

St.Michael's Preschool

Autumn Newsletter September 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope that you have all had a lovely summer and we welcome you all to the start of the Autumn term.

On our return our focus will be initially to support the children to settle in at preschool, to become familiar with the routine, staff and new peers. The children will all have the opportunity to choose, enjoy and explore their environment, the resources and activities to support their learning and development throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. We are continuing to plan using themes to extend the children's knowledge of their world, supporting the individual needs of the children, promoting and providing a rich and stimulating learning environment.

As the season of coughs, colds, viruses and chest infections approaches, please be considerate and keep your child at home if they are unwell as outlined within our policies, in order to avoid the spreading of germs to children and staff and ultimately closure due to shortage of staff. We thank you in anticipation for not sharing.

Please be mindful that paracetamol is only a temporary relief of symptoms/temperature and not a cure and medicines, such as Calpol, should not be administered unnecessarily. If your child has sickness/ diarrhoea please ensure they are kept at home for 48 hours from the last episode, before returning to preschool, thank you.

We will continue to maintain our high standards of hygiene that we have implemented as part of our daily routine along with taking the children's temperatures as this will alert us if a child is becoming unwell. Children with high temperatures will be sent home and must be kept at home for 24 hours once the temperature has returned to normal. Please could you ensure that your emergency contact is up to date as children who become unwell during their attendance at preschool will need to be collected.

As we continue to live with Covid-19 we still need to maintain preventative measures to ensure that we continue to protect us all and minimise the risk of transmission to one another, especially those most vulnerable which includes those who are pregnant.

We would advise that, if any of the Covid symptoms, as well as symptoms of flu and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus), are displayed please keep your child at home and seek medical attention. In the case of a positive Covid test, children will need to remain at home for at least three days and for adults five days.

The symptoms for these include:

- continuous cough
- high temperature, fever or chills
- loss of or change to smell or taste
- shortness of breath
- unexplained tiredness, lack of energy
- muscle aches/pains
- not wanting to eat or not feeling hungry
- headache
- sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
- diarrhoea, feeling sick or being sick

We will inform you by email (telephone call if you do not have an email address) when a COVID-19 test for an individual is positive and we will follow the Government guidelines along with our policies. We kindly request that social media is not used as a platform for discussion. We are happy to discuss your concerns.

Good ventilation is key to minimising the risk of transmission of viruses. Experts are encouraging both staff and children to wear extra layers as the winter months and cold weather approaches so that we can continue to ventilate sensibly and prevent the spread of viruses. This will continue for the foreseeable future, therefore please layer your child's clothing. We also have a range of wellington boots so you do not need to bring these with your child.

Your child's key person will be introducing themselves to you during the next two weeks if you are new to the setting or there has been a change of key person for your child. The key person will ensure that your child's learning is monitored and observations will be entered into your child's learning journal by all of the staff. We will endeavour to organise an evening during the latter part of the Autumn term so that each key person can meet with the child's family.

For children in the full term after turning 9 months of age:

Those eligible for 15 hours of funding will need to contact HMRC for a code which will enable us to claim for your child. Eg, if your child is 9 months before the 31st August, your child will receive funding from September. Grant forms will need to also be completed and signed.

For children in the term after their 3rd birthday: Universal funding:

All children are entitled to Universal funding for 15 hours. For those receiving HMRC Working Parent funding, this will be in addition if your child remains eligible. Grant forms need to be signed and completed if you have not already completed one.

Claiming for Working Parent entitlement:

This is made via HMRC directly for your code to be issued and updated every three months, you should receive a reminder. The dates for application are:

31st December for your code to be valid from January - March

31st March for the code to be valid from April - August

31st August for the code to be valid from September - December

Once you have your code you will only be required to update this on the HMRC system.

Please note that funding periods are: Autumn term 14 weeks from September-December, Spring term 11 weeks from January – March and Summer term 13 weeks April- July. Funding can only be claimed at the start of each term. We cannot claim any additional funding if you choose to increase your child's hours mid term and therefore this will incur an additional cost until the new funding period.

Shoes and clothing- please could your child wear velcro shoes/trainers as this will help with promoting independence. In addition please could your child wear loose clothing to enable them to try to attend to toileting independently. This is an important school skill to learn, with staff helping as necessary and encouraging independence. Please could you avoid 'croc' shoes as the children tend to struggle with gross motor development.

Registration forms – please let us know if there have been any changes to the information that we hold, this includes any new siblings. Please ensure that we can contact you during the time that your child is with us at preschool.

Medication – please ensure that we have a duplicate of any prescribed medication at the setting. We are happy to support this in writing with your GP if you have any issues. This is to ensure that we keep your child safe whilst in our care. Failure to comply with this request may result with your child not being able to attend their sessions. In addition if your child is taking any medication at home please let us know so that we have up to date information in case of an emergency.

Absence- Please could you kindly ensure that you telephone the preschool to report an absence on 07849722670, thank you. Please do not advise members of staff verbally.

Lunches- Please could you ensure that your child does not have any nut based products in their lunchbox, due to allergies. Please do not bring sweets or fizzy drinks. As a reminder, we are unable to provide the facility to warm any foods.

Although staff sit with the children at all food times, **please could we ask that foods such as tomatoes and grapes are sliced quarters to minimise the risk of choking, thank you.**

Visit- We are very fortunate to be welcoming Katherine Spencer to preschool in October 2026:

Katherine 'Waffy' Spencer, the newly appointed principal clarinet of the Handel and Haydn Society, is also the principal of The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music, Gabrieli Consort and Players, The Irish Chamber Orchestra, and the City of London Sinfonia, as well as guesting with many of Europe's leading period and modern orchestras. Katherine has played for Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace and at a private performance for the Emperor of Japan.

We thank you all for your continued support and if you would like to speak to us at any time or if we can be of help in any way, we are happy to organise a mutually convenient time to meet with you.

Kind regards,
Sonja, Lindsay, Stella, Louise and Rachel.

Term dates:

October half term - 26th October – 30th November 2026 return on Monday 2nd November 2026

End of term – Friday 11th December 2026, we return on Monday 4th January 2027

February half term- w/c 15th - 19th February, returning Monday 22th February 2027

Easter break – 26th March - 9th April, returning Monday 12th April 2027

May Day bank holiday - Monday 3rd May 2027

May half term – w/c 31st May – 4th June, returning Monday 7th June 2027

End of term for Summer - Friday 16th July 2027

Provisional dates (more details to follow):

AGM - October 2026: To be confirmed

Nativity – Friday 11th December 2026 - there will not be a two year old session on this day.

Sports day – Friday 25th June 2027 - there will not be an afternoon session (more information to follow). Please note that this date may be moved in extreme weather conditions.

