

# The St Michael Steiner School

## NEWSLETTER

9th July 2011

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### Dates for Your Diary

#### JULY

Sat 9 Barnes Fair 9:30 - 5:30

#### AUGUST

Your Class Teachers will be in touch with information about the new academic year and Andrea will send your consent forms and invoices. Watch the website for the new Calendar of Events and other information. Have a lovely holiday.

#### SEPTEMBER

Wed 7 SCHOOL STARTS 10am  
for Classes 1 - 8

Thu 8 SCHOOL STARTS 8:15am  
for Kindergartens

Thank You to you all

I wish to share a few of my thoughts with you as you might think all my ideas are dedicated to abracadabra your money out of your pocket, on behalf, and for the school. No, that is not all that lingers in that bubble on my neck.

As this year has been a momentous period in my life, I want to thank you all for supporting me in my job at the school. All of you, who pay the fees, donate, assist the school, and who support the movement have been wonderful people to be surrounded by. I want you to know that finances don't always have to be such a drag. How could it be better? –you may ask. Well, we all have to pay dues. Some can afford to pay more than others. But what we all have in common is that we all want to be part of The St Michael Steiner School.

I am sure many of you –if not all- know that none of you is paying the fees or should be paying the fees for your child (ren) only. We all make this education possible for our children to become conscious, artistic and professional human beings in the progression of this life regardless of the climate. And that is what we all strive to continue to do.

In order to further pursue this, we need to prioritise and awaken ourselves to the challenges of the times. Each individual is a vital force and together we form the community. Therefore, at times –and more frequently in this day and age- we have to work alongside each other with our best efforts to maintain the ethos. As I have been welcomed onto the bosom of the community, it inspires me to continue with my responsibilities at the school and better myself to my highest abilities.

Now, before I stop wasting anymore ink –from the precious school budget- , I would like to mention –just to be true to my position in the school- that if you wish to donate and you want to find a reason for it, you can always ask me because we always have holes on the budget that could be filled. Also, if you face difficulty paying your outstanding fees, please come and talk to me before I come after you. No judgement passed and it is confidential!

[finance@stmichaelsteinerschool.co.uk](mailto:finance@stmichaelsteinerschool.co.uk)

I am here for the benefit of the school and community.

Lots of hugs,

Andrea

*May your Summer be filled with fun(d) and light,  
In order to get ready for the Michaelmas bite!*





## St John's Day 2011



# Why we shouldn't take our kids out of school during term

Joanna Moorhead

Thursday 31 March 2011



Thousands of children will miss school today – because they're at the beach. That's according to statistics from the Department for Education, released this week, which show that [about 66,000](#) are absent without permission each day, many because they're on a term-time holiday. The figure has almost doubled in the last two years. This is no doubt fuelled by the hard economic times we're living through, and the fact that for an increasing number of families the only affordable way to the sun is to truant – as out of season deals are so much cheaper.

I'm a mother of four, and I struggle every year with the extortionate cost of trying to get six of us on holiday – I know how much these things hit the family purse. I also know how important they are. Like most couples with kids, my partner and I both work full-time, and we all desperate need the chilled-out, bonding opportunities that our once-a-year break provides.

But would I pull the kids out of school to make it happen? Well, no I wouldn't. Now you might be thinking – and you'd be right – that I'd be terrified to face the wrath of (in my case) three head teachers. All my kids' schools, like most UK schools, take a very dim view of requests for unnecessary term-time absence.

It's not only because of the reaction I'd get from their schools, though. The point is that if we want our children to respect their schools, teachers and the place of learning in their lives, then we have to provide role models for that respect. And sticking two fingers up at the school's policy on term-time holidays is, effectively, telling your kids that when the rules don't suit, we just ignore them. If we, the parents, can break school rules, then why should our kids keep them?

"Oh but ... " say parents who like to feel they are a special case; parents who think that rules only apply to everyone else, and not to them. Oh but ... what about the hugely educational experience that my child will get seeing other cultures and landscapes at close range? And of course, none of us is going to argue that school is the only, or even the most important, place where children learn. But the point is that if you, as a parent, buy into the idea that school is where your child will receive a formal education (and you don't have to do that), then your support of the school is surely your end of the bargain.

Schools need children – and parents – to co-operate: they're institutions, so that's how they function. If your kid misses a fortnight of term, his or her teacher has to find a way of covering what's been missed – and that's not fair on the teacher, or the other pupils, or even, actually, on your own child.

One "special case" often mooted is that of children with an extended family overseas: they need to reconnect with their cultural roots, and term-time trips are the only way they can afford to do that. But the bigger picture is that families still have to commit, first and foremost, to the importance of a school-taught education (if that's what they want). And even if families in this situation were allowed to take occasional trips, while everyone else kept to the rules, then the numbers of days lost through term-time holidays would plummet.

In other words, maybe those families are the one exception to the rule. But for the rest of us, I'm afraid, there's simply no excuse.

## From The Early Years

Dear Parents

### *Help us Move this Summer!*

As you know this summer we will be moving two of our kindergartens to the Open Door Community Centre for September 2011. We are delighted that this move is helping our whole school to grow, and enabling single year classes to develop. We do need help over the summer holidays moving and adjusting our present equipment and preparing our new space for us to be ready for the children in September.

Even if you can't be at school to help, there are things you may help with at home, i.e. sewing, making, mending etc. The school will be open throughout the summer except the first three weeks of August.

#### *Areas where help will be needed:*

- *Painting and renovating current equipment, adding wheels to shelving units*
- *Transporting furniture and equipment down the stairs and over to the new Centre;*
- *Creating a garden including adding a trellis fence, building raised beds and a sand pit;*
- *Boxes - any storage boxes will be useful for us to move items;*
- *Donations are also welcome to help us buy new equipment for the kindergartens. We have a list of items needed (please ask for a copy) to equip our new premises available with costs ranging from £10 to £400 (a large sand pit).*

Please speak to Katie or Leigha if you can help in any of the above ways, or telephone us - see phone list for details.

*A huge thank you from us all,*

*Katie, Leigha, Rebecca, Joy and Jeannette*

*PS A big thank you to all our parents for your help and support this year. We wish you all a wonderful summer holiday!*

*With best wishes from everyone in  
the Early Years team*

# *Simplicity Parenting*

*A course of 7 experiential workshops  
for parents and all those who care for children*

*“Using the extraordinary POWER OF LESS to raise  
calmer, happier and more secure children of any age”  
Based on the book “Simplicity Parenting” by Kim John Payne*

*Friday mornings from autumn 2011*

*St Michael’s Steiner School, Wandsworth, London SW18 5ST*



*Simplifying environments: Reducing toys, books and clothes.*

*Rhythm: Bringing more rhythm and predictability into a family’s  
day, week and year.*

*Balance: Between down time, creative time, busy time  
and scheduled activities.*

*Decision Making: Too many decisions, too young?*

*Filtering out: Guidance on exposure to what is true, kind and necessary  
for a child’s developmental stage.*

*Media influence: How to reduce TV/computer time.*

*For more information and a booking form please contact*

[dot@bowring-male.net](mailto:dot@bowring-male.net)

**01904 612683**

## Venue, days and times:

St Michael's School, Wandsworth, London SW18 5ST  
Friday afternoons. Please contact me for times and dates

## Cost :

£7/£5 per session payable in blocks of 6 weeks in advance.

**Leader: Dorothy Male.** has nearly 20 years experience of working with parents and very young children in support groups., and is a trained Early Years teacher and counsellor . She is highly respected in this field, running courses for parents and child group leaders, parents and other carers of young children in York and London . She has authored a book called *The Parent and Child Group Handbook.* (Hawthorn Press) and gives talks and workshops nationally, and abroad.

She is a pioneer in her approach to parents and infant group work, bringing to UK her specialist training in Eastern Europe and the USA . She is completing a Masters Degree in Child Observational Studies.

**Contact** for more information and booking

01904 612683      dot@bowring-male.net  
for a booking form, more information and a place.  
Please email for a booking form.

*A Gentle Beginning* is a new venture born out of a wish to give gentle support and space to new parents and babies. We know now about the importance of creating a healthy attachment and bonding with our baby from the earliest weeks and months. Similarly ,we know now that babies develop in a healthy, confident way when their needs for self directed development are respected. Babies also need a quiet simple life . And simple toys!

*A Gentle Beginning* is based on up to date baby/ infant research and the long experience of loving and respectful care of babies and infants practised at the Pikler Institute in Hungary, RIE in the USA and within the worldwide Waldorf movement.



# A Gentle Beginning

New parent ~ New baby

Regular group,

St Michael's Steiner School , London



A peaceful and supportive space to nourish a pleasurable and reciprocal relationship with your new child, observe and enjoy their self-initiated development, gain confidence and trust in your abilities as a parent, and make new friends.

## A Gentle Beginning ~ Gentle support for new parents and babies

Over the weeks of our regular coming together we will:

- \* Share and reflect on the joys and challenges of new parenthood in a warm supportive setting, where friendships can easily form.
- \* Have time to give loving focused attention to observing each child's unique personality and needs.
- \* Experience a nourishing setting equipped with age appropriate simple toys, where each child is free to be active and curious, unhurried and self-initiating in what is a uniquely individual developmental journey
- \* Explore together how to find new orientation and balance as parents , whilst respecting your child's needs for safety, security, daily rhythm, sensory protection, warmth and peace.

Mums/dads with babies from birth to toddling are very welcome.

Each group size is 10 families (max)

Photography: Eloise Drouet      eloisedrouet@hotmail.com

# Sponsored Bike Ride

Richmond Park

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October 10.30am

Due to the overwhelming success of our sponsored 5km run last year, both in terms of financial reward for the school, and team spirit cultivated through the training programme, we have decided to use all we've learned from that event and work towards a sponsored bike ride to be held five weeks after the autumn term commences. This will give us enough time to train and raise thousands of pounds!!!

The bike ride will start near the Roehampton Gate car park with the route taking an anti-clockwise circuit of the park.

The whole circuit, known as the Tamsin Trail, is 12 km, with only a couple of short uphill sections (see [www.richmondparklondon.co.uk/cycle](http://www.richmondparklondon.co.uk/cycle) for further details). The ride will take approx 45mins to an hour, so enthusiastic cyclists will probably be able to do the circuit twice.

We will have a picnic area for supporters, and of course for the riders to end up at, but there is no time limit, so people can stop wherever and whenever they need to along the route.

If you don't have a bike, and can't borrow one, there is also a cycle hire shop at Roehampton Gate where you can hire a bike by the hour or half day.

Application forms will be available at the start of next term, and training schedules will be announced then, in the mean time, why not visit Richmond Park over the summer and have a trial run on some of the paths – it's a great place to cycle as you're completely off road!

Wandsworth council are also offering road cycle training for children aged 9 and 10. If you would like your child to take part in this scheme, please sign up on the list at the top of the stairs, or contact Felicia.

Coordinators for the bike ride are: Felicia Biekarck, Catherine Edsell and Sarah Woods, so please feel free to contact them if you have any questions.

## OUTSTANDING SCHOOL FEES FOR 2010/2011 - PLEASE PAY NOW!

**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.

### 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.

## Newsletter Contributions

The next newsletter will be distributed on Friday 9th September. Deadline for contributions is 6pm Wednesday 7th September. 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.