



Reg No: A0030084W

ADMISSIONS POLICY & PROCEDURE

Introduction

The aim of this Admissions Policy & Procedure is to help make the choice to send your child to the Dandenong Ranges Steiner School as conscious as possible. A clear process also helps the teacher to receive the child into his or her class with knowledge and forethought, so that the needs of your child can be met. It is important that the admission procedure is covered with care and attention so that the teacher and the College of Teachers can welcome the child into their care. It is not just the individual teacher but the school as a whole who together will carry the joys and difficulties that each destiny encounter brings to them.

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School is open to all children irrespective of religion or race, as well as children of varying abilities. This is based on the principle that every child is gifted in one or more ways, whether academic, practical, social, cultural or other.

Making contact with the school

Your first contact with the school will be with a Staff Member, who will give or send you an **Information Package**. The Package includes:

- Admissions Policy & Procedure
- Fees Policy & Schedule
- Application for Enrolment form
- General brochure
- Current publications and brochures, e.g. Newsletter
- Additional information as required

You will also be informed of opportunities to visit the school such as Open Days or Tours.

If you decide to proceed with an Application for Enrolment the following procedures apply:

Playgroup

Please refer to a separate Playgroup introductory letter and Enrolment Application

Kindergarten

Complete an **Application for Enrolment** form. A non-refundable application fee of \$25 applies. This does not guarantee a place for your child, but will put your child on a waiting list.

Around **August/September** applications for **Kindergarten** for the following year will be processed and you will receive either a letter informing you that a place is not available for your child, or a letter offering your child a place and an **Acceptance Form**. The form should be returned to the school together with an acceptance fee of \$25 for each child to confirm your child's place. In term 4, you will be invited to an orientation session.

Individual interviews are conducted at the beginning of the following year when you may discuss your child's needs with the teacher.

Prep & School

Complete an Application for Enrolment form. A non-refundable application fee of \$25 applies. This does not guarantee a place, but will put your child on a waiting list. You will then be invited to attend an interview with the teacher.

You are asked to bring to the interview anything that will help give a clear and full picture of your child, e.g. drawings & paintings, mathematics, writing, school reports and projects. You will be asked about your child's health and developmental history, siblings, and any significant or unusual circumstances in the family history.

The teacher will share a picture of the class with you and answer questions pertaining to curriculum and school life. She or he will consider the social balance of the class and be aware of what a new child will bring.

If the interview is mutually successful, your child may visit the class before a final decision is made. You will then be asked to complete an **Acceptance Form**. The form should be returned to the school together with a \$25 acceptance fee.

Just prior to commencement you will be asked to complete a **Medical/Emergency & Permission** form, a **Day Excursions** form and a **Driver Declaration**. You will also need to provide a **School Entry Immunisation Certificate** and a copy of your child's **Birth Certificate** or extract.

Refundable Bond

Upon entry into Class One or a higher year, a bond of \$200 is payable. This bond is held in trust by the school for the duration of the student's time at the school. The bond is credited to your fees account during Term 4 of the year that the student leaves the school.

Special Needs

If the child has learning difficulties, an outside assessment by a specialist may be requested. A further interview or extra assessment may be necessary. If it becomes apparent that the child would require educational support beyond what the teacher can offer, another interview and assessment would take place with a Care Group consisting of: the teacher, parent, parent advocate, anthroposophical health practitioner, and other professional advisers where appropriate. This Care Group would establish in writing the needs of the child and the appropriate therapeutic and educational support needed.

The teacher would now have the opportunity to bring these findings to the College of Teachers to help make a decision regarding the application for enrolment. The Care Group will be informed of the College decision.

If the College of Teachers agrees that the child might benefit from this programme, a conditional acceptance would be offered, with a trial period and reassessment of the child's progress after a period of time. The teacher would confer with the Care Group and keep written records of all agreements and expectations with the parents.

Non-admission

If the number of applications in any one year level exceeds the number of places available, it may be necessary for the School to take some of the following factors into consideration:

- Siblings at the school or Playgroup
- Transfer from another Steiner School
- Application date
- Special circumstances

Age guidelines

Our approach has its roots in the understanding of the nature of the developing child, as indicated by the teachings of Rudolf Steiner.

Kindergarten/Prep

The young child lives in a world of "doing", of will activity. He or she needs plenty of opportunities to engage in rhythmical and domestic activities; cleaning, sweeping, digging, weeding, building, kneading... all the things that a child would see done, and wish to imitate, in an active household. For this reason the Kindergarten strives to be as little like school and as much like home as possible, with learning through imitation seen as a fundamental key to one's work with children at this stage of childhood (i.e. up to 7 years). Teachers acknowledge persistence, pre-literacy/numeracy etc.

With these things in mind, and based on the experience of many teachers, our age guidelines are as follows:

- **Prep** - 8 sessions per week. (4 full days)
Children attend fewer hours at the beginning of the year and build up to the full programme. For children who turn 6 in the given year but before September 30th.
- **Kindergarten** - Pre-School year – Big Kinder - 4 sessions per week.
For children who turn 5 in the given year but before September 30th.
- **Kindergarten** - Younger children – Little Kinder - 2 sessions per week.
For children who have turned 3½ years old.
Children who turn 4 after September 30th are recommended to wait until the following year.

Children may be in the Kindergarten/Prep for 2-3 years before going to Class 1 in the year they turn 7. It is not an expectation of the school that younger children attend the programme. It is offered as a service to those families who desire it.

Class One

Our Early Childhood teachers recommend that all children should be fully ready before entering Class One. They advise that the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of the child which takes place in the Kindergarten/Prep through play, movement, story telling and circle is crucial to the successful further development of every child.

For children turning 7 before September 30th. Acceptance of Prep children into Class One is not automatic. All children whose birthdays fall between 1st October and 31st December would be considered on an individual basis. This gives the Prep teacher and the parents a chance to establish the child's readiness for Class One.

The Way We Operate

Committee Of Management

The Committee of Management is responsible for decisions regarding administration and co-ordination of the organisation, finances, regulations, maintenance etc.

College of Teachers

The College of Teachers constitutes the heart of the school. It meets regularly to discuss, formulate and review educational policy, methodology and the School curriculum, in the light of the indications given by Rudolf Steiner. The work encompasses sharing of classroom experiences and the ratification of staff appointments.

The College of Teachers meets as equals. The value of the group working in equality seems to the College to be the true way of working in freedom. The College of Teachers does not vote but uses consensus to reach decisions.

The whole of the work of the College of Teachers is guided by a group meditation. A shared artistic activity further enriches the development of the College as a cooperative vehicle of the school. The College of Teachers carries the spiritual impulse of the school.

Exit Interviews

Families who choose to withdraw their child will be invited to attend an exit interview with their teacher.

Parent Education

"If the parents of our children perceive that we have the will to work in such a way that we place into the decades lying before us people capable of dealing with ever increasing difficulties of life - but still having questions to ask of life - then the parents will stand in the right relationship to the school. For it is upon the parents' understanding that we must build. We cannot work protected by the state or by any other authority. We can only work supported by a community of parents who have this understanding. We love our children; our teaching is inspired by knowledge of man and love of children. And another love is being built around us, the love of the parents for the true essence of the school. Only within such a community can we work towards a future of mankind able to prosper and withstand."

Rudolf Steiner

An on-going parent educational programme serves the purpose of deepening parents' understanding of the educational aims of Steiner education. Information evenings/discussion groups are held throughout the year. Participation is voluntary. The teacher also organises class evenings where she or he gives an overview of child development and the curriculum for that year. Specialist teachers may be invited to these evenings to share examples of work done with the children. At least one parent from each family is expected to attend these meetings.

Parent Responsibilities

In a developing school there are many tasks. The full participation of all families is required to carry our school through these early years of its development. Families are asked to contribute wherever possible.

In addition all families are expected to participate in fund-raising activities, working bees, etc. Not only does this play an integral role in the running of the school, it helps families to feel involved and fosters a sense of community.

Updated February 2009