**The Kidsclub Company Newsletter.**

**15th April 2021**

Dear Parents,

This time last year I was writing a letter under very different circumstances, what a year it has been for all of us on a personal level as well as professional. We’ve all learnt new skills (whether we wanted to or not) and learnt that we can tolerate far more than we ever thought possible. Now, with some light at the end of what has been a long and daunting tunnel, I thought it time for a Kidsclub Newsletter. Thank you to all those parents who continued to support Kidsclub during this period by either using the services, when allowed, or by donating childcare vouchers that helped to keep the business afloat when overheads still existed, but business was at an all-time low. Your generosity and kindness was above and beyond.

Please find some news updates below.

**Ashtead Kidsclub at Ashtead Youth Centre**: the building was closed for 4 months last year and during that time the building was redecorated and updated. There’s one last job of updating the heating system which starts next week.

**Greville Kidsclub**: I was very lucky that, with the support of The Head teacher, we managed to remain open for most of the last year. There was just a short 6 week period last summer we closed whilst school got to grips with all the new government guidance that was introduced at that time. Since re-opening for the new school year last September we expanded to take on more children than we have ever had and now use much more space each afternoon in school. The kidsclub team have coped amazingly well at being spread out around the school and having to locate and keep in touch with everyone. It will seem so strange when (one day) we can all work more closely again.

**Staff:**

With the help of the furlough scheme, and a loyal customer base, I’ve been able to protect all staff jobs. Only 2 people left our team early on last year and this had already been planned pre-Covid, plus 3 of our student staff (A’Level students from local schools) weren’t able to return for the new school year and I’m pleased to say that I have still managed to take on 8 new part-time staff over the last year, who’d have thought that was possible!

Both Maddie and Armi support me with admin duties throughout the week and they have both taken on much of their role working from home rather than in my office. Thank goodness for WhatsApp is all I can say. The staff team have pulled together throughout the pandemic and made the impossible seem possible.

Nevena has been promoted to Deputy Supervisor after completing her Level 3 in Playwork.

Some of you will already know that Maddie is expecting her first child this summer which is exciting news. We haven’t had a baby on the staff team for 6 years so this little one is long overdue!

**Training:**

Staff training courses have been few and far between, however we have managed to keep up to date with all mandatory training such as First Aid and Safeguarding.

**Fundraising:**

We have not been able to do our usual fundraising and I know the children will be itching to get back to this as soon as possible as there’s generally a cake sale involved. Thank you to those who donated to the Just Giving page to raise funds for Christmas lunch for families in need, we added £200 to the scheme.

**Holiday clubs:**

Last summer we were able to run the summer club from Greville School and we had a fantastic time and learnt a lot about bubbles! The only holiday club we weren’t allowed to open for was last Easter, since then we’ve been allowed to open, though sometimes with restrictions on who can attend. If you haven’t taken a look at the website for a while please take a look at the gallery where you can see all the lovely activities the children have taken part in: <https://www.ashteadkidsclub.com/our-gallery>.

We had to change dramatically the way we operate in terms of numbers/groups of children, areas they could access, equipment they could use, times for arriving and leaving and interactions with other club users. We couldn’t have club trips out as we would normally do, we couldn’t use the Ashtead recreation ground, or have visiting professionals such as sports coaches and the much loved Zoolab. Whilst most of these restrictions remain in place there should be some easing up this summer but as this is still to be announced holiday clubs will continue to operate in the same way for now.

**Fees increase:**

The last fee increases for after school club was in September 2019 and the next fee increase will be implemented in September 2021.

Breakfast club: Currently: £6 per child per session, this will increase to £6.25. A full week will be £30.

After school Club: Currently: £12 per child per session, this will increase to £12.50. A full week will be £60.

Holiday club: Currently £29 per child per session. This will remain the same for full day bookings, with a part time day to be introduced later this year (restrictions permitting)

This is a 4% increase per session and I believe represents great value for money. Discounts will remain in place for full time users (5 am or 5 pm sessions).

Thanks as always to the whole Kidsclub community: the parents, the children and the staff for making for their kind words, friendship, consideration of others and the hours and hours of fun we have!

**Louise**