

SmallSteps



Parent's Handbook

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 Small Steps (Teacher)	Anita Coppola MBE
Team Leader (Conductor-Teacher)	Eszter Boross
Team Member (Conductor-Teacher)	Cilu Vago
Team Member (Physiotherapist)	Kasane Minowa-Astridge
Team Member (Conductor)	Bettina Kerekes
Team Member (Physiotherapist)	Samantha Cook
Team Member - Charity Liaison	Tricia Paterson
Team Member - Marketing/ Communications	Ruth Evans
Team Member - Business Manager	Nicola Thackeray
Team Member - Charity Support Assistant	Mylene Terret
Volunteer	Zoe Day
Volunteer	Lucinda Gurnhill
Volunteer	Cathy Green
Volunteer	Caroline (Charlie)

Board of Directors

Chair	Andrea Samuelson
Treasurer	Tim Theobalds
Director	Patrick deVink
Director	Rachel Pain
Director	Joanna Brotherstone
Director	Genny Luxmoore
Director	Greg Ross-Sampson



The Sessions

Class sessions last approximately two hours each and start promptly at the allocated time. 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 in the foyer. Please take your shoes off before entering the classroom. We have some slippers you can borrow if you like... and when you leave, don't forget to take all your belongings with you!



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... we have collection boxes in the foyer.



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.

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.

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 & Holiday sessions

Small Steps operates during term time only. Dates of the terms will be confirmed with you in advance. You can also check term dates on our website www.smallsteps.org.uk. We do try to offer additional sessions during the Easter/ Summer holiday - we will let you know about these during the term. Generally we request a donation to cover the costs of these additional sessions.

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.

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.

Education Health Care Plan

If you require a report on your child's progress to contribute to Parent Network/ Review meetings, please ask the Team Leader to provide one. At least two weeks of 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 'Education Health Care Plan' process. If you would like more information, please do ask the Head of Small Steps or the Team Leader.

Outreach Provision

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 Small Steps.

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

N.B. Please inform the team if you have any injuries/pain or are pregnant so that we can support you appropriately.

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. Sit astride wheely stools and sit safely in the middle.

Toilets

Changing mats are available in the classroom at all times - please ask staff. Please don't put wet/soiled nappies on the classroom floor, put them in a nappy sack, then in the nappy bin straight away.

Please wash your hands or use Hand Gel.
Please ask staff for locations of the toilets.

Refreshments

Keep hot drinks away from the children, put them on the little chairs provided by the staff (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.



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 Small Steps. Alternatively, if you prefer, you can bring your issue to the attention of the Parent Representatives who can direct it, if necessary, to the Board of Directors.

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 Small Steps (Anita Coppola). Small Steps have access to 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.

Our Website, Facebook and Family Forum Group

There are lots of different ways to keep in touch with what is happening at Small Steps! Please keep an eye on our website www.smallsteps.org.uk . It contains lots of information such as term dates, address and maps, fundraising and events. The website also contains some general information about the service for new families, and anyone else who's interested in knowing more about what we do. You can also sign up for our regular e-newsletter by going to the home page of the website and filling in your details. If you have any information you would like to include on our website, do let us know.

Small Steps has a facebook page at www.facebook.com/smallstepssfp where we post information about events and fundraising and we have a 'Family Forum Group' on facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/smallstepsfamilyforum . This Group has been set up for all families who have attended Small Steps, past and present, to share information and ideas and support. So please join this group if you can!

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 use it as indicated on the form. 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 is a registered charity (1150651) and a charitable company limited by guarantee (0835363). The Board of Directors meets twice each term and in accordance with the Articles and Memorandums, the Annual General Meeting occurs in the first half of each autumn term.



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 Small Steps. 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

Registered Office 166 Roehampton Lane, London SW15 4HR

Company Registration No 8353635 • Registered in England and Wales • Registered Charity No 1150651

Tel: 020 8704 5935 • Email: info@smallsteps.org.uk • www.smallsteps.org.uk