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Dear Parents,

March 2021

It has been so long since I have done a newsletter due to the chaotic start to the year with Covid-19 closure etc, so I will start with a huge thanks to all of you for your patience and understanding. I feel like a broken record saying this, but I really do mean it sincerely, we are so grateful to all of you. I think we are all starting to feel tentatively optimistic about the rest of the year now, things are going in the right direction and we can start to get excited about getting back to 'normal'.

Thank you all for your amazing World Book Day efforts – they were all fab and we had such a fun day.



We enjoyed the rest of our Literacy Week, reading lots of books and focussing on mark making and reasons to write. We would usually have asked parents to be guest readers but instead Lydia did a few guest spots reading books about healthy eating, and Christina read in Greek to Oranges & Lemons to introduce them to a new language. We played word games and letter recognition games, and did lots of rhyming and alliteration.

We are all now enjoying lots of Easter and Spring related topics, planting seeds and making bird feeders and enjoying the milder weather. Later this week we will be celebrating the Hindu festival of Holi, and the Greek Independence Day.

We are also planning for our next focus week, which will be 'No Toys Week'..... Now I know this may not initially sound much fun, but it is a new challenge for children and indeed for practitioners. The idea is based on The Curiosity Approach, and a move away from brightly coloured environments and toys which have a single use. We will be using lots of natural materials and objects which are open-ended. So, for example a child can only use a toy car as a car, but they can use a cardboard box to imagine it is a car, or a telephone, or a brick as part of a larger construction, or indeed anything that they want to imagine. We hope that this change in resources will be interesting for children of all ages, and we will support them to engage in imaginative play, construction, role play, creative and artistic play. We will also be doing lots of Forest School inspired activities. We are planning various projects to engage them throughout the week so it will certainly not be boring. Each room will update you more about the activities they will be doing, and I will of course send out lots of photos. Exciting!

After the Easter holidays we will also be welcoming our lovely Anna back from maternity leave. She will re-join the Apples team. For those who do not already know Anna, she has been with us since 2014 and she is an Apples favourite, she is always calm and happy, and all of the children adore her. I'm sure she will settle straight back in. This means that Olivia will be moving to Bananas. We know that she will be greatly missed in Apples and it has been lovely to hear all of your comments about her, we know how fab she is! Unfortunately for us Olivia will only be in Bananas for a couple of months before she goes on an adventure to Camp America.

You may have noticed the skip and storage container in the driveway – we have had a very long overdue clear-out of the storage room at the top of the house, and spent an exhausting Saturday going through everything and bringing it down to either store or bin. We will now have the storage room refitted which will be done over several weekends so it won't interfere with day to day running.

The usual whinges

- Please remember to wear a mask in the driveway, if you are exempt from wearing a mask please come into the drive and wait by the pond, telephone your child's room and a member of staff will bring them out / come to collect them.
- Once again people are frequently parking on the double yellow lines on the corner of the road. I am seeing this happening even when there are plenty of spaces close by?? Please park legally.

Quick Query

We are thinking of having Wavy Davy back to do Gymtots from April. We had paused sessions during the 'second wave' as we wanted to be cautious. However, if we arranged it so that he came on two days a week and perhaps did Apples and Cherries one week and then Bananas & O&L the following week so that he wasn't crossing between bubbles in the one day, that would limit risk as much as possible? He doesn't currently work at other settings so that wouldn't be an issue, and he would do regular lateral flow tests as we are all doing. Have a think and if any of you feel uncomfortable about it let me know, otherwise we will ask for him to return from April.

Dates for the Diary

2nd – 5th April = Easter Holiday (so we are closed on Good Friday and Easter Monday!)

12th – 16th April = No Toys Week

(hopefully not too long until we can have a diary full of visitors and events again....)

Sending lots of love to all,

Eve, Sue, Lydia, Noreen and all the staff at Monkton xxx

PS I have added some more photos below – couldn't resist 

