




Gracelands  
Nursery School

SPRING 1 - 2025

# NEWSLETTER

## Sowing the seeds for lifelong learning

### Dates for your diary

#### FEBRUARY

WB 17th - SCHOOL HOLIDAY (1 week)

24th - Back to nursery (spring 2)

#### MARCH

5th - PSS/ EP/ OT SEND training session for parents (external agencies delivering)

6th - World Book Day (book character dress)

21st - World Downs Syndrome Day (wear odd socks to nursery)

26th - Ramadan / Eid family activity session

#### APRIL

1st - SEND parent coffee AM & PM

9th - Easter family activity session

WB 14th - SCHOOL HOLIDAY (2 weeks)

16th - Primary school place offer day

28th - Back to nursery (Summer 1)

#### MAY

5th - Bank holiday (nursery closed to all)

13th - SEND parent coffee AM & PM (May)

14th - Parent meeting (transition focus)

23rd - Break up for the half term holiday

26th - SCHOOL HOLIDAY (1 week)

#### JUNE

2nd - Back to nursery (Summer 2)

11th - Family Eid celebration event

#### JULY

1st - SEND parent meeting

9th - N2 (big nursery) sports day/physical games family session

16th - N1 (little nursery) sports day/physical games family session

17th - Graduation event (provision closed for all children)

18th - Open as usual, break up for the summer holiday

### Head Teacher's message



Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for reading our Spring 1 newsletter.

**Federation development day—Friday 14th February:** As you will know, nursery is closed tomorrow for one of our 5 training days. We are hosting 2 other of our 9 Federation nursery schools at Gracelands tomorrow morning to share much of our Early Years practice and learning spaces. We are very proud to continue providing the very best educational offer to our local community's young people. We'll also be working collaboratively with our cluster school (Jakeman

Nursery School) in the afternoon to explore our approach to inclusion and supporting children with SEND.

**New staff:** We welcomed Nagina to Gracelands in January—she has now completed her first half term as the teacher leading the N2 room.

We also welcomed Abdullahi (Abdi) at the end of January, and are pleased to share the good news that he has been successful in taking up the permanent role in our front office. We'll also welcome Aneesa after half term who will be supporting in little nursery (N1).

**What is coming up?** We try our very best to keep our website up to date with what is coming up in the calendar. Link: <https://www.grclands.bham.sch.uk/> (bottom of home page, 'What's On' box)

**Nut free school:** Please can we remind parents that we are a NUT FREE SCHOOL, food containing nuts poses an extremely high risk to our children with nut allergies. We are finding several occasions where children have nuts in their pockets when they come to nursery. Please also be particularly aware of hidden nut products such as chocolate spread and filled crepes that contain hazelnut.

**Fruit donations:** Thank you very much for your donations of fruit. We provide toast and fruit/vegetable snacks for the children every day. 1 piece of fruit donated daily or 5 pieces for the week helps us to do that. Items such as apples, bananas, pears, satsumas, cucumber, carrots are gratefully received.

Finally, the end of the month will soon be upon us and I wish you a blessed Ramadan for all families that will be observing. *Sam*



Nagina Kouser  
Teacher



Abdullahi Omer  
Administrative Assistant



*"When one flower blooms, spring awakens everywhere."*  
— John O'Donohue

**Executive Head Teacher:** Sam Richards

**Deputy Head Teacher:** Harshila Parmar

**SENCO:** Gail Goldberg

**Teacher:** Nagina Kouser

**Office Admin Assistant:** Abdillahi Omer

**Nursery Practitioners:** Salma Mushtaq,

Sughra Sattar, Rifat Shaheen,

Sonia Parvaz, Zaryab Mahmood &

Ammara Usman

WE ARE A UNICEF GOLD  
RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

Children's rights are learned, understood  
and lived in this school.



## Contact Us

GRACELANDS NURSERY  
SCHOOL  
Grace Road  
Birmingham, B11 1ED  
☎ 0121 772 3124

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'Gracelands Local Authority  
Maintained Nursery School'

## CURRICULUM FOCUS

# LEARNING

All the children that have started with us this year have settled in well, thank you to parents/carers for supporting your children with a smooth transition.

This half term, stories such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' have promoted development of children's mathematical concepts of size and order. We've had conversations around caring for others, sharing, being kind, stranger danger and risk taking. Children have talked about different terrains that they have identified with in the text, prompting discussions about forests, rivers and meadows.

All children celebrated 'Lunar New Year' through story-telling and visual props. Children also engaged in cooking activities where they prepared, made and shared food such as noodles and stir-fried vegetables. This helped children to incorporate dialogue about healthy foods, linking it to our 'Startwell characters – 'Fay five-a-day' and 'Mickey me size'.

Our 2-year-olds have enjoyed a range of stories such as 'The Train Ride' and 'The Wheels on the Bus'. The Train Ride generated lots of discussions about children's journeys to school and what they can see as they mapped out landmarks.

Both rooms have been busy investigating the art work of 'Yayoi Kusama.' A Japanese artist with a highly decorative focus on repeated patterns and layering materials. The children have created pieces of art collaboratively, focusing on her technique of layers on layers.

Both rooms have also been exploring jazz music this half term. The children are able to explore how the music makes them feel, how to move in partnership with the sound, and tuning into the wind instrument/s they can hear. Last week some children in N2 visited to Montgomery School's library, where children have enjoyed stories read to them by the school's reception teachers. It was great fun! We look to going again next half term with more children.



## ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

| Attendance Autumn term         |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
|                                | Attendance % |
| Big nursery                    | 77%          |
| Little nursery                 | 72%          |
| All                            | 76%          |
| Attendance Spring term to date |              |
|                                | Attendance % |
| Big nursery                    | 80%          |
| Little nursery                 | 74%          |
| All                            | 78%          |

The first half of the spring term has seen a slight increase in attendance—keep it up children and parents/carers! :-)

We want every child to access as much of their education entitlement as possible.

Our aspiration is to reach 90% attendance.

It can be tricky to know when to keep your child off school when they have signs of illness.

The NHS guidance 'Too Ill For School?' is useful to refer to if you are unsure: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

RRSA links

United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child:

**Article 3:** best interests of the child

**Article 28:** right to an education

## ATTENDANCE MATTERS



*If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone us on the first day. Let us know that your child won't be in, giving the reason. If the phone is engaged, please leave a message.*

## SPRING 2

The children will be exploring 'rock' music. Moving in response to rhythms that children hear is an integral progressive skill in dancing. Children will immerse themselves in opportunities to further explore nature and the natural world, with growing projects taking off. Children will plant seeds ready for our summer harvest of fruit and vegetables, they will then use these to cook healthy foods. They'll learn about the importance of Fay's 5 a day (Startwell) and sustainable living through the process of growing our own fruit and vegetables.

We look forward to further trips within the local area such as the local church, park and shops.

We thank all of our families for your continued support with family workshops and look forward to seeing you all at our workshops next term too!





# Startwell



## COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS:

Fruit based snacks that are regularly advertised and attractive to young children, such as...



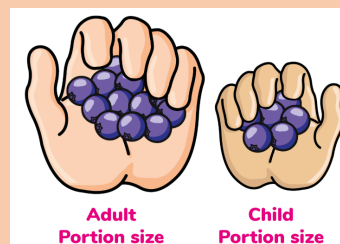
...contain 'free sugars' and are not suitable as an alternative to fresh fruit or vegetables.

See the information page coming up to view the sugar content of some of these items.

I'm Fay 5-a-day and I encourage children and adults to eat the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day. Portion sizes depend on size and age. A child's portion size for 5-a-day is roughly what fits in the palm of their hand.

Look at the Startwell website for more tips and advice:

<https://startwellbirmingham.co.uk/about-startwell/>



## SAFER INTERNET DAY

The internet can be a magical place for children to learn and explore. But just like crossing a road, they need guidance to stay safe. Teaching children how to keep themselves safe forms part of our general curriculum, but always we look deeper into internet safety again on Safer Internet Day. In nursery, we have linked the theme with a recent 'Picture News' story:

**Story: The UK government's culture secretary, Lisa Nandy, has written to video-sharing platforms, such as YouTube and TikTok, requesting they actively share more educational content for children.**

**Question: What do you enjoy watching or playing on a screen? What would you do if you saw something that made you scared or uncomfortable?**

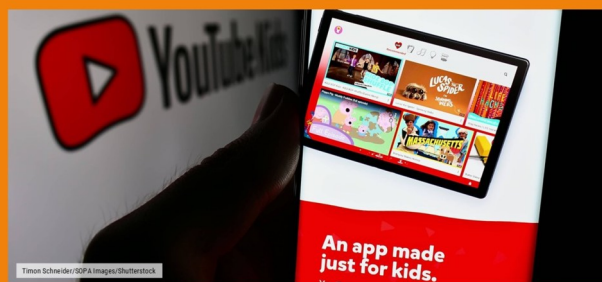
Safer Internet Day 2025 Tuesday 11 February

Coordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre

[saferinternetday.org.uk](https://saferinternetday.org.uk)

What's happening in the news this week?

Picture News In the Early Years



At such a young age, parental supervision is essential when children are exploring the internet. Also see the poster on the final page for tips on screen time with young children, and advice for parents and carers. Together, let's build awareness about staying safe online.

Check out these helpful links to get involved:

[UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - [Child-net](#)  
[Internet Matters](#) - [Better Internet for Kids](#)

## SAFEGUARDING UPDATE FOR FAMILIES



### A safer world for all our children

The following website shares very important information and tips on keeping children safe: <https://capt.org.uk/>

The safety tip for this newsletter comes from a recent urgent warning shared by the government, and subsequently by the Child Accident Prevention Trust:

### KEEP WATER BEADS AWAY FROM UNDER 5s!

With their bright colours and squishy feel, water beads are especially appealing to young children. When dry, water beads are tiny and can easily be swallowed without detection.

As they bathe in stomach fluids, some can expand to 400 times their original size, posing a serious risk of blockage in a child's bowel.

Some water beads grow up to the size of golf balls.

[The dangers of water beads video](#)







*Sowing the seeds for lifelong learning*





2 Snacks Max



5 a Day



## Processed Fruit Snacks

There are a lot of processed fruit snacks that are marketed at our Early Years children such as fruit winders, stars, peelers, strings, flakes etc. These foods are classified as Ultra Processed Foods and aren't suitable for our Early Years children.

These food products are made from fruit juices and purees and the sugar in them is classed as free sugar, which attack the teeth easier compared to the whole/fresh fruit. A diet high in free sugars is linked to poor oral health and overweight in children. They are not suitable foods to provide as a snack or part of a packed lunch.

A healthier and less expensive alternative would be a whole piece of fruit (or cut-up pieces of whole fruit) which contain vitamins, minerals and fibre that children need.

|   | Free Sugars<br>Per 100g | Free Sugars<br>Per Serving | Teaspoons of free<br>sugar per serving  |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|---|
|    | 61.2g                   | 18.4g                      |  x4.5 |
|   | 61.8g                   | 12.4g                      |  x3 |
|  | 58.0g                   | 9.3g                       |  x2 |
|  | 70.0g                   | 8.3g                       |  x2 |
|  | 65.0g                   | 7.7g                       |  x2 |

1teaspoon = 4g sugar

Free sugars are defined as 'All sugars naturally present in fruit and vegetable juices, concentrates, smoothies, purees, pastes, powders and extruded fruit and vegetable products. This includes pureed legumes, pureed dried fruit and juice and syrup present in canned fruits and vegetables

**Action on Sugar** A high free sugar intake increases the risk of dental caries (tooth decay) and higher energy intakes



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TODDLERS & SCREEN TIME

The toddler years are full of excitement, exploration and energy. It's a critical time in children's development, when brain connections are rapidly forming. Youngsters often begin to discover devices around this age, as they learn to communicate with friends, play games and watch videos (Ofcom recently found, for example, that one in five 3-4-year-olds in the UK uses social media). These activities can make a child happy and relaxed but have a damaging impact if overused. Setting screen time limits for toddlers can be a challenge, so we've pulled together some suggestions for making sure your little one is interacting with the online world in a safe, healthy way.

## ONLINE SAFETY CHECKLIST

### ✓ PARENTAL CONTROLS

Children need to be shielded from content that's not age appropriate. You can do this by adjusting parental controls and safe search settings on the devices, apps and games they use.

### ✓ ONGOING SUPERVISION

Try to stay engaged and present in what your child is doing digitally. Make time to talk about what they enjoy and how they can stay safe online.

### ✓ OFFERING HELP

Teach your toddler to ask for help – and that they should always tell a trusted adult if they're unsure about anything to do with a device, or they see or hear something that makes them scared or upset.

### ✓ COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Emphasise that your child should check with you before they do anything online for the first time – such as watching a new show, playing a new game or exploring a new app.

### ✓ FACE TO FACE IS ACE

Support toddlers' development of language and other skills by prioritising games or apps that encourage face-to-face interaction – like learning to read or count with an adult.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### MODEL IT

Your toddler is watching and learning from you whenever you pick up your phone. Even babies are aware of screens and the attention their parents give to them. By showing you know when to put your phone down and focus on something else, you're modelling an important behaviour for them.

### CONTROL IT

Use tech to control tech. Most devices and individual apps have settings that allow you to restrict screen time. Decide on the right length of time and use the settings or a timer to block access. This is especially useful for very young children, who simply see it as the device 'turning off'.

### ANNOUNCE IT

When a toddler's screen shuts off suddenly, it can lead to frustration and tears. Let your little one mentally prepare for the end of screen time by announcing they have five minutes left, two minutes left and so on. You could also set an egg-timer, alarm or buzzer to go off just before time's up.

### DELAY IT

Try to avoid letting children start their day with screen time. Once they're online, it can be hard to get them back offline – and can set a negative tone for the rest of the day. Routine and structure are important for toddlers, so encourage them to enjoy some other activities before the screens go on.

### TRADE IT

You could try offering rewards and alternatives in exchange for screen time – for example, having a device-free day to get a playdate with a friend at the weekend, or skipping screen time one evening in return for a trip to the ice cream parlour tomorrow.

### EARN IT

Screen time can definitely be used as a reward. You could opt for the classic "no screen time until you've tidied up your toys" or you could get creative and award screen time in relation to successful tasks: eating all of their vegetables earns 10 minutes on their device, for example.

### REMOVE IT

Keep family mealtimes, social gatherings, children's bedrooms and other important occasions and places screen free. Remember to turn off TVs that you aren't watching, because even background noise can distract from you spending quality face-to-face time with your young ones.

### SWAP IT

Put together a bag of things that your children love playing with – and get them to help choose what goes in there (items like stickers, pens, small toys, Lego or teddy bears are ideal). Then encourage them to pick something to play with from "the special bag of fun" instead of staring at a screen.

## Meet Our Expert

Cayley Jorgensen is the director of FaceUp South Africa: a reporting system currently being used to combat bullying in schools and businesses around the world. FaceUp helps to give a voice to bystanders by encouraging them to speak up.



**National Online Safety**



# Keep water beads away from young children

Children love water beads. But it's really dangerous if a young child swallows them.



They expand in the belly and can block the bowel. Some grow as big as golf balls.

A child may need major surgery to remove them. So please keep them away from young children.



If you suspect a child has swallowed a water bead, get medical help straight away.

Scan to learn more

