

11<sup>th</sup> September, 2023

Dear Parents,

We are so pleased and impressed with how quickly the children are settling into Acorn class. They seem happy and engaged and we are sure we are going to all have a wonderful year.

Most of the children will be having their free school meals this week. Milk is also free until your child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday so it is worth signing up if you'd like to have it. It needs to be ordered online, the office will have details of how to do this and you should have received a flyer in your welcome packs. Children are also entitled to a piece of fruit each day. Most days we have either apples, pears, bananas or carrots but occasionally we are given other things such as tomatoes or mini cucumbers. Please feel free to have a backup fruit snack (fresh or dried) in your child's book bag in case they don't like what's on offer.


This week we will be reading the stories of 'Farmer Duck' and 'The Little Red Hen'. Both of these stories enable us to focus on how the animals are feeling when no one helps them and we will link this in to all working together in the classroom – sharing, tidying and helping each other. We will take the opportunity to concentrate on farm animals and explore what the children already know, while widening their knowledge further. We have a topic table in class and, although we discourage the children from bringing in general toys from home, they are allowed to bring in items connected to our topic to show and tell and then display on the table for the week.

Over the next week we will be doing baseline assessments and finding out where the children are on their learning journey. We will be playing lots of listening games to help get the children ready for phonics and we will be learning lots of counting rhymes and reading stories connected to farms.

In your child's book bag you should find a library book and a wordless picture book they have chosen. Sharing wordless books with a child provides an opportunity for literacy-rich conversations. Each "reader" listens and speaks, and creates their own story in their own words. Sharing wordless books also reinforces the idea that, in many books, the story and the pictures are connected. On the reverse of this page are tips on how to share these books with your child. When you have read with your child, please record in the reading record.

Best wishes,  
Mrs Clarke and Ms Tonkyn

<b><i>Things to remember</i></b>
<i>Every day – book bag and water bottle</i>
<i>Tuesdays and Wednesdays – come to school in PE kit</i>
<i>During hot weather - Please apply sun screen before school and send in a hat to wear.</i>
<i>Coats- please send in a coat every day so if it starts raining the children can still go outside.</i>



Tips for sharing wordless picture books with your child.

- Recognize that there are no "right" or "wrong" ways to read a wordless book. One of the wonderful benefits of using wordless books is how each child creates his own story (or stories!) from the same pictures.
- Spend time looking at the cover and talking about the book's title. Based on those two things, make a few predictions about the story.
- Take a "picture walk" through the pages of the book. Enjoy the illustrations, which are often rich with detail. Look carefully at the expressions on characters' faces, the setting and the use of color. Talk to each other about what you see. These conversations will enrich the storytelling.
- Enjoy the pictures and point out a few things, but don't worry too much about telling a story yet. Just enjoy the pictures and get a sense of what the book is about.
- Go back through the book a second time and get ready for some great storytelling! Consider going first and acting as a model for your child. Ham it up! Have characters use different voices, add sound effects and use interesting words in your version of the book.
- Encourage your child to "read" you the book with his story. Focus on the words your child uses when he tells the story. Help your child expand his sentences or thoughts by encouraging him to add information from the illustration's details. One way to encourage more details is by asking "W" questions: Who? Where? When? Why?
- Finish your wordless book sharing by asking a few simple questions: What pictures helped you tell the story? What was your favourite still life part of your story? Have you had an experience like the one in your story?

Sharing wordless books is a terrific way to build important literacy skills, including listening skills, vocabulary, comprehension — and an increased awareness of how stories are "built," as the storyteller often uses a beginning, middle, end format. For a book with few words, you'll be surprised at all the talking you will do, and all the fun you'll have!