



Lower School Newsletter - 15th June 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am very pleased to write to you personally following the end of my maternity leave. I am sure you will join me in saying a huge thank you to Miss Emma for the absolutely wonderful job she has done of managing the school whilst I have been away, in particular setting up and operating our fantastic online school. Miss Emma is currently covering for our Adult, Upper and Lower School Administrators and going forwards, she will continue to be heavily involved in the school as our Deputy Principal.

This term has been challenging and interesting and I am very proud of how well so many of our students and teachers have adjusted to online classes. The online classes seem to be a little ray of sunlight each week for children and teachers alike. Thank you to everyone who has and continues to support the school as part of our online community. I do, however, understand that online classes are not suitable for all of our students and I know we all cannot wait until we can be back together in the dance studios again.

Miss Emma and I are starting to put together the 'normal' timetable for academic year 2020-2021 and then, once we receive more information about how and when we can reopen the studios for 'in person' classes, we will be able to adjust the timetable to suit. We anticipate that at least the first half of the autumn term will have to be a combination of online and 'in person' classes, but through this method, we very much hope it will be possible for each of our students to attend classes in the studio either weekly, fortnightly or monthly, and to continue to participate in all of their other classes online.

So that we can accurately put together the timetable for academic year 2020-2021, please reply to this email letting us know if you are planning to leave the school or would like to drop / add / change any classes for your child when we reopen. Obviously, you do not yet know what the timetable will be so it will not be possible at this stage to make all decisions, but if you have already made any choices about classes next academic year, then please let us know by Sunday 21st June to help us with our timetabling.

We are also busy preparing the studios for reopening in the safest possible way. As well as deep cleaning, repairing, repainting and reflooring the upstairs, we will be temporarily removing many shared resources, the sofas etc and ensuring hand washing facilities are as hygienic as possible. We are already working on

how we can implement social distancing within classes and for all of our school community in the communal areas. Our Adult and Lower School Administrator, Katarina Hill, is undertaking online training for Covid-19 safety and she will be responsible for ensuring our reopening is as safe as possible.

I will write to you as soon as we have further information about reopening including the autumn term timetable. In the meantime, you will find below a lot of updates about upcoming school events etc so please read the sections that are relevant to you . . .

Show update

We are really happy to announce that we have secured new dates for our show *'The Scarecrows' Wedding'* and *'This is Me!!'* Our show will now be held **Sunday 10th January 2021** at the Bromley Churchill Theatre, with rehearsals in the theatre the day before the performance day (Saturday 9th January). As was the plan for the July dates, there will also be rehearsals on a few Sunday's prior to this weekend for singers and children who are cast as main parts in the ballet - dates for these rehearsals are TBA.

We are so pleased to have secured these new dates so that the children now have something really exciting and fun to look forward to! We very much hope many of the children will still be able to take part. Our composer Mr. Rush has almost finished creating the music for the ballet and it is amazing, so we are so excited to start working on it!

If your child was due to participate and you are not available on these dates and therefore sadly, your child will be unable to take part in our show then you will be entitled to a full refund for the entry fee you have paid. **Please email sldsperformances@gmail.com with your bank details by Monday 29th June if your child is unable to take part and therefore, you would like a refund.**

After this date, we will budget for the show on the basis that your child will be taking part and it will not be possible to apply for the refund.

Please note that refunds will be made in one sitting in September.

If previously, your child was unable to participate in our July show, but you are going to be available for the January dates and so now you think your child would like to participate, then **please email sldsperformances@gmail.com by Monday 22nd June** and detailed information will be sent to you to enable you to make an informed decision about participating.

Finally, please note that as our show has been pushed back to January 2021, then we will not also be putting on a show in summer term 2021 as was previously planned.

Term dates (updates in red)

SUMMER TERM 2020 DATES

Our online classes this term finish on **Friday 17th July**.

AUTUMN TERM 2020 DATES (12 weeks)

Monday 7th September - Sunday 19th October

Half term - Monday 19th - Sunday 1st November inc (we may be holding some classes over half term to make up for previously cancelled classes)

Monday 2nd November - Sunday 13th December

Class observation week for Lower School Nursery, Preparatory, Pre-Primary (I) and Junior Funky Moves classes only - w/c Monday 30th November *(we feel it is unlikely this will be possible if any level of social distancing is still in place by this time)*

Acting class dates - TBC

SPRING TERM 2021 DATES (11 weeks)

Monday 4th January - Sunday 14th February (6 weeks)

Half term - Monday 15th to Sunday 21st February inc

Monday 22nd February - Sunday 28th March (5 weeks)

Class observation week for Lower School Nursery, Preparatory, Pre-Primary (I) and Junior Funky Moves classes only - w/c Monday 22nd March

Acting class dates - TBC

Show at Bromley Churchill Theatre - Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th January

SUMMER TERM 2021 DATES (12 weeks)

Saturday 17th April - Friday 28th May (classes will take place on Saturday 1st May and Monday 3rd May which is a Bank Holiday weekend)

Half term - Saturday 29th May to Sunday 6th June inc (note - there are two Saturday's off)

Monday 7th June - Sunday 17th July

Acting class dates - TBC

Class observation week for Lower School Nursery, Preparatory, Pre-Primary (I) and Junior Funky Moves classes only - w/c Monday 5th July

Acting class dates - TBC

Staff updates

I am very sad to announce that from September, Helen will be stepping down from her position of Upper School Administrator as she feels it's time to move on to new challenges. Helen has been a fantastic part of

our office team who will be greatly missed by us and I am sure, by many of you. We wish Helen all the best in her new challenges. Tilly Rayner (who some of you will know as Miss Tilly), will gradually be stepping into Helen's shoes, so please welcome her into this new role and bear with her as she finds her feet.

We are also sad to say that Miss Jenny will be leaving our Saturday teaching team as she wants to spend more time developing her own dance school. Miss Jenny's boundless energy and love of teaching some of our very youngest children will certainly be missed by everyone. We wish Miss Jenny the best of luck with her dance school.

Miss Steph has been one of our main Festival Team teachers as well as our Advanced tap teacher for the past few years and we are very sorry indeed that she has decided to leave us at the end of this term because she has secured a fantastic teaching opportunity much closer to where she lives. I'd like to thank Miss Steph for the creativity and passion for performing that she has put into choreographing and coaching some superb, winning festival dances. She will be greatly missed by everyone, especially our Festival Team. We wish her the best of luck for the future.

When possible, we will be arranging a leaving get together for our teachers so that your children can say goodbye.

Also, Miss Marina returned to her home country of Italy at the beginning of the pandemic and unfortunately will not be returning to assist on Saturdays. However, Miss Marina is putting her energy and time into developing her new business mentoring and life coaching dancers, so we may see her again in the future. We wish her all the best on her new venture.

'Teddy Bear's Ballet Picnic' LIVE Zoom event!

Watch this space for more information about this exciting summer holiday event for your little one!

SLDS' Covid-19 Bursaries for Young Dancers Scheme

I am very pleased to let you know that we have been able to support several of our students whose families are currently experiencing exceptional financial difficulties under our new Covid-19 Bursary Scheme. The children are most grateful to be able to attend online classes which they otherwise would not have been able to do.

Due to the massive economic impact of Covid-19, we anticipate that unfortunately, more children may need support over the coming months in order to be able to continue learning dance with us. As the dance school

is suffering as a business, unfortunately we are not in a position to be able to sustain this support long term. Therefore, if you are able to help and would be interested in 'sponsoring' another SLDS student for their dance classes then please do get in touch to discuss how this could work. Also, if you wish to ask for support for your child then please get in touch and we will do our best to support at this time.

Upper School student news

We want to wish **Jasmine Gillott** the best of luck as she leaves SLDS aged 18. Jasmine has danced with us since she the age of 5 during which time she has achieved outstanding examinations results, won many medals at dance festivals and most recently was chosen to represent the tap faculty at the ISTD Bursary awards. Jasmine has been an inspiration to many of our younger dancers over recent years and we are extremely proud of the young woman she has grown into. We all wish her the best of luck in her gap year before she goes to university to study Environmental Science.

Did you spot ex-student **Ruben Garcia** on BBC4's Men at the Barre - if you missed it do catch up, it was aired Wednesday 27th May. It is a fantastic documentary about male ballet dancers including a trip to White Lodge where we spot Ruben standing out in his year 7 boys ballet class. Ruben had been thoroughly enjoying his first year at the infamous Royal Ballet School and he cannot wait to get back!

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this letter; I hope the information is helpful to you. Please contact Miss Emma at your normal Administrator's email address if you have any questions.

I very much hope to see some of you soon.

Miss Zoe
Principal
South London Dance School

PS - I would like to let you know that Maggie Bulman, who makes fabulous dance costumes for our students, is currently selling handmade masks for children and adults in a range of fab materials ;) This is following the incredible voluntary work she did making PPE for local NHS workers. Please follow this link to purchase yours - <https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/maggiEBulmanmasks>