

### Welcome to our Autumn Term newsletter!

Welcome back to our YMCA Sovereign families and a warm welcome to the new families joining us over the coming weeks.

We have enjoyed hearing about and celebrating all the exciting things the children took part in over the summer holidays... please do continue to send in your WOW moment cards so we can celebrate them together at circle/news time.

The children have settled back in beautifully and for our new friends, the preschool routine is already embedded.

We are very proud of the children!

With play at the heart of everything we do, we are continuing to explore sounds, shapes, numbers and colours and this term, we will be exploring our theme 'Just About Me!', finding out about all the special things that makes each one of us amazing and unique. We will continue to embed Jolly Phonics Stage One, enjoying a sound of the week and learning the corresponding song. In line with our setting's 'total communication system', we will share with you our sign of the week for you to practice and share together at home.

#### Curriculum

We are proud to offer a broad and enriching curriculum, provided through a holistic, play centred approach, supporting your children to become curious and confident learners! The children have the opportunity to take part in a variety of extracurricular activities during their time at preschool.

Our weekly extracurricular planner for the term ahead is as follows: **Monday morning – Mini athletics**, Mini



Athletics is a 'magical combination of imaginative play, sport and burning energy!' Perfect! <https://www.miniathletics.com>

**Tuesday morning - Preschool Gymnastics class** - run by East Surrey Acrobatics, this session is for children who are already 3 years old. Additional charges apply. You will receive an email shortly with information on how to enrol.

**Tuesday afternoon – Bake, Rattle and Roll** – an established favourite! Preschool cookery session where the children can experience and explore foods, discover where food comes from and begin to learn about making healthy choices. If they haven't been nibbled beforehand, the children will bring their bakes home to share!

#### Jolly Phonics sound of the week

Week 1 (9<sup>th</sup> Sept/4<sup>th</sup> Nov)  
phonic sound **s**

Week 2 (16<sup>th</sup> Sept/11<sup>th</sup> Nov)  
phonic sound **a**

Week 3 (23<sup>rd</sup> Sept/18<sup>th</sup> Nov)  
phonic sound **t**

Week 4 (30<sup>th</sup> Sept/25<sup>th</sup> Nov)  
phonic sound **p**

Week 5 (7<sup>th</sup> Oct/2<sup>nd</sup> Dec)  
phonic sound **i**

Week 6 (14<sup>th</sup> Oct/9<sup>th</sup> Dec)  
phonic sound **n**

Week 7 (21<sup>st</sup> Oct/16<sup>th</sup> Dec)  
phonic sounds  
**s, a, t, p, i, n.**

#### Preschool/Home connections:

please try to find one toy or item that begins with the phonic sound of the week! (you don't need to bring these in but enjoy talking about the sound of the week with your child!)

**Wednesday afternoon – Robot Reg** - The children learn skills of language and literacy through high-energy dance, games, music and movement. There will be a focus on the teaching of stage 1 phonics, in line with our sound of the week. <https://www.robotreg.co.uk/our-classes/#preschool>

**Thursday afternoon** – Gracie Grooves Dance classes! Gracie has been away for a little while as she welcomed her new baby into the world but she is looking forward to coming back to YMCA Sovereign this term!

**Friday afternoon** – Physical Friday! A firm favourite, the children get chance to practice their big physical skills and shake their sillies out in the dojo! We also hold our community links sessions on a Friday which may occasionally involve a local off-site visit. (Permission is always sought prior to any off-site trips)



### Artist of the Term

Art subjects are enriching and encourage self-expression and creativity. They can build confidence as well as a sense of individual identity. We ended last term focusing on Wassily Kandinsky. We looked at the painting 'Squares with Concentric Circles' and we had a big focus on circles in the environment, extending our knowledge of 2d shapes in order to link our learning. This term, we will focus on the artist Van Gogh, making connections between the painting Starry Night and our topics linked to Understanding the World (EYFS 2023).

### Eco Schools

We continue to take part in Eco-Schools, a pupil-led project empowering our children to want to make a difference in preschool, the community and beyond. Our Happy Earth committee is made up of some of our July 2025 school leavers. Parents are welcome to join us for our Happy Earth meetings and you will be informed of meeting dates. Last year the pre-schoolers upcycled a rabbit hutch to make a community larder; a donation station to 'take what you need and give what you can'. The project is highlighted in our latest OFSTED report where the inspector remarked positively on the project and wrote the following, "There is a whole community and inclusive feel to the setting, with children learning about others and kindness. For example, children bring items for the food bank, showing a clear awareness of their local community"



The preschoolers continue to enjoy identifying the recyclable items in their lunchboxes and sorting them into our classroom recycle bins. Future activities will include litter-picking in our local area, upcycling old items and we will continue to visit our YMCA allotment in Princes Road where the children enjoy planting and harvesting their own vegetables, allowing them the opportunity to experience 'field to fork' first hand. Please see the accompanying activity sheets on how you can get involved at home this term!

### Staying hydrated!

We have a water dispenser in preschool. The children are supported to select a cup, dispense their own drink and place used cups in the wash box. Having free access at all times to the water dispenser instils that amazing sense of agency, independence and responsibility in the children. You are welcome to continue to provide a drinking cup, particularly if your children will only drink from a specific type but in line with healthy eating guidance and policies, we always encourage water rather than juice or other sugary drinks. The Henry website has some great information on healthy bodies and teeth.

<https://www.henry.org.uk/tips/healthyteeth>

### Black History Month

October is Black History Month. An important annual observance marked by educational settings throughout the world. It is a great opportunity for staff, children and families to celebrate and understand the impact of black heritage and culture. We are joining in by offering our preschoolers opportunities to engage in activities which will help them make connections between different lives, cultures and experiences and offer starting points for discussions around similarities and differences, in line with our theme 'Just About Me'. The EYFS Statutory Framework says, "Supporting children to understand diversity, including that others will have a different background or family type from themselves will help all children to feel valued and understood."



At YMCA Sovereign Preschool, we value and celebrate diversity as an integral part of our everyday practice and Black History Month will see us taking part in some special events such as our visit from Kaira Kafo, a traditional West African Drumming and Dance company. Other activities include turning our home corner into 'Cultured

Cuts', an Afro-Caribbean hair salon and a Caribbean market stall, with real fruits and vegetables. We will enjoy multicultural music and try food from around the world.

If you have any resources at home - magazines, recipe books, clothing, fabrics or packaging that you think may support Black History Month or our topic, please bring them in for us to look at and enjoy. There are some wonderful resources on the CBeebies website to support the teaching and learning of Black History Month at home and you may wish to follow this link where Sienna is teaching us how to make her special, unique version of Nigerian Jollof style rice from My World Kitchen:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/watch/my-world-kitchen-nigerian-jollof-rice>



*"I am very impressed about your team talking about Black History Month. My family feel included and equally treated. Celebrating Black History Month shows how you embrace diversity 100%"* Parent feedback.

### Packed lunches

We welcome healthy packed lunches! We love to see the variety of delicious items the children get in their lunchboxes every day! But don't forget, we can offer practical support for anyone struggling to fill the cupboards. Just let me know and we'll be sure to help.

**Tragically, a child dies in the UK every month from choking and hundreds more require hospital treatment. It can happen quickly and it can happen to anyone.**

Please can I remind you to cut grapes, cherry tomatoes and cocktail sausages lengthways and quarters. Babybels are not recommended anymore – same for lumps of cheddar – the advice is now that cheese for children under 5 is cut into short, narrow strips.

Please remove bones from meats and please remove cocktail sticks. No marshmallows or popcorn and no nut products – including Nutella spread or peanut butter. (Source: Early Years food choking hazards – Food Standards Agency food.gov.uk) The safety of your children is paramount to us. Thank you for helping us by following these safety recommendations. If you missed our Healthy Eating workshop at our last parents evening, you can still access the workshop resources. They include ideas for healthy packed lunches and tips for fussy eaters. Please take the resources home and return them when you're ready. [https://foundationyears.org.uk/files/2021/09/Early-Years-Choking-Hazards-Table\\_FINAL\\_21-Sept-2021.pdf](https://foundationyears.org.uk/files/2021/09/Early-Years-Choking-Hazards-Table_FINAL_21-Sept-2021.pdf)



### Tapestry

Parents will have received a link to your child's online learning journal where parents are able to view their child's progress and see how much fun they're having here at YMCA Sovereign Preschool. We encourage you to upload your own comments and media, allowing us to see the fantastic things your little one is getting up to at home, creating those vital links between preschool and home. If you are having trouble activating your account or need a secure link to activate your account, please see a member of the team.

**Preschool t-shirts are back in stock. Additional t-shirts are available to purchase for £3.50. Please let a member of the team know if you would like a t-shirt or if you wish to purchase extras.**

## YMCA Sovereign Pre-school Newsletter

A space to play and learn in Reigate

### Parent Workshops

Parent workshops coincide with parent's evening.  
This year's parent workshops are:  
Autumn Term **Teaching the Curriculum**  
Spring Term **Internet Safety in the Early Years**  
Summer Term **Learning Phonics**

### Wanted!

We would like to accept your preloved and unwanted balance bikes, scooters and small bikes without stabilisers. Also any little helmets! Thank you!

### WOW!

Please continue to share your WOW! moments with us at preschool. What are you proud of? This can be anything from staying in their own bed all night to putting their own shoes on! We want to celebrate your achievements, the big ones and the tiny ones!

### Staff training and updates

Our preschool community is growing! We have welcomed **Katie**, Early Years Practitioner, who was a member of the YMCA Sovereign Preschool team previously but after spending the past few years focussing on family, Katie rejoined the team. We have welcomed **Amy** to the team. Amy comes with extensive experience of supporting children with additional needs and disabilities and has hit the ground running! Another face you may remember from last year is **Sarah (S)**, who will join the team this month to complete her Early Years Teacher's Training with us here at preschool – and **Melissa** who has also recently enrolled on her Early Years Teacher's Training. How wonderful to have not one but two Early Years teachers in our busy and vibrant preschool! **Zoe** joined us this term and will support across both Preschool and Afterschool club alongside Kyra. Please join us in wishing the new members of our team a rewarding and successful time with us on their Early Years journey.

Gina is our ELKLAN qualified practitioner. Working alongside external Speech and Language professionals, Gina has become our own in-house Speech and language specialist, supporting children who require more targeted intervention in their speech and language development.

Elaine is our qualified ELSA practitioner. Please read more on ELSA intervention here.

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/what-is-elsa-intervention> Another wonderful asset to the preschool team. If you feel your child could benefit from ELSA intervention, please do not hesitate to speak to Elaine.

Alex will shortly complete her Early Years qualification and Nikki is also currently undertaking the Early Years Educator qualification alongside her role in preschool. Best wishes to Alex and Nikki with their Early Years Studies.

**A gentle reminder that you may arrange to meet with your key worker once every 6 weeks for a general catch-up. These meetings will take place in addition to our termly parent's evenings and informal Partnership with Parent Zoom meetings. If you are new to preschool and are unsure of who your child's key worker is, please ask a member of the team.**

## YMCA Sovereign Pre-school Newsletter

A space to play and learn in Reigate



### Outdoor play

As the weather gets colder, please remember to send your children in with named, weather-appropriate clothes, as well as wellies for wet play!

### Beach School

Beach school sessions will resume this term. All seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework (EYFS) are covered on our beach school adventures. The same group of children will take part in all three Beach School sessions (one session per term) and emphasis will be placed on the sequenced learning of Understanding the World (EYFS), where the

children will be able to make comparisons in the environment - the weather, the clothes we wear and the changes in how the sea looks and feels compared to the previous visit, for example. Learning at the beach allows self-regulation and self-motivation in the children and activities involve group work so socialisation and empathy develop naturally, and communication skills improve. Please note this activity is for children who have just entered their pre-reception year and will start school in September 2025. We welcome parent helpers at Beach school. Please reach out if you would like to get involved!



### Forest School



Watch this space for information about future forest school sessions at our very own YMCA East Surrey Forest Learning space, located at The Old Pheantry, Merrywood Grove. Forest School is a specific curriculum with the focal point being a child-led environment, where children can follow their



instinctive curiosity and they can explore, investigate, develop and imagine. The location is perfect and we are excited to say that planning for these sessions is currently underway!

### Term dates, early closures and INSET days

- October half term Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October – Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November.  
Children return to preschool Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November.
- INSET day Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December
- Christmas break Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> January.  
Children return to preschool on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January.
- February half term Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February.  
Children return to preschool Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February.
- Early Closure Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April. Preschool closes at 11:45 to all children.
- Easter Break Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April – Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April.  
Return to preschool on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April.
- May half term Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May - Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May  
Return to preschool Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.
- Preschool closes for summer Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July. Preschool closes at 11:45 to all children

### Dates for your Diary

[Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 10:30 at YMCA Sovereign Centre](#) – Information session with SEND Advice Surrey in attendance. Hosted by Sandhya (Face2Face). SEND Advice Surrey is Surrey's statutory Special Educational Needs advice and support service, providing free, impartial and confidential advice with an opportunity to discuss individual cases/queries. Come armed with your SEN questions!

[Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 10:30 at YMCA Sovereign Centre](#) – Face2Face Drop-in coffee morning with Sandhya. For parents of children with identified or suspected additional needs and disabilities, where parents can chat, ask questions and share with others who understand.

[Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October](#) – Beach School. Information to follow.

[Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October](#) – Kaira Kafo African Drums workshop. A celebration of Black History Month.

[Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November](#) – Parents Evening 18:30-20:30. Sign up by selecting your preferred time on your key person's clipboard in the foyer during pick up and drop off from w/c 14<sup>th</sup> Oct. The evening will feature a Parent Workshop – *Teaching the Curriculum*.

[Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November](#) – Stay and Play. Parents are welcome to join us from 13:45.

[Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November](#) – Photographer. If your little one doesn't usually attend on a Tuesday but you would like them to have a photograph taken, you are welcome to bring your child to preschool from 8:45. Siblings are also welcome to attend from 8:45.

[Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November](#) – Partnership with Parents ZOOM. An informal virtual get together for parents and staff, to discuss all things preschool! Bring your items for discussion/questions.

[Christmas Dates to follow.](#)

## Labelling items

Please label every item of your child's belonging. We have a much better chance of returning your lost items to you if they are labelled. Please check the lost property box for your missing items.

### Illness

We remind you that children should not attend preschool if they are unwell. We request that you do not send your child to preschool if they have had Calpol as this may mask a temperature.

Please see the link for information about illness and exclusion times: [Health protection in education and childcare settings: exclusion table \(khub.net\)](#)

We love to hear suggestions for preschool and we never stop striving to offer you and your family the best service. Do let us know your ideas! If you haven't done so already, you might like to leave us a review! <https://www.daynurseries.co.uk/review-submit/65432214664/rcsid/1012>

### Thank you for your unwavering support!

Your preschool team,  
Stacey, Elaine, Kyra, Gina, Angela, Alex, Annie,  
Melissa, Nikki, Becky, Katie, Amy, Zoe and Sarah.

Contact Details: 01737 222859    message: 07732 602999

email: [stacey.lawrence@ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk](mailto:stacey.lawrence@ymcaeastsurrey.org.uk)






Smiles  
at School  
PHOTOGRAPHY


Snowhere i'd rather be...


# PHOTO DAY!

Our photographer - Claire - will be visiting us to  
take photographs of the children on

**19 November 2024**

Print prices from £10 (before discounts!) 

Build your own pack & save 

Discounts for prompt online orders 

It's free for your child to be photographed & there's no obligation to purchase  
**DON'T FORGET** to wear clean clothes on the day & bring your best smiles!