

Headlines

Issue 1 - 08.09.23



MESSAGE FROM MRS FORD, HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents/Carers

I am very pleased to welcome you back to a new school year. I hope that you all had a wonderful summer. I am also very pleased to welcome our new children and their families to Stepgates this term. The children have settled very well with their new class teachers and I am looking forward to a happy and successful year working together. I would like to thank you for your continuing support, which makes all the difference to your child's education at Stepgates.

Firstly, I would like to extend a huge thank you on behalf of the staff at Stepgates for all the cards and gifts we received at the end of term. It is always sad to see the children we have worked closely with moving up to a new class or school but it is good to know that they have such happy memories to take with them as they grow up.

I hope that you will take the opportunity to meet with your child's new class teacher at their 'Meet the Teacher' meetings (date and time for each class has been advised separately), as these meetings contain useful information which we hope will help with your child's transition; however there will be another opportunity to meet your child's class teacher later this term on Tuesday 10th October for Parent-Teacher Consultation Evening.

OFSTED REPORT

I do hope you enjoyed reading our OFSTED Report which was sent earlier this week.

STAFFING

This term I am delighted to extend a warm welcome to Mr St-Gallay who is our new Year 1 teacher; along with four new members of staff who have joined our Learning Support Team - Mrs Wallace; Mrs Sully; Miss Mihell and Miss Joseph. I am sure that they will soon feel part of the Stepgates team.

I am also delighted to announce that Mrs Thompson (Grasshoppers Class Teacher) is expecting a baby. She will be taking maternity leave early next year. We will advertise for maternity cover for her and are hopeful we will secure a first class temporary replacement to cover her absence.

I am sad to inform you that due to health complications during the Summer break, Mrs Payn, our Busy Bees teacher / Inclusion Leader & Head of Communication and Interaction Needs (COIN) Centre, will not be returning to school for at least three months. We very much miss having her in school, and staff and children send their best wishes for a speedy recovery. A huge thank you to Mrs Conn, Deputy Headteacher, who has very kindly agreed to move to Busy Bees to be their class teacher.

SOCIAL MEDIA REMINDER

As we start the new academic year I would like to remind parents of our Social Media Policy, in particular around WhatsApp groups. If you have any worries or concerns around school practices or procedures please speak to a member of staff in school. This enables issues to be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. WhatsApp groups are not designed for this purpose.

Please see below for guidelines around Stepgates Community School Social Media Policy:

The school encourages all members of the community in the same responsible and respectful use of social media that is taught to pupils. All matters regarding the school are to be communicated via appropriate channels so that they may be dealt with fairly and effectively for all concerned. Parents/carers are reminded to use existing structures when making any complaint about the school or a member of staff. If at any time during the child's time at Stepgates Community school, a parent wish to make a complaint, then they are advised to follow the school's Complaint Policy and Procedure which can be found on the school website. We recommend that all parents and carers refrain from using social networking sites to discuss sensitive issues about the school.

Abusive, libellous or defamatory comments on social media (including WhatsApp Groups etc.) regarding the school, staff or pupils will be reported to the site's 'report abuse' section, or School's Admin Team, for immediate removal. Procedures on how the school will deal with such issues are outlined in The School's Social Media Policy, Appendix A: What to do if a complaint is made on Social Networking by a Parent or Carer.

MESSAGE FROM MRS FORD, HEADTEACHER Cont'd....

SOCIAL MEDIA REMINDER Continued....

If you are attending a school event parents/carers do have permission to film and take photographs but please do not share publicly, including on social media. Should you have a genuine concern please see me.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

I am delighted to announce that over the summer holidays the first phase of building works in preparation for the expansion of our COIN Centre took place. To accommodate the extra space required for this project three of our Junior classrooms (Years 3, 5 and 6) have been enlarged and are looking very smart. This does mean, however, that two portacabins have been installed on the Infant Playground to house our Junior COIN Centre children. I would like to reassure parents/carers that this is a temporary measure and I will keep you updated as to timescales for this very exciting project.

JEANS FOR GENES DAY

On Friday 22nd September we will be supporting Jeans for Genes Day. If your child would like to participate they should come to school wearing their school shirt, tie, jumper/cardigan with jeans and trainers/shoes.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

As a school we love to celebrate children's achievements and successes both in and outside of school. Have they achieved success in gymnastics, horse riding, football, swimming, playing an instrument, Cubs, Brownies etc.? Children may like to bring in a certificate or a photo of themselves involved in the activity and we celebrate their achievement with the whole school as part of our Friday assemblies.

SPECIAL AWARDS

In our final assembly on Friday 21st July our Chair of Governors, Michael Pope, presented our annual awards for Outstanding Achievement during the year and our termly Governors Awards for consistent effort, achievement and contribution to the school and Outstanding Sportsmanship.

Congratulations to the following children for their hard work and enthusiasm:

- Infants Termly Achievement Award - Max P
- Juniors Termly Achievement Award - Ruby D
- Sports Award - Junior - Olivia L
- Sports Award - Infant - Km O
- Arts Award - Junior - Martha F
- Arts Award - Infant - Phoebe H
- Penny Wise Cup for Swimming - Kerenza J
- Cappiello Cup for Reading - Sebbie H
- Junior Outstanding Achievement Award - Aleesha A
- Infant Outstanding Achievement Award - Summer S

The Ray Lowther Award for Outstanding Citizenship was presented to Mrs Charis Wallace for her outstanding contribution to Stepgates Community School.

UNIFORM

Thank you very much for sending the children back to school looking so smart. If you still need to buy new uniform then please order online at www.sales@sportsofaddlestone.co.uk (telephone number 01932 849333). Just a reminder, PE kit is a red T-shirt with logo, black shorts (unbranded) and trainers. During the colder months the children are asked to wear black tracksuit bottoms and a red round neck sweatshirt (can be unbranded). **Please make sure that everything is named as it is so much easier to return it to its owner!**

CLUBS

We are delighted to be able to offer a wide variety of School Clubs to our children, both during and after school. Most of these are organised and run by Stepgates staff on a completely voluntary basis with one or two outside agencies adding to the selection of activities on offer.

You should have received the new Clubs Itinerary for Autumn Term this week; clubs will start week beginning 18th September.

I would like to say a huge thank you to the parents, children and staff of Stepgates Community School for making the start to the new term such a success.

Please see Page 3 for my expectations regarding attendance and punctuality.

Mrs T Ford
Headteacher

ATTENDANCE / PUNCTUALITY EXPECTATIONS

ABSENCE & HOLIDAY REQUESTS

As we start the new academic year, I would like to remind parents of my expectations regarding absence and holiday requests. The Head Teacher, on behalf of the Governing Body, can grant leave, at their discretion, for up to five days in any school year in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**. (Please note - A 'Family Holiday' does not meet the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances'). This includes leaving school early. In accordance with guidance from Surrey County Council no holidays will be authorised at the beginning of the academic year, or during May due to end of year assessments. No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their children as a right. Holidays taken without the permission of the Governing Body may result in legal action being taken against each parent.

As a school we are obliged to inform you that you may be subject to a Penalty Notice if your child's absence from school is unauthorised. It is important your child attends school to get a good education. **By law**, as a parent or carer, you must make sure that if your child is aged 5 to 16 (compulsory school age), he or she receives a suitable full-time education. This means that your child should not have sessions of unauthorised absence. During term time your child should attend school regularly unless he or she is ill or the school has authorised their absence.

The Penalty Notice fine would be :-

- £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.
- If the fine is not paid within 28 days you may be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996.

I must advise you that if the prosecution takes place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Our inclusion Officer also expects school to provide evidence of illness if attendance is below 90%.

Our key priority is to ensure your child(ren) are as successful as possible, are able to reach his/her full potential and gains maximum benefits from his/her educational experience.

I would hope that upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy, that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

PUNCTUALITY

I would also like to remind parents that lateness to school is just as serious as non-attendance and could also lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice. It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The start of the school day is an important time for children to develop their social skills with their peers, as well as preparing them for their learning. We start teaching at 8.45am and 'late' children miss out on vital skills such as phonics and/or basic number work. In cases of persistent late arrival to school, school will liaise with the parents/carers to identify reasons for the persistent lateness and provide appropriate support and guidance. The matter may be referred to the Inclusion Officer (IO) for investigation on her regular visits to school. The role of the Inclusion Service is to monitor school attendance/lateness and to support children in order to improve their attendance/lateness. This often involves a home visit.

Thank you for your support in ensuring all our children are in school on time, every day.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO MR ALLEN



We would like to extend our gratitude and say a huge thank you to Mr Allen who very kindly cleaned the school bike shelter on Wednesday 30th August. What an amazing transformation!



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

STEPGATES COMMUNITY SCHOOL

HARVEST FESTIVAL

TUESDAY 17TH OCTOBER

AT ST. PETER'S CHURCH

Further details to follow



**ALL PARENTS
WELCOME**



Our Value for this
Half Term is



Collaboration

ARTIST OF THE MONTH



Dame Phyllida Barlow DBE RA

(Born 4th April 1944)

Dame Phyllida Barlow DBE RA is a British artist. Barlow studied at Chelsea College of Art (1960–63) and the Slade School of Art (1963–66). After joining the staff in the late 1960s, Barlow taught at the Slade School of Art for more than forty years before retiring in 2009 and is now Emerita Professor of Fine Art. Phyllida Barlow has had an important influence on younger generations of artists through her work and long teaching career in London art schools. At the Slade School of Fine Art, her students included Turner Prize-winning and nominated artists Rachel Whiteread and Angela de la Cruz. In 2017, Barlow represented Great Britain at the Venice Biennale.

COMPOSER OF THE MONTH



John Williams

(Born 8th February 1932)

John Towner Williams is an American composer, conductor, pianist and trombonist. In a career that has spanned nearly seven decades, he has composed some of the most popular, recognizable, and critically acclaimed film scores in cinematic history. Williams has won 25 Grammy Awards, seven British Academy Film Awards, five Academy Awards, and four Golden Globe Awards. With 52 Academy Award nominations, he is the second most-nominated individual, after Walt Disney. His compositions are considered the epitome of film music. In 2005, the American Film Institute selected Williams's score to 1977's *Star Wars* as the greatest film score of all time. The Library of Congress also entered the *Star Wars* soundtrack into the National Recording Registry for being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant".

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

OPEN MORNINGS AND OPEN EVENING FOR PROSPECTIVE PARENTS

We welcome all prospective parents to visit our wonderful school.
Our Open Morning and Open Evening tours will be held on the following dates:

Open Mornings

Thursday 28th September - 9:30am

Wednesday 4th October - 9:30am

Thursday 19th October - 9:30am

Open Evening

Wednesday 8th November

Between 5pm and 7pm (Last tour: 6:30pm)

Please contact the school office either by telephone (01932 563022) or email (events@stepgates.surrey.sch.uk) to book a space. (If emailing, please specify which date you would prefer and provide a contact telephone number).

All visits must be booked in advance

Is your child starting school in September 2024?

If your child was born between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020 you will need to apply for a school place between **30th October 2023 and 15th January 2024.**

Apply online at www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions

Is your child in Year 6?

If your child was born between 1st September 2012 and 31st August 2013 you will need to apply for a secondary school place **by 31st October 2023.**

Apply online at www.surreycc.gov.uk/admissions

DATES - 2023/2024

UPCOMING EVENTS - AUTUMN TERM 2023

Friday 22nd September	Jeans for Genes Day
Monday 25th September	FOSS Bag2School Collection (Drop off between 8-9am and 3-4pm)
Friday 29th September	Macmillan Coffee Morning 9:00am & Second-hand Uniform Sale
Tuesday 10th October	Parent-Teacher Consultation Meetings
Wednesday 11th October	Flu Immunisations - Years R - 6
Tuesday 17th October	Harvest Festival at St Peter's Church (<i>Further details to follow</i>)
Wednesday 18th October	Individual School Photographs
Friday 20th October	Children finish at normal time for half term
Mon 23rd to Fri 27th October	Half Term
Monday 30th October	Children return to school
Wednesday 1st November	Whole School Trip - 'Shrek The Musical'
Monday 4th December	INSET Day - School closed
Friday 15th December	Last day of Autumn Term - Children finish at 1pm
Mon 18th Dec to Mon 1st Jan	Christmas Holidays

SPRING TERM 2024

Tuesday 2nd January	Children return to school
Friday 9th February	Children finish at normal time for half term
Mon 12th to Fri 16th February	Half Term
Monday 19th February	Children return to school
Thursday 28th March	Last day of Spring Term - Children finish at 1pm
Fri 29th March to Fri 12th April	Easter Holidays

SUMMER TERM 2024

Monday 15th April	Children return to school
Monday 6th May	Bank Holiday - School Closed
Mon 13th - Thurs 16th May	SATs (Standard Assessment Tests) Week
Friday 24th May	Sports Day (Weather Permitting)
Friday 24th May	Children finish at normal time for half term
Mon 27th May to Fri 31st May	Half Term
Monday 3rd June	Children return to school
Monday 10th June	INSET Day - School closed
Friday 19th July	Last day of Summer term - Children finish at 1pm
Monday 22nd July	INSET Day - School closed
Tuesday 23rd July	INSET Day - School closed