

**Dandenong Ranges Steiner School**

**School Parent  
Handbook**



# Dandenong Ranges Steiner School

## SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

We extend a warm welcome to you and your family. This booklet is to provide you with information about our school. We want you to feel an important part of our activity here, so please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions at all.

### COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

The College of Teachers constitutes the heart of the school. They meet 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 meet 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 do 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.

*“The Greatest Divine Revelation on Earth is the Evolving Human Being”  
Rudolf Steiner*

### THE CLASS TEACHER

The Class Teacher will have full State qualifications and have embarked Steiner Teacher Training. All teachers are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

The very different understanding with which a Steiner school approaches education gives a different definition to the role of the teacher.

The Class Teacher remains with the class group throughout the Primary years. The task of the teacher is seen as a creative and spiritual one, requiring continuous personal renewal as well as the thorough study and preparation of class content. The teacher works with the class as a group, whilst the long term nature of the relationship allows an intimate knowledge of individual children.

Each teacher has a mentor appointed, both for themselves and their parent group. The mentor is available to share, support and clarify any aspects of classroom activity.

### CURRICULUM

*“The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility  
– these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education.”  
Rudolf Steiner*

The Steiner curriculum is based on the developmental phases of childhood and as such, constitutes a guide to these stages. It provides a balanced approach to the modern school curriculum. The academic, artistic and social aspects are treated as complementary facets of a single program of learning.

Our Curriculum document is available for perusal in the office.

**Class Teaching:** the day, the week, the year is structured in such way as to provide a balance between concentration and relaxation, mental and practical work, movement and rest, listening and participating. Thus, much learning is also sung, recited, walked, danced, painted, retold, enacted, etc. In this way, academic subjects are enlivened and enriched in a way that meets the individual child as well as the class group.

Each day begins with a verse. The main lesson of new content is then taught, a block of approximately 2 hours over 3 – 4 weeks. The subject matter is then left to ‘digest’. The day continues with skills that require regular practice and subjects given by specialist teachers.

Each day ends with a verse.

**Form Drawing:** unique to Steiner schools, this is a drawing exercise on paper to experience a quality of movement, as opposed to drawing an external object. Initially, simple forms and their transformations lay the foundation for writing and reading; spatial orientation and pattern recognition for maths and later, geometry. The drawing of forms from the great civilizations and tribal groupings of humankind enhances insights into the people who created them. Ultimately, the drawing of form helps the child to unfold his own inner nature.

**Eurythmy:** also unique to Steiner schools, Eurythmy is a dance-like art form, aimed at harmonising developmental processes, integrating thinking, feeling and willing, and cultivating an aesthetic sense. It directly supports classroom work as an experience of sound through movement. It is taught throughout the school years by a trained Eurythmy teacher.

**Craft:** is an integral part of the Steiner curriculum by its ‘learning through making’ basis. Items made are real things that serve real needs. Many items made will be used by the children themselves in the classroom. Craft is taught throughout the school years by a specialist teacher.

**Music:** is fully integrated in all lessons through song and movement, providing mood and emphasis. Throughout the primary years, recorder playing will be learnt. From Class Three, private stringed instrument lessons (violin or cello) with an instrumental teacher begins. A class orchestra then follows. This is an integral part of the school program.

**3 Fold Movement:** is a movement-based therapy designed to help children integrate coordination within space and with their feeling and thinking. It is conducted by a trained therapist and given to all children in small groups in Term 4 of Class One and Term 1 of Class Two. Thereafter, any specific needs will be addressed individually.

**German:** is taught from Class 1 to 6. German is the language of a cultured nation that produced personalities whose influence is felt to this day far beyond German boundaries. This influence stretches from the realm of music to the Natural Sciences and the Humanities, in particular Philosophy, Psychology, Archaeology, and History. German is the language in which the mainstreams of modern philosophy have found expression.

**Computers & Technology:** we believe it is not appropriate or relevant for children to become involved with them from a young age. Electronic media is not used in the classroom. Instead, we promote manual and mental dexterity, and we honour personal interaction in our teaching. Computers are introduced in High School.

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

Procedures employed by teachers to promote a harmonious atmosphere beneficial to growth and learning include:

- creation of rhythm in the day
- redirection of activity
- availability and proximity
- verse or song to heal a situation
- story to ‘explain’ a situation

Our Behaviour Management Policy is available for perusal in the office.

## **CLASS PARENT INFORMATION EVENINGS**

Parent evenings specific to each class, are scheduled regularly throughout the year and the presence of at least one parent from each family is expected.

Teachers hold the view that television, videos, movies, computer and other screen-based activities are damaging to children's natural development and should be avoided. Please ask your child's teacher if you would like more information.

## **PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS**

Individual parent/teacher interviews are scheduled regularly throughout the year. However, if you wish to discuss something at length, interview appointments are available on request.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

For the healthy development of each child, teachers ask that you consider the general recommendations of:

- providing unpackaged, wholesome food for your child.
- ensuring your child has enough sleep.
- helping your child to dress appropriately for the season.
- ensuring your child arrives to school on time.
- ensuring your child attends school regularly.
- planning any holidays to coincide with school or public holidays.
- any specific recommendations pertaining to your child.

In a pioneering school, there are many tasks. The full participation of all families is required to carry our school through these early years of its development. Many jobs around the school are performed voluntarily and you are asked to contribute wherever possible. Working bees and fund-raising activities play an integral role in the running of our school. They help keep fees low and strengthen our community by involvement. If you have any skills you can offer or access to relevant services, we would love to hear from you.

## **CLASS CARERS**

One or more class carers volunteer annually in each class. Their role is supportive of the class teacher, to encourage all parents to become involved in class and whole school activities, to facilitate open communication and welcome new parents into the class. Some of their activities may include:

- contacting new families in the class and encouraging other parents living nearby to introduce themselves.
- activating the telephone tree for the class teacher.
- assisting the class teacher in organising class functions such as working bees, excursions, P/T meetings, rosters, etc.

Each family will receive a class list/phone tree early in first term.

## **CLOTHING**

Clothing needs to be well fitted (not loose or sloppy) and not obstructing work or movement in any way. Plain coloured clothes are acceptable, excluding commercial logos or black coloured clothing.

Children will need a wide brimmed or neck protected hat in Terms 1 and 4.

Children will need a waterproof coat and hat in Terms 2 and 3.

Children need comfortable shoes, boots or supportive strap sandals.

Hair needs to be held back off the face. Shoulder length or longer hair needs to be tied back.

Our Clothing Policy is available for perusal in the office.

## **MARKET DAY**

Each year, we hold at least one market. Our Market Day is a wonderful opportunity to become involved in our school community. This is our school's main fundraiser.

## **OPEN DAY**

Our Open Day is intended to showcase the work of the students to the wider community.

Students are required to be at school on Open Day.

## **LIBRARY**

We have a small parent library available to all families. It is housed outside the office.

## **STUDY GROUP**

A fortnightly study group meets to explore anthroposophical texts.

## **CRAFT GROUP**

A craft group is held with an experienced facilitator. No experience necessary & all welcome.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**News Sheet:** a regular *News Sheet* is circulated to all families. It includes dates of events, community news, articles of interest and announcements from staff, the College of Teachers and Committee.

**Pockets:** each child is allocated a 'pocket' where notices and the *News Sheet* are placed for collection. These are hung outside each classroom. You may also use these pockets to leave notes for the teacher, College, Committee and others. However, please note that fees must be paid at the office.

## **COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE**

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School values and encourages open communication. Therefore, if you have any questions at all about your child, the school or procedures, we ask that you bring it directly to the person concerned. Please ask at the office, your class teacher or your class teachers' mentor for direction.

The College of Teachers is responsible for educational policy, curriculum and staffing. The Committee of Management is responsible for finances, regulations and operation. School Policies and Curriculum are available for perusal in the office.

## **THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT**

The Committee of Management is comprised of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, two representatives of the College of Teachers and up to two others. All are volunteers elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association, or appointed by the College of Teachers.

The Committee is responsible for decisions regarding administration and co-ordination of the organisation, and management of community activity groups.

Decisions are reached by consensus of members and we meet regularly. Meetings are open to all interested families. Parents are encouraged to attend to learn more about our school and discover the opportunities available to play an active role in our development. The Chairperson must be notified of intention to attend. Any items that you wish to raise need to be listed on the agenda and lodged with the Chairperson 24 hours prior to a meeting.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School Association is incorporated in Victoria with Consumer & Business Affairs. Registration No: A0030084W.

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School is an independent School, Kindergarten and Playgroup based on the educational model founded by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). It is registered as an Independent School with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). Registered School No: 1975.

The Kindergarten is also registered as a Children's Service Centre with the Department of Human Services. Licence No: 3287.

## **ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS & ENROLMENT PROCEDURE**

Please refer to the Admissions Policy and Procedure.

## **FEE POLICY & SCHEDULE**

Please refer to the Fee Policy & Schedule.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

School begins gently for Class 1. Until the end of February, Class 1 operates Monday to Friday 8.45am – 12.00pm. For the remainder of the year, Class 1 operates full days, except for Wednesday being 8.45am – 12.00pm, allowing a rest afternoon.

School hours for all other classes are Monday to Friday 8.45am – 3.15pm.

## **ABSENCES**

If your child is sick, on holidays or unable to attend school, we need to be notified. This may be verbal or written.

## **ILLNESS**

If your child is unwell, they need to stay at home until fully recovered.

If your child has come into contact with an infectious disease, the school needs to be notified immediately. The school can inform you of the required exclusion periods.

If your child becomes ill or sustains a substantial injury whilst at school, you will be notified immediately. If you cannot be contacted, the emergency person stated on the Medical & Emergency Form will be notified.

## **IMMUNISATION**

The school is required to request the immunisation status of your child. If your child is immunised, parents are required to provide an Immunisation Status Certificate. If your child is not immunised and a relevant medical case is reported in the school, you will be required to keep your child at home.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

Please ask your teacher if you would like to see our Emergency Evacuation Procedures. These are kept in each classroom.

In the event of a bushfire in this area, all children will be kept within the school buildings with their teacher. Please do not attempt to come into the area. Parents will be notified by telephone when it is safe to collect their child.

On Total Fire Ban days parents have the option of keeping their child at home.

## TERM DATES 2009

<b>Term 1</b> Tuesday 3 February – Friday 3 April	Monday 2 February – Staff Conference Monday 16 March – Curriculum Day
<b>Term 2</b> Monday 20 April – Friday 19 June	Tuesday 5 May – Curriculum Day Wednesday 10 June – Reporting Day
<b>Term 3</b> Monday 13 July – Friday 11 September	Wednesday 12 August – Curriculum Day
<b>Term 4</b> Monday 5 October – Wednesday 16 December	Friday 23 October – Curriculum Day Monday 2 November – Report Writing Day

## CONTACT DETAILS

### Campus Locations:

#### Classes 1 – 6

11C Duffys Road  
EMERALD VIC 3782  
phone: (03) 8790 4797 (main office)

#### Prep & Kindergarten

51 School Road  
MENZIES CREEK VIC 3159  
Prep phone: (03) 5968 2630 (urgent only)  
Kindergarten phone: (03) 5968 2122 (urgent only)

### Main Office & Postal Address:

11C Duffys Road  
EMERALD VIC 3782  
phone & answering service: (03) 8790 4797  
fax: (03) 8790 4793  
email: [drss@ozemail.com.au](mailto:drss@ozemail.com.au)  
website: [www.drss.vic.edu.au](http://www.drss.vic.edu.au)

*“Receive the child in Reverence  
Educate him in Love  
Let him go forth in Freedom.”*

*...Rudolf Steiner*