

WELCOME TO

SmallSteps

SCHOOL FOR PARENTS

REGISTERED CHARITY

1089161

SMALL STEPS, SCHOOL FOR PARENTS (SfP) INFORMATION FOR NEW PARENTS



Hello! Welcome to 'Small Steps, School for Parents'. Starting something new can be daunting, so with this in mind we have created this booklet to give you some information, which you may find useful. If it leaves you with any questions unanswered please do not hesitate to ask one of the team...

Who's who?

Staff

Head of Service (Teacher) full time	Anita Coppola
Team Leader (Conductor-Teacher) full time	Eszter Boross
Senior Team Member (Physiotherapist) part time	Anthea Pell
Team Member (Conductor-Teacher) full time	Ilona Vago (Cilu)
Administrator (part time)	Ruth Evans
Finance / Personnel Officer (part time)	Nicola Thackeray

Trustees

Chair of Small Steps Management Committee	Sally Wilson
Treasurer	Sue Burke
Secretary	Andrea Samuelson
Parent Representatives	Mike Fitzpatrick Tim Theobalds Wesley Sparkes Rachel Pain Susana Collier (not a trustee)
Management Committee Members	Joanna Brotherstone Penny Morley Heather Mathew

Parent Representatives

Parent reps are your link to the management committee. They also organise social events and some fundraisers and might get in touch with you on occasion. Please don't hesitate to contact them if you have ideas or thoughts related to social outings / parent networking, fundraising or the management committee, and please support them in their efforts.

The Sessions

Class sessions last approximately two hours each and start promptly at the allocated time (9.30 for morning sessions, 1.15 for afternoon sessions). If you can, please try to come to sessions a few minutes early to enable your child to take coats off and settle down. We do try to start sessions on time so if you are late please just join in with your child as appropriate. There are hooks for coats outside the classroom door and hooks for bags inside the classroom. Please take your shoes off before entering the classroom. We have some slippers you can borrow if you like.



It is helpful to keep chatting during the sessions to a minimum, as it can be very distracting for the children, staff and other parents. But we like to encourage chatting over a cup of tea at the **end** of the session! There is no charge for refreshments but if you would like to make a donation please feel free to do so.

What to bring

Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately. This means...

- No skirts or dresses - much harder to crawl and kneel in.
- No tights - make sensory work with feet very difficult.
- No clothes that are unable to get dirty - we do get a bit messy from time to time!
- Always bring socks and shoes (if your child wears them).

It is always a good idea to bring a spare set of clothes... we like to get messy!

Please make sure that if your child uses any aids such as...

- Glasses
- Hearing aids
- Splints
- Special footwear
- Suction unit

they come to every session, along with any medication that may be required.

Siblings

As we do not have any crèche facilities, we prefer that siblings do not accompany children to the sessions. Under certain circumstances, allowances can sometimes be made, if agreed with the Session Leader in advance.

Drinks and Snacks



A drink and snack is offered to your child free of charge during each session. If you would like to make a donation please feel free to do so. If your child has a special diet, you may like to bring along a drink and snack for them to enjoy if the refreshments provided are not appropriate.

Birthdays

When it is your child's birthday we like to have a party. If you are not able to or do not wish to provide a cake please tell a member of the Team (who will rustle one up!).



Holidays

Small Steps operates during term time only. Dates of the terms will be confirmed with you in advance.



Targets



Once your child has been coming to Small Steps for a few weeks, the team will put together a few targets for your child to aim for each session. One target will focus on physical skills, the second on communication and the third on self help and social skills. This helps us to focus on some of the specific individual needs your child has, within the session. Targets are also helpful as a way of recording and celebrating the progress your child is making.

You will be given a copy of these targets to take home and a copy will be put on your child's clipboard on the counter in the classroom. At the end of each session staff record each child's achievements on their file. We are keen to encourage parents to write their observations on this file too.

Due to the number of children attending Small Steps sessions, it may be necessary to cancel a session each term to enable staff to update the targets. Every session is planned around a termly theme (e.g Favourite characters, Transport, Weather) and in accordance with Government Curriculum guidance; the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Attendance / Absences



Small Steps maintains a register of attendance, which is helpful when compiling reports. If for any reason you are not able to attend a session, please do let us know on 020 8704 5935 as soon as you can. If a child is unable to regularly attend sessions or parents do not let us know in advance of inability to attend it is likely that they will be discharged from the service. This policy has been adopted due to the large numbers of families waiting to come into Small Steps.



Illness

Many of the children coming to Small Steps are extremely vulnerable to illness. We therefore ask that...

- If children are unwell, please keep them at home. Remember that what might be a mild illness for your child can affect others far more seriously.
- If a child has been vomiting (due to illness rather than reflux etc.) or has had diarrhoea within the past 24 hours, please do not bring them in.
- Any cuts or open wounds are covered prior to a group.
- We are notified if your child comes down with an infectious disease (eg. chicken pox) so that we can advise (if necessary) other members of the group.

Visitors

Small Steps often has visitors watching sessions. These may be potential families, interested Professionals such as Portage workers or Community Physiotherapists, or fundraisers.



A high number of visitors can be disruptive and on occasion it may be necessary to interrupt sessions to interact with visitors but usually the team will try to continue with sessions. If you do have an issue relating to visitors or if you wish to bring a visitor to a session, please inform one of the Team. All visitors are asked to write their comment in the visitors' book.

Visitors will be asked to sit outside the classroom to watch the session through the observation window. We also ask that only one adult per child is in the classroom during sessions. This is to prevent distraction for the children and maximise space.

Reports / Statements / Outreach Provision

If you require a report on your child's progress to contribute to Parent Network meetings or Review, please ask the Team Leader to provide one. At least two weeks notice is helpful. We may also be available to attend such meetings if you request it. The Small Steps team is also happy to provide a report towards your child's Statementing process. If you are considering requesting a Statement for your child or would like more information, please do ask the Head of Service or Team Leader.

We are also available on occasion to make visits to children in other settings (nursery, playgroup etc). If you think your child and their other provision would benefit from this service, please speak to the Head of Service.

Health and Safety

Small Steps maintains a Health and Safety Policy available for you to see on request. Below is some information detailing key 'Health and Safety' advice for your information:



Positioning/ Movement

Be aware of your back. Work in front of your child to minimise twisting. Bend knees, keep back straight, get close to your child when lifting. Kneel on the floor or use a wheely stool when wheelbarrowing. Sit astride wheely stools.



Toilets

Potties/ changing mats are available at all times - please ask staff.
Place wet/soiled nappies in the nappy bin straight away.
Please wash your hands or use Hand Gel.



Refreshments

Keep hot drinks away from the children (ie. don't put them on the table).



Fire

If you hear the fire alarm:

Don't panic...

Carry your child and leave your belongings

Follow staff instructions

Walk through the Fire Exit up to the front of Greenmead School as directed by staff.

Complaints and Suggestions



Of course we hope that you will have no need to make a complaint during your time at Small Steps. We do however maintain a Complaints Procedure Policy, which is available for you to see on request. If you do have a complaint, grievance or other issue, please bring it to the attention of the Head of Service. Alternatively, if you prefer, you can bring your issue to the attention of the Parent Representatives who can direct it, if necessary, to the Management Committee.

We love hearing Parents' ideas about how we could improve Small Steps. If you have any suggestions, please write them down and put them into the Suggestion Box in the foyer. Look out for our responses on the Parent Noticeboard!



Child Protection and Safeguarding

The wellbeing of the children is at the heart of 'Small Steps, School for Parents' philosophy and practice and the Small Steps team will take every care for the emotional and physical health of the children. We maintain a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which is available for you to see on request. Small Steps are required to follow national guidance in respect of safeguarding procedures and any concerns will be reported to the appropriate services. We operate a no smacking policy and you are requested to refrain from using smacking when working in the groups with the children. We are on hand to discuss possible strategies for handling 'difficult moments'. If you do have any concerns relating to child protection and any child, please bring them to the attention of the Head of Service (Anita Coppola). Small Steps staff benefit from termly meetings with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service in order to gain understanding of children's behaviour and strategies to assist. An accident book is maintained. All accidents involving children, parents/carers, staff or visitors are recorded.

Newsletter



We produce a regular newsletter 'News for parents' which contains information about current events, fundraising, term dates and other helpful tips. If you have anything you would like to include in the newsletter, do let us know.

Our Website

Please keep an eye on our website www.smallstepssfp.org.uk. It contains lots of information such as term dates, address and maps, fundraising and events. It also contains some general information about the service for new families, and anyone else who's interested in knowing more about what we do.

Data Protection

Small Steps maintains a Data Protection Policy, which is available for you to see on request. Enclosed with this booklet is a Permission form that we would like you to sign to acknowledge that some information relating to you / your child will be held on file and to give your permission (or not) to allow your contact details to be circulated amongst other Small Steps families. We also ask your permission to use your child's photograph for the purpose of helping to raise Small Steps profile in order to secure funding.

Charity Status

'Small Steps, School for Parents, Greenmead' is a registered charity, number 1089161, of which all parents are members. In accordance with the Small Steps Constitution, the year runs from August to August with the Annual General Meeting occurring in July of each year, combined with the end of year party. During this meeting the Small Steps Management Committee is elected for the following year. The Management Committee meets a minimum of once per term. Current members are indicated at the beginning of this booklet. A copy of the Constitution is available on request.



Fundraising

Small Steps is charity funded. Having no permanent funding source makes us very vulnerable and we are totally reliant on charitable funding, grants and donations to continue operating.

In the past, parents have organised, cake sales, Christmas fundraisers, done sponsored runs, car boot sales all to raise money for Small Steps. Any amount raised, however big or small is invaluable to us. If you have any ideas or would like to get involved in the fundraising, please speak to the Head of Service.

Some parents, families and friends have also decided to make a regular donation to the Charity each year. To make this process easier we have made a Standing Order form and one is enclosed with this booklet. Even if you are not able to make a donation yourself, maybe you have relatives who might?

Small Steps collecting boxes are available if you know of someone who might be able to collect at their shop / business., or if you are thinking of running a stall or event. Please ask in the office if you'd like some more information.

However, we would like to emphasise that Small Steps is a free service and there is no obligation to make a donation. So please feel no pressure.

Small Steps SFP, Greenmead School, St Margaret's Crescent, Putney, London SW15 6HL

Tel: 020 8704 5935

Registered Charity No. 1089161