and was rated as 'Outstanding' from the outset. I have a Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce, up-to-date First Aid and Safeguarding training, and a Level 2 Food Safety qualification.

With my own children thriving across their school curriculum and in their extra-curricular activities, I believe I am well -informed and -placed to help prepare our pre-school children strive to achieve the best of their abilities in all areas of their development, so that they are more than ready for school when the time comes.

Future plans

I would like to thank Helen for all the time, energy, care and attention she has put into Croft Early Years over the years that she has been here. I feel incredibly fortunate to be able to take on such a fabulous setting, with amazing children and an immensely caring, supportive and passionate team of staff. I am truly grateful that Helen will still be around in September to help with the handover of management and ensure a smooth transition.

I look forward to building upon the relationships that I have already made with the children, Parents/Guardians/Carers and staff, thus far, as well as welcoming our new additions. I really enjoy interacting with children and helping them to learn and develop into happy, helpful, kind, thoughtful, respectful, considerate, smart and independent individuals.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries, I am always open to new ideas and suggestions.

I would like to wish everyone a happy term that is full of joy for learning and lots of fun!!

Penny.

Diary dates

5/9/18 Term starts

6/9/18 National Read a Book day

8/9/18 International Literacy Day

10/9/18 Rosh Hashanah – Jewish New Year

11/9/18 Muharram / Islamic New Year

13/9/18 Roald Dahl Day

19/9/18 Yom Kippur - Jewish

19/9/18 International talk like a Pirate Day

26/9/18 European Languages Day

4/10/18 World Space Week

7/10/18 Grandparents Day

12/10/18 National Spain Day

18/10/18 Parents Evening

19/10/18 End of half-term

Harvest Time

29/10/18 Term starts

5/11/18 Bonfire night and fireworks

6/11/18 Diwali (Deepavaali) – Hindu

10/11/18 World Science Day

11/11/18 Armistice Day; Origami Day

16/11/18 Children in Need

19/11/18 Road Safety Week

22/11/18 Thanksgiving Day

30/11/18 St. Andrew's Day

1/12/18 Start of Advent

2/12/18 Start of Hannukah

12/12/18 Christmas Performance

14/12/18 Christmas Jumper Day

14/12/18 Christmas Party

18/12/18 End of term

3/1/19 Preschool re-opens