

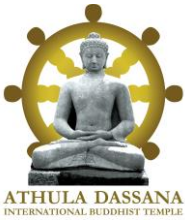


# Athula Dassana International Buddhist Vihara

## Dhamma School

### Information Pack for prospective parents

e-mail: [dharmaschool@heathrowvihara.org](mailto:dharmaschool@heathrowvihara.org)



# Athula Dassana International Buddhist Vihara Dhamma School



Dear Parent,

On behalf of the staff at Athula Dassana International Buddhist Vihara Dhamma School, I am happy to welcome you to our Dhamma School. We are looking forward to a productive partnership with you to ensure our children can achieve their highest potential.

We recognise that in order to be successful in the Dhamma School, children need support from their parents and the teachers. We believe that a strong partnership with you will make a great difference in your child's education.

To achieve our aims, we ask that you guide and support your child's learning by ensuring that the child/children,

- Attends the Dhamma School every week
- Arrives on time
- If applicable, completes all homework assignments given by teachers

Our Dhamma School is a 'family' within the larger Vihara community and each family has the potential to contribute as a valuable member towards our common aims. As such, we encourage everyone to get involved and value your support and contributions. Our Dhamma school programme is a work in progress and we are open to new ideas and progressive input.

I have enclosed a copy of our school rules and regulations, so that you and your child can review them together. If you have any questions about the contents including the rules and expectations, please feel free to contact me or to discuss them with our School Principle, Mr. Bandara Wannaku.

Sincerely,

**Venerable Wanduramba Kassapa,**  
Chief Sanganayake of Amarapura Sri Saddhamma Wansa Niyaka of Great Britain  
President, Athula Dassana Multi-cultural Buddhist Community Centre  
Head of the Athula Dassana International Buddhist Vihara  
Head of the Athula Dassana Dhamma School

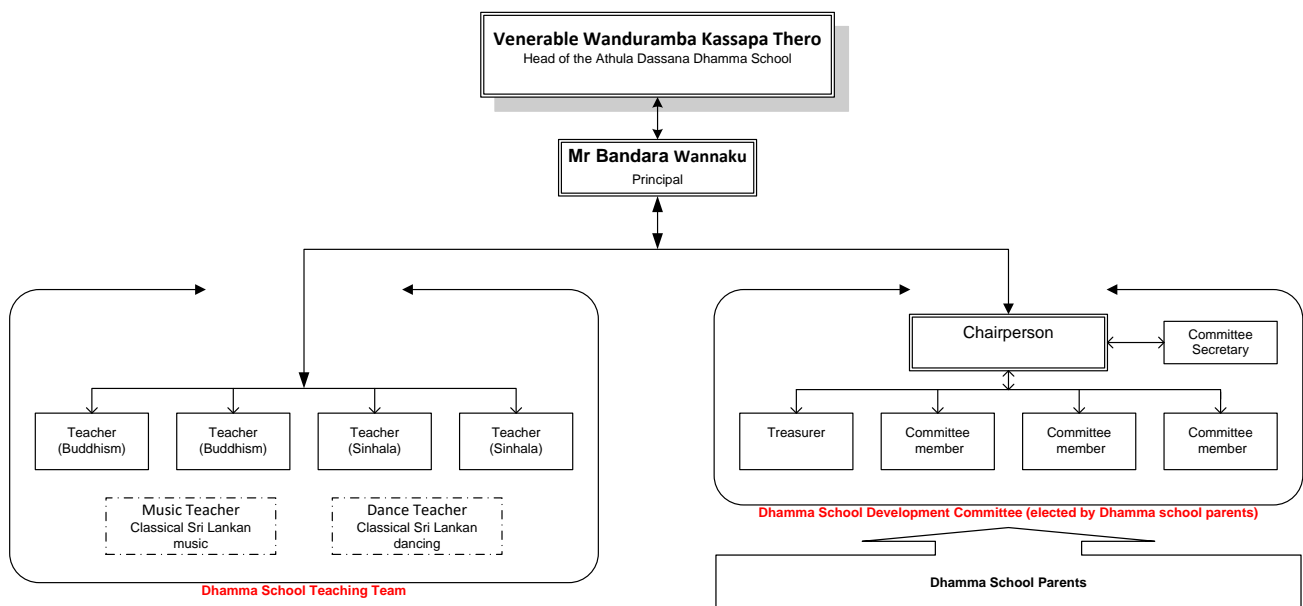


## Introduction to our Dhamma School

The main purpose of the Dhamma School is to educate the younger Sri Lankan generation in Buddhism, Sinhala Language and Sri Lankan culture. Venerable Wanduramba Kassapa Thero started our Dhamma School in 2012 with just 8 children. At present we have more than 50 students enrolled in our school. Enrolments are open for anyone over the age of 3 years who is interested in learning Buddhism and the Sinhala language.

If you are interested in sending your child to our Dhamma School then please complete the attached registration form and return the completed form to the Dhamma School Principle, Mr Bandara Wannaku. Prior to the admission we will invite you and your child to a meeting with the head of our Dhamma School, Ven Wanduramba Kassapa thero.

## Dhamma School Structure:



## Classes offered

Our Dhamma school offers a broad and balance curriculum that enable children of all ages to learn the life and teachings of the Buddha.

### • Buddhism (Dhamma) Classes:

- We have 6 Buddhism Classes. As we prepare our children for YMBA examinations, children are allocated to classes based on their age. All our classes are conducted in Sinhala Language but if necessary our teachers will provide instruction in English Language to assist children with limited knowledge of Sinhala.

### • Sinhala Language Class:

- There are 5 Sinhala Language classes. These classes are organised depending on children's age and the ability in Sinhala language. Class 1 is the entry level for Sinhala Language.

**Class Text Book – It is mandatory to purchase the relevant Buddhism text book; approx cost £1.00 (a nominal charge). Please consult the class teacher for further information. Replacement cost (lost books) is £10.00.**

## **Assessments**

Our teachers assess their class children's knowledge throughout the year. Children will be also sitting an annual end of year exams as part of Dhamma School's assessment procedures. We think end of year exams are important as they allow children the opportunity to demonstrate the highest achievement of which they are capable and competent. Teachers will use the end of year exam results to determine the child's progression to the next stage of the Dhamma School programme.

We are delighted to inform you that Athula Dassana Dhamma School is collaborated with YMBA Colombo and it is our expectation that all children will sit for YMBA exams. Our Teachers are working on set plans to cover the exam syllabus and conduct mock exams to ensure students will receive best possible support for YMBA exam. For further information please speak to your child's class teacher.

## **Our Teachers**

We have well educated, and experienced pool of volunteers teaching Buddhism and Sinhala Language and are very closely guided by the Venerable Wanduramba Kassapa Thero. We also have access to a Dance Teacher (Traditional Sri Lankan Dancing) and a Music Teacher (Classical Sri Lankan Music).

## **School Programme and Terms**

Our Dhamma School operates parallel to the Local School calendar. We have approx 5/6 weeks break during summer holidays and approx 2/3 weeks break during Christmas holidays.

**When:** Every Saturday from 2:30pm to 5:30pm

**Where:** Lampton School (Lampton Ave, Hounslow TW3 4EP)

## **Typical Dhamma School Day:**

- 2.30pm - 2.55pm: Observe Pansil by Ven Wanduramba Kassapa Thero followed by a weekly individual presentation\talk by a student(s)
- 2:55pm – 3:00pm: Class register
- 3.00pm - 4.00pm: Dhamma & Sinhala Language Classes
- 4.00pm- 4 .20pm: Interval
- 4.20pm - 5.20pm: Dhamma & Sinhala Language Classes
- 5.20pm – 5:30pm: short sermon by Ven Wanduramba Kassapa Thero & end of lessons

## **Dhamma School Event Calendar\***

- **Term 1 (September to December)**
  - ❖ Dhamma School Classes\Lessons
  - ❖ Prize giving Ceremony
  - ❖ Annual Dhamma school Development Committee meeting (AGM)
  - ❖ Parent\Teacher meetings
  - ❖ Katina Festival
- **Winter break (approx. 2/3 weeks)**

## Term 2 (January to July):

- ❖ Dhamma School Classes\Lessons
- ❖ Independence Day Celebrations
- ❖ Sri Lankan New Year Celebration
- ❖ Vesak Programme (special Sil programme, Vesak lanterns competition and Bakthi Geetha session)
- ❖ Poson - special Sil programme
- ❖ Parent\Teacher meetings
- ❖ End of Year Examinations and YMBA Examinations
- ❖ Annual Summer School trip\outing

### ➤ Summer break (approx. 5/6 weeks)

\*Please note that above schedule and events has been put together to provide parents with an ideal of a typical school events calendar; a more confirmed yearly schedule will be provided to parents at the beginning of school year/1<sup>st</sup> term.

## Extra Activities

All our Dhamma School Children actively participate in various functions\events organised by our Dhamma School and by the Athula Dassana



International Buddhist Vihara. These include events such as the Sri Lankan New Year Day celebrations; Independent Day Celebrations

and a number of Buddhist festival including special Vesak programmes, Katina Day events, Bakthi Geetha Programme and special Sil programmes are to name few.

## Dhamma School Fees

- One-off registration fee: £20.00 (per family)
- Weekly fee – **£2.00 or £3.00.** (£3.00 per week if you have 1+ children attending). Fee is payable every 12 weeks in advance; usually at the beginning of a term. All proceeds go towards to covering the cost of classroom hire.

## Dhamma School Rules, guidelines and responsibilities

The following guidelines and expectations of the Dhamma school are introduced to maintain consistency and a positive conducive learning environment.

- **Responsibilities of Students:**

- Respect and follow instructions of teaching staff.
- Behave in a responsible, polite and courteous manner at all times.
- Engage in the learning and attempt tasks assigned to the best of their ability, including homework.

- **Responsibilities of Parents:**

- Parents must ensure children attend school regularly and be punctual. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the Dhamma School of any planned or unplanned absences. All absences must be communicated to either the child's class teacher or the Dhamma School principal before 2:30pm on Saturday. Consecutive uninformed absences exceeding 3 weeks will lead to the child being excluded from the Dhamma School. We also operate a minimum attendance requirement rule. Effective from September 2018, we expect all students' participation to Saturday Dhamma school on regular basis to ensure continuity of the studies in the area of Buddhism, Sinhala and YMBA curriculum. To promote this, we have taken a number of initiatives including preference given to the students with more than 80% school attendance rate in selecting;
  - a) Children for Dhamma School extra-curricular activities
  - b) Participation in various functions/events organised by our Dhamma School and by the Athula Dassana International Buddhist Vihara
  - c) Selection of Dhamma school prefects
- Ensure that your child is suitably dressed;
  - Boys: Jathika Anduma (White).
  - Girls: Lama Sariya (white).
  - Jewellery: Girls should wear simple earrings; any other jewellery is prohibited.
  - Girls' hair should be tied back or worn in plats.

**\*\*Children who are unsuitably dressed might not be admitted to the class\*\***

- It is compulsory for children to observe Pansil therefore parents must ensure that children arrive on time; 2:15pm.
- Parents must ensure children bring their text books (Buddhism and Sinhala), writing books and pens\pencils to Dhamma School.
- Parents and children are encouraged to participate in Dhamma School activities such as the Vesak Celebrations, monthly Sil programmes, Independence Day Celebrations, New Year festival etc. Our aim is not only to provide a Buddhism and Sinhala education but also to promote our Sri Lankan culture and the rituals, therefore you and your child\children's participation in these activities will greatly benefit and influence your child\children's development.
- Children are not allowed to bring any mobile phones, computer tablets, any type of games and sport equipments to the Dhamma School.
- Parents must attend Parent\Teacher meetings and any other relevant meetings.
- Dhamma School Fees must be paid in full, on time at the beginning of each term and\or every 6 weeks. Your prompt payment will enable us to pay the class room hire fees to the Lampton School on time.

- **Code of conduct for parents and how to raise concerns:**

We are very fortunate to have a supportive and friendly parent body. Our parents recognise that educating children is a process that involves partnership between parents, class teachers and the Dhamma school community. As a partnership, our parents will understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons we continue to welcome and encourage parents to participate fully in the life of our school. Parents are students' most significant role models. Accordingly, the Dhamma School expects a high standard of personal behaviour from parents when they are attending the School, attending events or communicating with staff. Communication and interaction with staff, other parents are expected to interact civilly with staff at all times. The School takes seriously any issues that are brought to its attention. If parents express their concerns to the Dhamma School, they can expect to be treated with courtesy and respect in order to try and resolve the matter.

Any concerns you may have about the Dhamma School must be made through the appropriate channels, so they can be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned. If appropriate your first point of contact always should be with your child's class teacher. Please note that we do not expect parents to contact any of our Teaching staff by Telephone. All teaching staffs are available soon after every Dhamma School day, therefore we expect all parents to speak to relevant teacher in person. If the matter is urgent and cannot wait till next Dhamma School day, then parents are requested to contact Venerable Wanduramba Kassapa Thero. For any reason if you are unable to speak to the teacher in person then please put your concern in writing to the relevant teacher, head teacher or Venerable Wanduramba Kassapa Thero. Written and spoken communication should be courteous and respectful. Abusive language, raising your voice, insulting or violent is not appropriate and will not be tolerated and the Dhamma School may feel it is necessary to take appropriate action including ban the offending parents from entering the school.

- **Code of conduct for Teachers:**

A teacher is expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of personal and professional conduct.

**Core Principles:**

- The welfare of students is paramount.
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Staff should work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from another senior member of staff or head of the school over any incident, which may give rise to concern.
- Staff should treat students fairly, equally and with respect and without discrimination
- Staff should have a sensitive and positive attitude towards differences amongst students and identify and respond appropriately to students who have barriers to their learning, seeking advice where appropriate.

As a parent if you have any concern about a conduct of a teacher please contact Venerable Wanduramba Kassapa Thero immediately.

## Dhamma School Parents association (Dhamma School Development Committee)

The Athula Dassana Dhamma School has an active Parents' Association chaired by a parent. The primary purpose of the Association is to act as one of the channels of communication between parents and the Dhamma School. It also provides parents a forum through which their skills and ideas can contribute to the well-being of our Dhamma School.

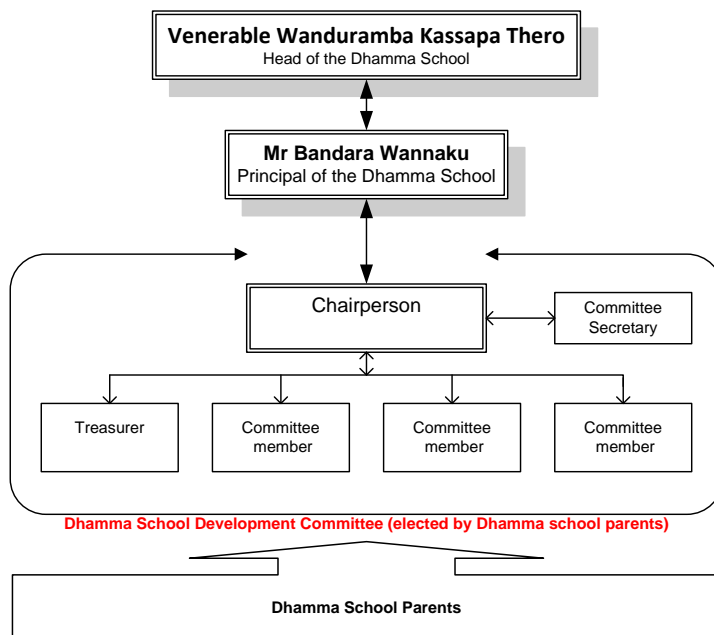
The Parents' Association meets twice a term at the Dhamma School to review past events and plan new ones. The Parents' Association always welcomes new, enthusiastic parents to participate in its activities. Dhamma School Parents elect the members of the Committee in December to serve for one year.

Dhamma School Development Committee is responsible for organising and managing most of our Dhamma School's events and activities.

Members of the Committee and their responsibilities;

- The Chairperson - provides leadership for the Committee and works closely with Ven Wanduramba Kassapa, Teaching Staff and all the Committee members to ensure that the association is run effectively.
- The Secretary - is responsible for ensuring that there are effective communication links between the committee members, the parents and the Dhamma School.
- The Treasurer - ensures that the Committee has agreed appropriate financial procedures. He/she is responsible for maintaining accurate financial records including the collection of Dhamma School Fees.
- The other Committee Members - play a vital role working alongside above listed posts.

## Dhamma School Development Committee Structure





## **Safeguarding Children**

Everyone in the education service plays a part in keeping children and young people safe from harm and abuse. Creating a safe learning environment, identifying pupils who are suffering or at risk of harm and then taking appropriate action, are vital to ensuring children are safe at home and at school.

We ensure that the Dhamma School environment is safe place for Children and ensure that all our teaching staffs don't pose a risk to children. We make certain that all our teaching staffs are fully vetted (criminal records checks; DBS). Most of our teachers have received Child protection and safeguarding training delivered by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

## **Communication between Dhamma School and parents**

To ensure that there is clear communication between school and home it is extremely important that parents notify school of any changes to their contact details. We will use email and text as our preferred mode of communication. If any parent has any objections or require any further information please contact the Dhamma School principal.

## **Further information**

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact either the head of the Dhamma School, Ven Wanduramba Kassapa Thero or Mr Bandara Wannaku, who is the principal of the Dhamma School.