

28<sup>th</sup> August, 2009

Dear Parents,

We hope that your summer has been relaxed and happy, that you have been enjoying the fine weather, and that your children are now looking forward to getting back to school. For those who are new to St. Helen's, there will be butterflies in tummies, but we are confident that the children will settle quickly and happily. For the seasoned veterans, next week will provide a happy opportunity to re-establish friendships and swap tales of summer fun. The teachers have been working very hard, preparing interesting and challenging programmes of studies and activities, and we are confident that the children, as always, will respond with enthusiasm and diligence.

We shall send a term programme home to you next week and will periodically write with more detailed information about school events. All newsletters are published on the school website ([sthelenscollege.com](http://sthelenscollege.com)) so you can always check there if you cannot find the information that you need at home.

All parents – especially those of you who are new to the school – please be sure to read the parking notes (below) and enclosed parking regulations carefully so that you are aware of how the routines work. Full compliance is essential if we are to minimise congestion, inconvenience and traffic hazards.

### **Holiday Works**

The new Windsor library renovation and decoration is complete, and furniture and books are now being moved in and set up. The children in Years 2 to 6 will be able to browse, change books and sit and read during the lunch breaks, and all classes from Y1 to Y6 will be able to visit with their teachers. The project has benefitted greatly from donations of new books by parents, and also from a donation of £2200 from the Parents' Association – this money was raised at the Summer Fete last month. Our thanks to all who contributed.

A new office and a medical room have been refurbished and set up in Cambria, and the music practice room and SEN room have been refurbished also. A new pond has been created in the orchard – for science and ecological studies – and a 'log cabin' erected at the Lower School for one-one tuition (violin and special needs).

### **Relay for Life Tog Day**

The St. Helen's staff have again entered a team for the Harrow and Ruislip area Relay for Life, a charity which raises money for cancer research. Teams walk and/or run for 24 hours in shifts in return for sponsorship. Last year we raised over £6000 for cancer research.

To support this year's Relay, which takes place on 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> September, we shall be holding a Tog Day – a non-uniform day when the children wear their own clothes - on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September. We shall run fitness activities throughout the day with each class having a turn and in return we would ask each family to make a donation (suggested £5) for Relay. Please note that the children will all need to be suitably dressed for fitness activities, so trainers and shorts rather than dressy shoes and clothes please!

An integral part of the Relay event is the nightfall 'Candle of Hope' ceremony. Sponsors pay for a candle to be lit in memory of a loved one who has died of cancer or to celebrate someone overcoming cancer and may decorate the bag in which the candle is lit if they so wish. The candles (hundreds of them) are lit during a short but moving night time vigil. If you would like to dedicate a candle, please use the enclosed form or ask Mrs Stark for details. The suggested donation for this is £5.

Friends and supporters are most welcome to attend Relay if they so wish – it is a really inspirational event and a fun family day out. More details can be found at <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/relay/venues/harrow/> and if you wish to support the team online this may be done at [www.donatetomyrelay.org/sthelenscollege](http://www.donatetomyrelay.org/sthelenscollege)

### **Traffic and Parking**

#### Nursery, Reception, Year 1 Parents

Long Lane can be very busy at the beginning and end of the school day, and you might not be able to park close to the school. Please take great care not to block residents' drives, and do not park or turn on the Methodist Church forecourt or car park. If Year 1 parents wish to 'drop and go', then Mrs. Brouder (one of our School Patrols) will take the children straight into school safely.

#### Year 2 - 6 Parents

In the mornings we have a 'drop & go' point outside the Upper School in Parkway. Simply pull up, the prefects on duty will help your child out of your car and close the door, and you can drive away without getting out. If you do wish to get out, or to come into school with your child, then please park in the car park at the end of Parkway. In the afternoons, please park in the car park and walk down to meet your child at the entrance. Please do not park in Parkway.

Please note that some works are taking place at the bowling club and the contractors have closed off some of the car park. The work should be over by the beginning of the second week of term.

To avoid driving down Parkway, you may drop your children at the supervised 'drop & go' point outside Windsor House (227 Long Lane), and let them walk through the garden to school. Similarly, in the evenings you can pick up from the same place, where your child will be supervised by Mrs. Kenny until you arrive. But please do not arrive early and block a parking space – these are sorely needed by the Lower School parents. Please arrive a 5/10 minutes after your child's class ends so that you can collect and go without needing to park.

#### Parents with children on both sites

In the mornings, you can avoid having to park twice by parking in the Parkway car park and walking your Lower School child through the playground and garden and across the zebra. The Windsor gate closes at 8:40 a.m. so don't chat for too long before returning!

#### Other hints

You can help greatly to reduce congestion in many ways. For example:

- If parents of older children arrive early in the afternoons to bag a parking space, they deny spaces to parents of younger children. This is most unhelpful.
- If you have more than one child at St. Helen's, then make use of the Holding Area (details enclosed). It is free and you can avoid arriving early for your younger child and then having to wait for the older child to finish.
- If you cycle to school, or park a little way from the school then walk the last part of the journey, then you and your child benefit from easier parking, fresh air and exercise!

- Lift-sharing can provide a terrific mutual benefit, and we have a lift-share website. Details are enclosed.

Yours faithfully,

28<sup>th</sup> August, 2009

Dear Parents,

### **Holding Arrangements**

The Holding Area exists to assist parents with two or more children who finish lessons at different times. With this arrangement, parents avoid having to arrive early to collect their younger child, and then having to wait for the older sibling to finish.

#### **a) Parents with two or more children in the Upper School (Years 2 - 6)**

If you have two or more children in the Upper School (Years 2 - 6), then, at the end of lessons, younger siblings who are in Years 2 or 3 may wait in the Holding Area until the time that your older child finishes class. The 'holding' children will wait in one of the downstairs classrooms on the ground floor of the main block. This will be known as the Holding Area, and will be supervised each day by a member of the Funtasia staff.

Please collect your children from the Holding Area promptly at the time that your older child finishes class. Please note that this arrangement does not extend to cover after-school activities.

#### **b) Parents with a child in Y2 and another in Y1 at the Lower School**

If you have a child in Year 2 and another in a Year 1 class at the Lower School, then your Year 2 child can also join the Holding Area, to allow you time to collect from the Lower School. You must, however, collect your Lower School child first, and your Year 2 child by 3:30 p.m.

#### **c) Parents with two children at the Lower School**

Your younger child will be looked after by his/her teacher until the time that your older child finishes school, at which time you should collect both children promptly.

In addition to parents with two or more children at the school, the holding arrangements may be used by parents who are lift-sharing with another family. You will need to advise the Holding Area staff so that they are aware that you are lift-sharing and are therefore eligible.

To register your child for the Holding Area, please complete and return the enclosed form that was posted to you last month.

Yours faithfully,

D.A. Crehan

## School-run.org

We have commissioned a website from Liftshare to enable our parents to find other St. Helen's parents with whom to share the school run. The scheme is fully automated, enabling parents to register on-line without any input from the school. It doesn't matter whether you wish your children to walk, cycle or be driven to school – the scheme has been designed to be entirely flexible, and aims to meet the needs of parents, whilst also reducing congestion, pollution and the incidence of childhood obesity.

Only parents with children at St. Helen's are able to register with our scheme, which is password protected. The system works entirely on information about the parents and school and requires no information regarding children. Users are informed at each stage how their personal information will be used, however more details can be found in the Privacy Policy on-line. If you would like to register with the website, please follow the guidelines below

To access the website parents should go to [www.school-run.org](http://www.school-run.org). This will take you to the log-in page.

- In the search field enter St Helens College (no punctuation)
- This will bring up several schools of the same name
- Click on St Helens College, Uxbridge
- When using for the first time, use the 'New Users' log in area
- The school password is apple
- This will take you to the 'Register Me' page which you should complete fully
  
- Once registered on the system a password will be sent to the email address you submitted
- You can then re-enter the school-run.org site, enter your e-mail address and new password, and search for other parents with whom you can share the journey to school
- You can email potential matches, or telephone if a contact number has been given
- As more parents register, it is more likely you will find a match for your requirements

I will be able to monitor how many parents are registered on the scheme and track changes through a secure on-line administrator page. I will also be able to gather data on the resulting reductions in carbon emission, and this information will be used in school to encourage further participation from the children, and to promote environmental education.

If you any usability issues regarding the website (i.e. error messages), please email [customersupport@liftshare.com](mailto:customersupport@liftshare.com). For any other queries, please contact Mrs. Douglas at school.

D.A. Crehan