

The St Michael Steiner School NEWSLETTER

14th January 2011

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Dates for Your Diary

JANUARY

Thur 20 Kindergartens' parents' evening 7-8.30pm

Tue 25 Class 2&3 parents' evening 7-8.30pm

FEBRUARY

Tue 1 Class 4&5 + 6&7 parents evening 7-8.30pm

Sat 5 "A Morning in the Classroom" workshop for parents. 9-12.30

Tue 8 Class 1 parents' evening 7-8.30pm

Sat 12 Parents' workday (TBC)

Thur 17 School ends for half term

Fri 18 Staff INSET (No school)

Mon 28 Back to school

MARCH

Sat 12 Association AGM

APRIL

Fri 1 TERM ENDS 12.30pm for all classes

MAY

Tue 3 **BACK TO SCHOOL**
(NB Change of date)



A Spanish Epiphany in our Kindergartens

"This festival of the Epiphany will assume greater and greater significance as its true symbolism comes to be understood." Rudolf Steiner, December 1904

The first thing the visitor to Spain will notice is that Christmas is not the huge commercial occasion it is in many other western cities. Christmas lights are usually lit in the first week of December, by which time the shops are fully stocked with Christmas supplies. Nothing like the US and UK where the end of summer marks the build up to Christmas. In homes there are intricate, miniature nativity scenes called Belénes which always include the baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the Three Kings, Baltasar, Melchior and Gaspar.

Children may receive a small gift on Nochebuena (Christmas morning) but the day for presents is 6th January, Epiphany. For Spanish children this is the most important day of the year when they wake up to find that Los Reyes Magos (the Three Kings) have left gifts for them in their house. (From spanish-fiestas.com)

The Kindergarten children celebrated Epiphany this year in the Spanish way, after discussing the festival with Natalia, Alithea's mother.

While we are in Spain, the Lower school would like to welcome back Natalia - Señora Rivero - our much-missed Spanish teacher, after her maternity leave.

From The Early Years

A warm welcome back to you all after the Christmas Holiday! We hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable break with your family and friends. We would all like to thank you so much for your kind gifts of cards, New Year greetings and presents – we are very grateful to you all.

We are delighted to welcome three new children to our Kindergarten this term: in Katie's room is Dino, with his parents Deborah and Joel Hladecek; and Malaya with her parents Jenny and Craig Dodds. In Leigha's room, we have welcomed in Azzura (some of you will know her as 'Mini'), Aryanna and Xavier's little sister.

Our Parents Evening is next week on Thursday 20th January from 7pm to 8.30pm. Please do let us know if you are unable to attend. If there is anything specific you would like to put on the Agenda, please let Leigha or Katie know.

After the freezing weather at the end of last term, we have spent some time considering how to structure Fridays for the remainder of the winter. We would like to offer parents two options:

1. Forest Friday: a shorter session from 9am to 12noon on the Common, *OR*
2. Kindergarten Friday: a kindergarten morning from 8.15 to 12.15 at school.

1. Forest Fridays The morning will be structured differently than before and will focus on a 'hike' which will be interspersed with stops from time to time for running up and down hills, exploring, hunting and gathering, tree climbing, story time, songs and a picnic. We will speak to the Ranger and try to arrange to visit his horses each week. We may have a herb tea and toast stop at the Windmill café before home time.

Children will need to bring a small backpack *that they are happy and able to carry themselves*, with a change of socks, gloves and underwear, a piece of fruit and a small bottle of water. We will continue to provide a warm drink and snack. Please note, this is a 3 hour session only, not our usual 4 hours.

2. Kindergarten Fridays Some children find it difficult to stay warm during a long period outdoors and some may be recovering from a winter illness and for these children we offer a kindergarten session at school. This is also the option for those parents who need their children to be with us for the whole 4 hours.

Children's indoor play time will focus on spring cleaning and mending, followed by ring time, an indoor 'picnic' and story time. The morning will conclude with a short outdoor play session and collection from the Gazebo in the playground.

We are fortunate to have enough qualified and experienced staff to cover both sites, but may need a volunteer parent helper on the Common if most children take that option (1 adult to 4 children on the common). You will be able to choose your child's option each week, but please sign up at school by drop-off time on Thursday morning at the latest, in order for us to prepare appropriately for each site. We would especially like the older children to come to the common, if possible.

If a continual downpour is forecast, we will inform you by Thursday lunchtime that we will remain at school on the following day.

We will revert to all the children being on the Common together for our usual four hours once the weather improves after Easter, or perhaps earlier. We will be happy to answer any questions at the forthcoming Parents Evening.

We look forward to seeing you next week.

We have space available on Wednesday and Thursday for Afternoon Care. Please speak to Rebecca and your child's teacher if you are interested.

We have invited Dot Male, a 'Birth to Three' specialist, to give a talk about the care of young children. Dot is a Kindergarten teacher who runs Parent and Child/Baby groups. She is the author of *The Parent and Child Handbook* and runs *The First Three years*, a new three-day course beginning in early spring, focussing on the work of Emi Pickler (See attached flyer).

We are very pleased that Dot can come and in order to open the talk up to as many people as possible, the Early Years team will run a free crèche during the talk for children aged 1 to 6 from our Parent and Child group or Kindergartens. Babies can be brought to the talk.

The cost will be £5. Concessions are available. Please book with Andrea at reception.

Leigha and Katie for the Early Years



What's Happening in the Classrooms?

Well, there's a lot happening in the classrooms but people are either being very secretive or, perhaps because we've only had 3 days of school, there's not much to report. Anyway, you can find out what your children are doing at your Class' parents' evening on 25th January (2&3), 1st February (4&5, 6&7), 8th February (1) and in the meantime, something else will be happening in their classrooms, so let me tell you about that:

A MORNING IN THE CLASSROOM

A Workshop for Parents
Saturday 5th February
9.00am - 12.30pm

These termly workshops with the teachers are an opportunity for parents, grandparents, neighbours and friends to find out more about what happens in the classrooms in our school.

This term, our theme is the History curriculum in the Lower and Middle School. The teachers will give an overview of what is taught in each class, and why, with practical examples and activities, a chance to ask questions and an opportunity to look at some of the children's work.

The two, two-part workshops will run concurrently, so you will need to choose either A or B:

A

9.30 - 10.45 Class 1: Fairy Tales with Lara Koppers
+ 11.15 - 12.30 Class 3: The Old Testament with Amanda Bell

B

9.30 - 10.45 Class 5: The Ancient World with Amanda Bell
+ 11.15 - 12.30 Class 7: The Age of Discovery with Brian Jacques

Please contact Andrea on 020 8870 0500 or info@stmichaelsteinerschool.co.uk to book your place.

Please note that these workshops are for adults only

IMPORTANT: CHANGE OF SUMMER TERM START DATE AND EASTER TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

The announcement of a bank holiday for Prince William's wedding on Friday 29th April left us with the prospect of returning to school after Easter Monday, having 3 days of school and then 4 more days holiday, because of the May day bank holiday on 2nd May. This didn't seem like a very good way to start the term, so we have decided to extend the Easter break and return to school on Tuesday 3rd May.

We will not, however, be resting during the last week of April as the school is hosting the SWSF Easter Teachers' Conference at Rudolf Steiner House from 26th to 28th April. Some of the conference participants will need accommodation for the nights of 26th and 27th. If you are able to offer a bed, with or without breakfast, please let us know. Your guest will pay £20 per night. Email amandabell@mac.com with subject 'conference accommodation'

ACCOMMODATION FOR VISITORS

Occasionally we have students, advisors, therapists or speakers, who do not live in London, come to our school. Often we need to find a place for them to stay for the night so that they can join us for our early starts. If you have a room available and are happy to have lodgers there from time to time for mostly one night at a time, and with plenty of notice, please let us know.

FREE SCHOOLS UPDATE

The search for new premises for the school continues. If you see any empty or available buildings, let Katie or me know. We will pass the information on to Lara Newman, our contact at 'Partnership for Schools', and she will investigate for us.

Amanda Bell, for the College

Outstanding Fees - please pay now!

Fee invoices may be paid either:

- 1 Annually in advance by September 10th or:
- 2 Termly by the first day of each term or:
- 3 By regular monthly Standing Order commencing in September with financial commitment to be met in full not later than the following 30th June (NB *This date is a correction to the one previously published.*)

Cheques should be made payable to:
The St Michael Steiner School Ltd.

Information for BACS payments:

Account name:
THE ST MICHAEL STEINER SCHOOL LTD.
Account number: 65098413
Bank: THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK
Sort code: 08-92-99

Please quote your family name as a reference so that we can identify your payment.

Education News Clippings

The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship office sends out regular media clippings about education issues to anyone who is interested. Some of them are controversial and not all of them are complimentary about Steiner education, but we're all grown up aren't we? So if you are interested and not scared of a little criticism, email Jasmin at forjasmin@googlemail.com and she will forward them to you.

Travel Costs - Donations Requested

Hannele, our Eurythmy teacher who works with our Kindergartens to Class 4/5, travels from Bristol to our school for one day a week. Her weekly travel costs of £30-£40 take much of her salary, and we would like to ask for donations towards covering these costs. Donations may be given to Andrea. To help cover these travel costs, Hannele is offering a Parents Eurythmy session each week – see below.

Parents Eurythmy

Every Monday from January 17th from 1.15pm to 2pm. A minimum number of parents would be needed for a successful session. (*Childcare cannot be provided*)

The fee is £5 or £3 concessions.

Please ring or e-mail Andrea at school to book.

The Management Team meets approximately every two weeks to monitor and co-ordinate the School Support Teams. If Support Team members have items for our meetings, please put them in the box in reception or email them to Jin Yee Lim at j.lim@liminaires.co.uk

Would you like to see this newsletter in colour and detail?

This Newsletter - as well as back issues - is available in full colour on our website at www.stmichaelsteiner.wandsworth.sch.uk

Newsletter Contributions

The next newsletter will be distributed on Friday 11th February. Deadline for contributions is 6pm Wednesday 9th February. We are always keen to publish contributions from parents in the newsletter. If you have something interesting/funny/controversial/moving/profound to share, however small, please send it to me. Email please, to: amandabell@mac.com

Community Page

Please note that the school does not endorse or recommend, either in general or in particular, anything offered in the Community Pages and parents are advised to check the qualifications of practitioners or people offering services here.

The Best Apple Juice in the World

Dear Parents and staff

I have imported 60 x 5 litre boxes of the world's finest organic apple juice.

All of the kindy parents who have tried the juice and all the kindy teachers will agree to this brave statement!

I'm importing the juice direct from the farmer in Eastern Hungary. Why Hungary? Because in our cereals we use dried apple pieces sourced direct from this farmer. Why not from UK? No one in the UK is drying apple! So when we import apple pieces I also import his juice. Is this a Rude Health business? No, it's just me being enthusiastic, and it's a non-profit activity for me. How does the school benefit? Well, we'll all be better off for drinking this apple juice and also from every box sold i will give 50p to the school.

The price? £8.00 each box - this is very inexpensive - 5 litres non-organic refined apple juice is over £12. 50p of the £8 goes to the school funds.

The shelf life? End April 2011

Pasteurised?: yes very lightly

Refined?: no way

Delicious?: yes indeed

Cloudy?: yes thank goodness

Need to keep in fridge once open?: not necessary, we don't and it does not go off as it does not last long!

Tasty if diluted?: yes we drink it 50/50 water/juice

If this goes well, I will aim to continue to import the apple juice all year round.

all the best,

Nick Barnard

If you are interested in this offer, please contact Nick. (Father of Emily in Class 1 and Max in Katie's Kindergarten)

House Swap

We are a Waldorf family from Vermont in the U.S.A. Occasionally our school newsletter receives requests from Waldorf families seeking housesitting positions. We are planning a trip to England during the first two weeks of August and wonder if there is a family at your school who might be interested in having house sitters for a part of that time? Our girls are 14 and 12. Our oldest daughter graduated from the Upper Valley Waldorf School while our younger daughter is in 6th grade.

I keep a Waldorf blog at <http://maymomvt.blogspot.com>

Thanks for your help

Sarah Rooker