



Parent's Handbook

SMALL STEPS

INFORMATION FOR NEW PARENTS

Hello and welcome to Small Steps! 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 questions unanswered, please do not hesitate to ask one of the team...

Who's who?

Staff

Head of Small Steps (Teacher)	Anita Coppola
Assistant Head of Small Steps (Physiotherapist)	Samantha Cook
Conductive Education Lead (PCA registered Conductor-Teacher)	Eszter Boross
Conductor- SEN Teacher	Flóra Baki
Conductor-SEN Teacher	Bella Csonka
Conductor-SEN Teacher	Judit Molnar
Physiotherapist	Popi Mair
Physiotherapist	Susana Nunez Munoz
Session Supporter	Rayanne Piercy
Business Manager	Nicola Thackeray
Marketing & Communications Manager	Ruth Adlington
Charity Support Administrator	Mylène Terret

Board of Directors

Chair	Andrea Samuelson
Director	Joanna Brotherstone
Director	Becca Sarson
Director	Deborah Challinor
Director	David Marillat
Director	Harriet Edwards
Director	Andrew Richardson
Director	Nina Preston-Smith

The Sessions

Small Steps operates during term time - dates of the terms will be confirmed with you in advance. You can also **check term dates** [here](#).

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**. 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!

A drink and snack are offered to your child free of charge during each session. If your child has a special diet, you are welcome to bring along a drink and snack for them.

If you would like to make a donation for the refreshments, please feel free to do so – Thank you!

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 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 or braces
- Special footwear
- Suction unit / oxygen monitoring or delivery
- Specialist feeding equipment
- Helmet

They come to every session, along with any medication, emergency, or medical equipment that may be required. **Small Steps do not keep any medication or medical equipment on site.**

Siblings

As we do not have any creche 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 – please ask a member of staff.

Birthdays

When it is your child's birthday, **we like to have a party**. Please feel free to bring in a birthday cake so we can celebrate at the end of the session. If you forget – please let us know and we will rustle one

up! Alternatively, if you would prefer for your child not to have a cake, **we have a celebratory birthday wreath** with candles for everyone to enjoy 😊

Attendance / Absences

Small Steps maintain 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 or email us on info@smallsteps.org.uk. It really helps us with our planning and set up and sometimes if you cannot attend, we can ask another family for that week.

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 48 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, Covid19) 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 any issue relating to visitors or if you wish to bring a visitor to a session, please inform one of the Team. **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 Plans

If you require a **report on your child's progress to contribute to Review meetings**, please ask the Session Leader to provide one. **At least two weeks of notice is helpful**. We may also be available to **attend 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 your Session Leader.

Outreach Provision

We are able to offer an **outreach service** to current and recently graduated families which might include visits to other settings such as **nursery or school, inviting other settings in to observe a Small Steps session or liaising with other professionals**. We also run **Parents Evenings** which are workshops on a variety of topics that may be of interest to you. We will consider any request for outreach so please speak to the Assistant Head of Small Steps if you think you may have one.

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 beds are available in the toilets – please ask staff for locations. Please **put the nappies in the nappy bin straight away** and **wipe the changing bed** with the wipes provided. **Wash your hands** or use Hand Gel.

- **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 – staff will be able to help you

Follow staff instructions

- **Accidents**

We hope you won't need to, but please **do inform us of any bumps or scrapes** – we have a cold pack available, and a first aid kit should you need it. **There is always a trained first aider on site. All accidents are recorded in the accident book.**

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 **Board of Directors**.

We love hearing Parent's ideas about how we could improve Small Steps. **If you have any comments or suggestions, please write an email to any member of Staff.**

Graduation Criteria

Children leave Small Steps when:

- The child has achieved age appropriate physical skills **and** the parents have the knowledge, skills and support to continue to work with their child.
- The parents have the knowledge, skills and support to work with their child even if the child hasn't achieved age appropriate physical skills.
- The child is not considered to be obtaining **significant benefit from the Small Steps group**. For example, they consistently find structured group working difficult or for those children with social communication difficulties, a different environment would be more appropriate.
- The child **fails to attend Small Steps** on three or more occasions within one term without notifying Small Steps in advance or is **unable to attend regularly**. It is considered that this child is taking up, but not benefiting from, a place that another child could use.
- When the **child starts nursery or school full time**
- When the **child turns 5**.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

The wellbeing of the children is at the heart of Small Steps' 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**.

Please remember that **you are responsible for your child during sessions at Small Steps**. Please **do not leave your child unattended** in the classroom or anywhere in the building or ask another parent to look after your child for you. If you need anything or need to step outside the classroom for a moment, please do tell a member of staff who will be happy to help you.

If you do have **any concerns relating to child protection and any child**, please bring them to the attention of the **Assistant Head of Small Steps**, who is also the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

If you have any **concerns about a member of staff**, please speak to the **Assistant Head of Small Steps, Head of Small Steps or trustee responsible for safeguarding**. The office can pass their details on request.

Parking at Small Steps

We only have a very **limited number of parking spaces** available at the front of the building on Worple Way, which will be available on a first come first served basis. Otherwise, **there is metered parking on Sheen Road**. You can find out more about **metered and free parking bays on the Richmond Council** website [here](#).

If you have a **blue disabled badge**, please park on the **surrounding roads**. Parking in Richmond borough is free for disabled badge holders in both metered and residential parking bays but be sure to **display your badge correctly**. Please try to avoid parking in disabled bays in the surrounding residential roads, as these have been placed there for the use of the person who lives there. Full details of **where you may park with a blue badge** can be found on the council website [here](#).

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 the 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!

There is also a **WhatsApp group for Parents of Small Steppers only**, administrated by a graduate Dad, join on this link if you like <https://chat.whatsapp.com/ETc9lkeZCJP2DeTHwoX0H0>

Data Protection (GDPR)

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 and to evidence our work to funders.

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, marathons**, car boot sales, all to raise money for Small Steps. Some companies have **Matched Funding schemes** or will **support a charity for a year**. 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 **regular donation to the charity each year**.

To make this process easier, we have made a **Charity Gift Aid Declaration form** and one is enclosed in the email. You can also set up a **regular donation online via bank transfer**.

Buying things online? Please **nominate Small Steps to receive a donation every time you shop at no additional cost to you** by using sites such as '[Easy Fundraising](#)' or '[Give as you Live](#)'. Please ask someone in the office for more details. 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.**

Help for you

As a parent of a disabled child, you may be eligible for the following:

- **Carers Assessment**

If you are looking after a disabled child who needs **support to live a home**, your Social Services Department may be able to help to make things easier for you. Social Services may be able to help provide: services that give you a break; emotional support; help with household tasks, help with caring tasks during the day/night; benefits advice; activities for the child you care for. If you are interested in having a Carers Assessment you can contact your local council social services department. Alternatively, speak to your GP or Health Visitor for a referral or get in touch with '[Contact](#)' for information and advice, tel: 0808 808 35555 / helpline@cafamily.org.uk. Take a look at this really [helpful factsheet about Carer's Assessments](#) for more information too.

- **Continuing Healthcare Funding** might be available to you if your child needs **regular healthcare treatment at home**. This funding can pay for medically trained staff to give you a referred for an assessment for this funding by a healthcare professional. For more information, speak to your child's GP or Paediatrician or your local Children's Community Nursing Service and take a look at this [NHS leaflet](#).

- **Home-Start** is a charity that can help with family support in many ways. A Home-Start volunteer will visit you in your own home, usually once a week, for a couple of hours. You

decide what you will do together. They can help you with practical tasks, offer advice and share their experience of being a parent or support you through emotional issues. Take a look at the Home-Start website **link above** to find your local service or **call them on 0116 464 5490**.



- **Crossroads Care** can provide respite care support within the home, to give parents a break.
- **Shooting Star Children's Hospices** offer respite care and care at home, to children with very complex health needs. You can find out more by **contacting** the Shooting Star Children's Hospices **team or email referrals@shootingstar.org.uk**, Christopher's Guildford 01483 230960 / Shooting Star House, Hampton 020 8783 2000.



Other benefits and resources:

- **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**

DLA is usually paid every four weeks and is a non-means tested benefit. This means you can be paid this benefit regardless of your financial circumstances. DLA has two parts; **the care component and the mobility component** and either or both parts can be claimed depending on your child's needs. The charity 'Contact' have an excellent '**Guide to Claiming Disability Living Allowance**' [here](#). To make a claim for DLA you will need the claim form DLA (1) Child which is available from local benefit offices or by calling the Disability Living Allowance helpline on: 0345 712 3456.

- **You may be able to access the 'Motability' scheme...**

The Motability Scheme can help you **lease a car if your child is aged 3 or over** and is entitled to either the: higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance or the enhanced mobility component of Personal Independence Payment. More information about the scheme is on the [Motability website here](#). You can also contact Motability on: 0300 456 4566

- **You may be eligible for a Blue Disabled Parking Badge:**

The higher rate of DLA mobility component will also entitle you to a Blue Badge which will give you parking concessions. If you are not getting the higher rate of DLA mobility component, you may still qualify for a blue badge if you meet certain conditions. The scheme is run through your local council or trust, and you should contact them for further information. **This badge enables you to park in disabled bays**, and to park **free in many pay and display bays**. For further details about the Blue Badge Scheme call Blue Badge Initial Enquiry Support Service: 0844 463 0213. You can also check your eligibility for a Blue Badge on [The Department for Transport website here](#).

- **Taxicard...**

If your child receives the higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance or is registered as Blind you can apply for a Taxicard. Taxicard is a method of providing subsidised door-to-door transport for people with serious mobility impairment and difficulty in using public transport. Taxicard holders make journeys in licensed London taxis and the subsidy applies directly to each trip. Your **Taxicard can be used anytime, 24hours a day, 365 days of the year**, subject to taxi availability. You can find out more on the [Taxicard website here](#) or tel: 020 7934 9791

- **Carer's Allowance is the main benefit for carers.** You qualify for this benefit if you provide at least **35 hours care per week to someone who gets the middle or highest rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**. There are additional tests if you work or study. To claim Carer's Allowance, get a claim form from the Carer's Allowance Unit by calling 0800 7310297. You can also apply on the government's [Carer's Allowance webpage here](#).
- For **more information** about the help available if you have a disabled child, see the Government webpage: www.gov.uk/help-for-disabled-child

