

The St Michael Steiner School

Friday Bulletin

24th April 2020

What's happening this term?

Although there seems hardly to be a boundary between term time and holiday time at the moment, 'school' will resume on Monday. The teachers have had time to take stock of what had to be pulled together very quickly when the lockdown began and they will let you know their plans for the coming weeks, if they have not done so already.

We have taken into account siblings who need to use the same computer for their lessons, so timings have changed for some classes. As this lockdown continues, we have to find a balance between social interaction, emotional wellness and school learning while minimising screen time for everyone, but especially for young children.

Here is a glimpse of some of our plans:

Children in the Lower School continue to work with poems and games as part of their daily programme; some have their own activities with or sent by their Class Teacher, but there is also a daily movement session provided by Kevin Davidson (see link below)

Class 8

Class 8 will begin the term with the final project presentations and then have a Physics block with Miss Harrison. They will have a Zoom session from 10:30 to 11:30 each day, and Mrs van Breda has outlined some expectations for the students' conduct in these lessons:

At the end of last term I spoke to the students of my expectations of these rather unusual lessons. I want to share with you what I asked of them. The zoom lessons are to be considered as formal lessons, I expect therefore everybody to be out of their bed and pyjamas, it is a requirement that I can see and interact with everybody, there can be no eating during the sessions, and all pupils need to have pen and paper ready to make notes and record set tasks.



These expectations have been discussed in the Lower School meetings and are broadly applicable to all classes. Ms Pietrzyk has this to add:

Please make sure that they sit comfortably in a space where they can focus, with all their school materials, e.g. their Main lesson book, fountain pen, pencils and wax crayons etc. Please make sure that for the duration of their session the children do not have any programmes running in the background, so that they can focus on the lesson.

Class 7

Class 7 will be revisiting Algebra for the first two weeks, recapitulating the rules of equations and practising daily via zoom sessions. Later on we will be doing Euclidian Geometry and will be practising various constructions.

The online lessons can never replace the classroom environment and the intention is mainly to maintain a sense of rhythm and keep the students busy with activities that they can do independently.

Class 5

Class 5's first Main lesson block will be Botany. This will take place daily through a Zoom meeting from 9:30 until 10:30 (maximum). At 2pm every day there will be a Zoom session which will be used at first to see the Odyssey project presentations, then on Mondays for maths practice and on Tuesdays to Fridays for children who need extra support individually to ask questions and receive help.

Class 4

Until half-term, Class 4 will have a block of animal study through audio recordings and emailed documents, which the children can use to do their own write-ups: the kind of thing that would be put on the blackboard through recall. They will also have Maths practice sheet every other day, a Form Drawing and instructions for making a different basic knot each day.

Link: 7 Essential Knots You Need To Know by Inner Bark Outdoors. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X8drKsdf5E>

The children will also be keeping a a Wildlife Diary, based on half-an-hour observations in the garden or local park.

Link: This is a wildlife memory game: <https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-04/Wildlife%20Memory%20game.pdf>

Morning Movement Sessions with Kevin Davidson

I'm offering morning movement classes weekdays 9 - 9:15am to support families. I'm trained as a Waldorf games and Bothmer Movement teacher and have been working for 10 years at Greenwich Steiner School. The sessions are somewhere between a Class 1 games lesson and a rhythmical time. I'm getting lots of families joining in together as a way to start the day with lightness and movement.

Warm wishes,

Kevin

Family Time

Morning Movement with a playful spirit

9-9:15am weekdays with Kevin

Details:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/6293571756>

Meeting ID: 629 357 1756

See previous episodes at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TC7Bw2lUpHg>

Class 3

In Class 3, hands-on, practical blocks like house building, farming and textile making were left to the summer term so that the class could build and work outdoors, but now that's not possible. Still the content can be brought to the children in an imaginative, meaningful and fun way at home.



The farm visits and full-scale building projects will have to wait until school reopens.

From Monday, Class 3 will have daily lessons on Zoom at 9am, Monday to Friday, for about 15-20 minutes. They will sing songs, recite poems and times tables, play the flute, have some interactive games, and discuss the main lesson, which will be 'Houses and Shelters'.

This from Mrs Ho:

Houses and Shelters Block

As the Class 3 child continues to move through the nine-year change and experience a separation from the world, an inner need arises in them to build their own sanctuary. Creating a shelter allows this impulse to find an outer form. A home provides shelter and protection, but it is also a place where we nurture ourselves, creating a safe place apart from the world.

We will begin with stories about animals and how they build and use their homes. We will then look at different traditional homes throughout the world, and how their form and structure develop out of their environment. We will explore how houses are constructed and lived in. And finally, we will look at how a modern house is built, through a collaboration of many people with different skills.

Our original plan was to build a little round house for the kindergarten by driving stakes into the ground and weaving willow whips around them to make the walls, then putting a roof on top. We may have to postpone the actual building to when they are in Class 4. We will make dens and tents at home using chairs, tables and bedsheets (sorry for the mess!), and mini house models using twigs, plasticine, and anything else we have at hand.

High School

Students from Classes 10 and 12 have had a film club with Stella during the Easter holiday. They have been watching a film 'together' each week and then meeting via Zoom the following day to discuss it. Films watched in Class 10 were Toy Story, Princess Mononoke, Gosford Park and Hunt for the Wilderpeople; in Class 12, American Hustle, Laura, Rebecca, Cold War and Pan's Labyrinth.

Class 10 also have a writing group in which they are writing short stories and critiquing them together. All of these groups are voluntary, but online school starts again on Monday.

Class 9 begin with a block of Poetics with Stella and Music with Pan Liang. Class 10 will have Ecology with Alex and Class 12 have a week to finalise their year-long projects and prepare their presentations.

Finally, this from Mrs van Breda

We live in strange times and we are challenged to ask new questions that affect us all. What for instance do we understand with this new phrase 'the new normal?' Whatever our answers might be I do think there is something central that comes up for us all; "What are the most important things in our lives and what is not?" When I think of your children I want them to be interested in the bounty of life and be able to fully engage with its joys. I realise this is rather difficult in isolation. We will need to find ways to sustain the wonder and natural joy that they all already have. I am sending you a poem spoken by a young woman about her love and sense of responsibility for nature and our dear earth. I hope you will find it with your children as inspiring as I did.

https://youtu.be/rWR86_YODaU

More news and pictures from these and other classes next week.

HEALING EURYTHMY

On Tuesdays, I have been giving sessions of therapeutic eurythmy for anyone who wishes to join. It is a sequence which Dr. Steiner recommends to strengthen the "I", build up the immune system and protect from viral infections.

You are welcome to join.

This will be at 4.30 pm on Zoom.

Please email me if you are interested in participating so I can send you the invitation:

mhunter1life@aol.com

With warmth,
Michèle

Dear Parents,

Thinking of you all during these times we find ourselves in.

Please find below information from Kim Payne about a series of podcasts he has recorded in order to support families .

Whether you are familiar with 'Simplicity Parenting', have attended a course or group or are coming to it new, I have listened to the podcasts and I have found them very helpful.

The 'Compassionate Response' is an extended version of the practise we worked with in our various groups at School.

The website has other short videos, podcast recommendations, courses etc... and a Free Simplicity Starter Kit. The Facebook page incorporates other very useful material including lectures and a link to a story telling platform "CV-19Tales from Kids, Parents and Global Story tellers"

Warmest of Wishes,

Leigha Hipkin



NB The first course has already started, but there are others coming up

SIMPLICITY PARENTING WITH KIM PAYNE

<https://www.simplicityparenting.com/>

Troubling Times: Anxiety Rising, Schools Closing, and Way More Time at Home With The Kids.

In response to anxious enquiries from parents, we recorded this special five-part audio series. You can listen here in the player below or download it from our podcast page and listen in your preferred **podcast player**.

In this challenging time, we feel it's more important than ever for each of us to do what we can to support each other, so we wanted to put this together and make it available right away. If you find the series helpful, please think of any other parent, organization, or school community who might benefit from this kind of support and send them a link to this page.

Now more than ever, our children need us to stay centred so that they can feel secure at home when so much is changing around them. *The Compassionate Response Practice* is a visualization exercise practiced by tens of thousands of parents, that is a key part of creating a safe harbour of family life.

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Thank you. Be safe. And our very best wishes to you and your family. Kim