



~ Welcome to the February edition of The First Steps newsletter ~

Returning to 'Normal'

It has been fantastic having children back in school over the past few weeks following the campus closure in January. I would like to thank parents for their patience and understanding since children returned to school and a series of procedures were introduced to reduce contact across the school.

From the start of Term 2B on Monday 1st March we will be easing some of the COVID-19 restrictions at The First Steps slightly. We will revert to using one gate for all children to enter the school and parents will be permitted back into the garden area before and after school to drop off/collect their children. We ask that where possible, parents do not enter classrooms.

We will continue to split playtimes between older and younger children to ease congestion in the garden area. Upon arrival at school, children in K2, Year 1 and Year 2 will be permitted to play in the garden until 8:30am. Any children in Rising 2s, Nursery and K1 who arrive at school prior to 8:30am will be escorted to their classrooms, however from 8:30am onwards children in these younger age groups will be permitted to play in the garden.

Temperature checks and hand sanitizing will continue to be in place upon entry to school and children's temperatures will still be taken throughout the day in classrooms.

Chinese New Year

On Friday 12th February we held a wonderful celebration for Chinese New Year at the First Steps. Students and staff came to school wearing traditional Chinese dress and took part in lots of fantastic activities throughout the day. From Rising 2s to Year 2 children enjoyed making Chinese rattle drums and lanterns, learning about calligraphy, and even cooking delicious dumplings! In the afternoon students in K2, Year 1 and Year 2 took to the field to take part in their very own Dragon dance.





Congratulations Ms Fiona

As many of you might already know, Ms Fiona is expecting a baby and will be on Maternity Leave during Term 3. I am sure our whole school community will join me in wishing her the very best for the coming weeks and this exciting phase in her life.

Over the past few months we have been interviewing for a replacement who will teach French while Ms Fiona is absent. I am pleased to announce that we have now appointed Ms Doris who will join The First Steps until the end of Term 3. A French native with over twenty years' experience in education, Ms Fiona and I felt that Ms Doris was the best fit for The First Steps and the children who learn French.

Ms Doris will start on Monday 22nd March and have two weeks in school working alongside Ms Fiona prior to the Songkran holiday. This will provide an opportunity for her to get to know the children and for Ms Fiona to complete a thorough handover.

If parents have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Recycling at the First Steps

In a further drive to raise awareness of recycling and help our children to understand its importance, we have introduced a plastic bottle top collection point in school. Children are encouraged to collect bottle tops at home and bring them into school.

The bottle tops will be donated to 'Precious Plastic Bangkok', a volunteer-run initiative that collects bottle tops from all over Bangkok before shredding and melting them into new products.

The collection point is located next to the school office.



The First Steps Expansion

As you might have read in the January edition of the newsletter, for academic year 2021/22 there will be new classes for children in Year 2 and Year 3 at The First Steps. I am pleased to announce that Ms Emily and Ms Jade have been appointed to teach Year 2 and Year 3 respectively and will be joining us in August 2021.

Ms Emily was awarded a BA (Hons) in Sports Science and Physical Education from the University of Brighton and completed her PGCE at the University of Sussex. She has taught across Key Stage 1 and 2 and took on the responsibility of PE Coordinator and Head of Design & Technology at her previous schools. Specialising in Mathematics, Ms Marshall was awarded a BA (Hons) in Primary Education from Kingston University and brings significant experience to our school. She has also taught in Key Stage 1 and 2 and was Head of Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) at her previous school.

We have also appointed a full time Music Teacher who will teach across the school from Rising 2s to Year 3 in order to significantly enhance our provision in this important area of the curriculum. Mr. Supasit was awarded a BA in Music from the University of Illinois in the US, before remaining in the US to complete his MEd. He has experience teaching Pre-School, Primary and Secondary aged children at schools including Wells International School Bangkok and Kids Academy Bangkok.

We currently have two Primary classrooms at The First Steps (Year 1 Grizzly Bears and Year 1/2 Polar Bears). To accommodate our new Year 2 and Year 3 classes from August 2021



we have been working with architects on designs for new classrooms which will be built on the current First Steps site.

The current gym will be expanded and converted into two new classrooms which will be used by Year 2 and Year 3 from August 2021. A new gym will be built above these classrooms which will extend across the current driveway providing an indoor multipurpose space which will be double the size of our current gym downstairs. Work will take place over the Summer ready for the start of the academic year 2021/22 at the end of August.



FSB House System

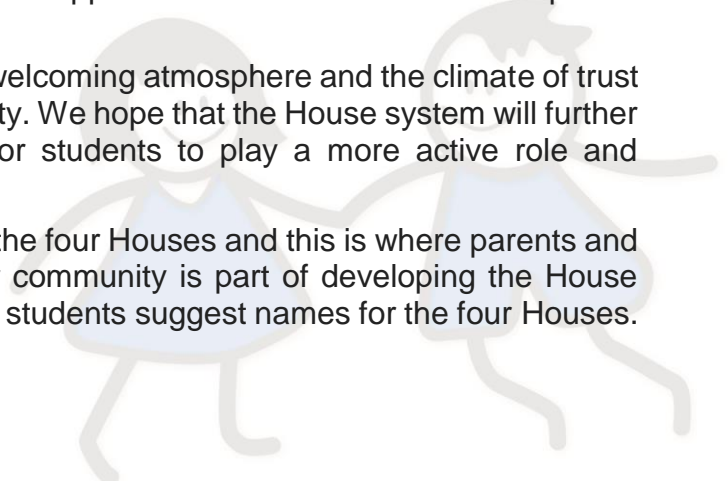
From the start of the academic year 2021/22 we will be introducing a House system in the Primary School. This will initially be for children in Year 1 upwards as we prepare for opening the FSB campus the following year.

For those unfamiliar with a House system, it involves students being placed in a 'House' or team. If you have read the Harry Potter books, then you will know that there were Houses at Hogwarts! We plan to have four Houses at FSB and so all students will be allocated to one of four Houses which they will remain in for their time at the School. Teachers and Teaching Assistants will also be allocated a House.

The aim of the House system is to foster skills such as leadership, responsibility and respect, and develop vertical and horizontal integration across all year groups. The House system will enhance students sense of belonging by providing a supportive structure that encourages cooperation and communication across classes and year groups. There will be House events throughout the year which will enrich the extra-curricular development of our students, promote 'House spirit' and provide fantastic opportunities for students to develop their teamwork and interpersonal skills.

The First Steps is well known for its warm, welcoming atmosphere and the climate of trust which exists between all members of the community. We hope that the House system will further reinforce this as well as provide opportunities for students to play a more active role and contribute to a community within their school.

The next step is to decide on the names of the four Houses and this is where parents and children come in! We feel it is important that our community is part of developing the House system and so we are requesting that parents and students suggest names for the four Houses.





Although the House system will initially be introduced only for students in Year 1 upwards we are keen to hear ideas from as many people as possible across the school. If you or your child have some ideas for House names then please note these down and let your child's teacher or me know after half term.

New School Website

If you haven't seen already, please take a look at our new school website which can be viewed at www.thefirststeps.ac.th. Information about all aspects of The First Steps can be found on the website, including downloadable copies of food menus and policies. There is also a separate section about the new Primary School.

Have a great half term and I look forward to welcoming you back to The First Steps on the 1st March. As always, if you have any comments, questions or concerns then please come and speak to me or email me at head@thefirststeps.ac.th

Sincerely,

Mr. Alistair

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2021

Monday 22nd - Friday 26th February: Half term Holiday (School closed)

Monday 1st March: First day of Term 2B

Monday 8th of March – Friday 12th March: Book Week

Children will participate in a variety of activities throughout the week linked to books and the importance of reading. On Friday 12th March children are asked to come to school dressed as their favourite book character.

Monday 15th - Friday 26th March: Term 2 Parent Teacher Conferences

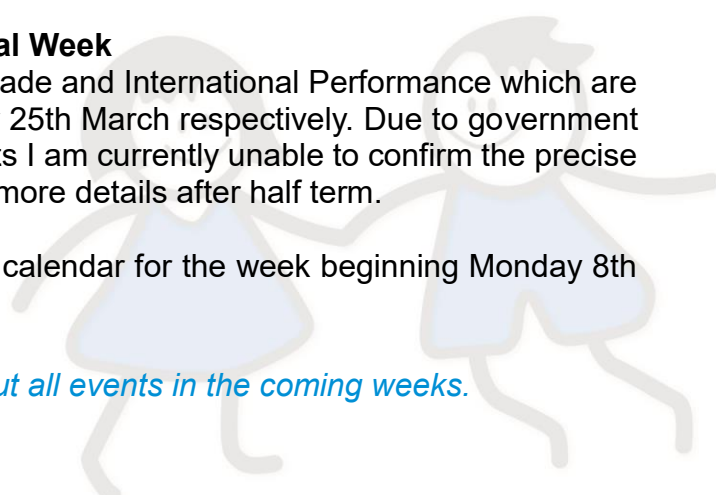
Parents are invited into school to meet with their child's teacher. This is an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss progress made since Term 1 and targets for Term 3.

Monday 22nd - Friday 26th March: International Week

During this week we will hold our annual Flag Parade and International Performance which are scheduled for Tuesday 23rd March and Thursday 25th March respectively. Due to government guidelines on parents' attendance at school events I am currently unable to confirm the precise plan for these events, however I hope to provide more details after half term.

PLEASE NOTE: Field Trips, listed on the school calendar for the week beginning Monday 8th March, will be rescheduled for later in the year.

More information will be sent out about all events in the coming weeks.





Academic Year 2021/22

School Timings

Towards the end of Term 1 I contacted parents regarding proposed school timings for the academic year 2021/22. As I mentioned then, in order to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to our Primary aged children (Year 1 - Year 3) we are looking at increasing the length of the school day slightly. This will ensure that we are able to provide additional music, sports, humanities and language lessons which cannot currently be accommodated on the Year 1 and Year 2 timetable.

The new times will also see children in Rising 2s, Nursery, K1 and K2 starting school slightly earlier in order to best meet the needs of the different ages of children and ease traffic congestion as the school grows.

I would like to thank parents for their feedback which provided Mr. Damon and I with a wide range of opinion. We have taken into account the overall length of the day for different age groups, school bus pick up/drop off times, the ECA schedule, and the start time for oldest and youngest children in order to best accommodate families with siblings in different year groups.

The new school timings for 2021/22 are shown below:

	Start Time	End Time	ECAs
Rising 2s, Nursery and K1	8:45am	1:30pm	1:30pm – 2:30pm
K2	8:30am	2:30pm	2:30pm – 3:30pm
Year 1 - 3	8:15am	2:30pm	2:30pm – 3:30pm

Should parents have any further feedback on the new times, please don't hesitate to contact me at head@thefirststeps.ac.th.

Happy Birthday To You...

Born in February

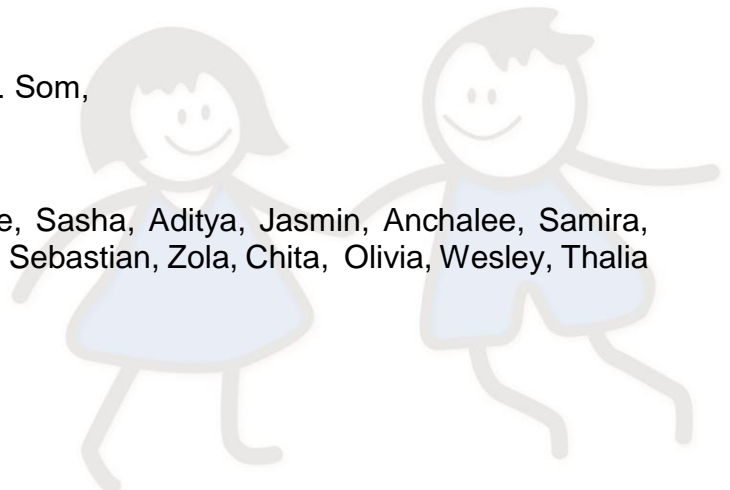
Children: Lucia, Sakura, Milan, Sakura K2, Lupin, Anika K1, Ariane K1, Declan, Matteo, Towa, Teddy, Ju Wan, Hanna.

Staff: K. Ploy, P. Nak, Mr. Danny, T. Alex, Alistair P. Som,

Born in March

Children: Freya, Athena R2, Matteo B. N2, Neve, Sasha, Aditya, Jasmin, Anchalee, Samira, Maya, Ash, Hunter, Ark, Penelope, Yukimaru, Lola, Sebastian, Zola, Chita, Olivia, Wesley, Thalia

Staff: T. Anthony P. Mai Ms. Tak Mr. Jake





A Message from The Director

Dear Parents,

I hope you are all ready for a short holiday – maybe a trip to the beach or a short staycation in the city.

Following on from Mr. Alistair's words, I would like to add that we will be starting a few other NEW things at The First Steps / FSB. I am happy to say that we will add a swimming team to our normal LETS ASIA swimming lessons. Although our current pool is only 15 meters, if you swim there and back it is 30! 😊

The focus at first will be on the 7 and 8-year-olds for this program so that we can take part in swim meets during the year. At some meets the swimming team will participate with LETS ASIA, however at others it will participate as FSB. Obviously this will begin small but it will grow quickly with time.

We will also have a choir for the Primary children led by the new music teacher. We will also offer music ECAs to children across the school.

In FSB design and construction news, things are moving along: The demolition of the townhouses will begin next week, with the removal of the goods that can be resold, and then the metal protective walls will go up! Everything is moving along quite swimmingly, and we are getting more and more excited.

See you after the break!

Warm Regards,

Mr. Damon

Sincerely,

The First Steps International Pre-School

