We extend a warm welcome to you and your family. The aim of 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. This group 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.

*The Greatest Divine Revelation on Earth is the Evolving Human Being*

- Rudolf Steiner

**The Class Teacher**

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 (Class 1 – 6). 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 him/herself and his/her 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 seven year developmental phases of childhood and as such, constitutes a guide to these stages. Please see the school website for more information on the seven year phases. 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.

The DRSS follows the curriculum documented by Steiner Education Australia (SEA) and endorsed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA). The full documents are available on SEA's website: http://steinereducation.edu.au/curriculum/. A summary is available on the school's website: http://www.drss.vic.edu.au/curriculum.html.

Class Teaching

The day, the week and the year are structured in such a 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 closes with a verse.

Please visit the school website for further information on main lessons and the core curriculum subjects of Maths, English, History, Science and Physical Education.

Form Drawing

Form Drawing is 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 civilisations and tribal groupings of humankind enhances insights into the people who created them. Ultimately, the drawing of form helps the child to unfold his/her own inner nature.

**Eurythmy**

Eurythmy is 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**

The craft program is an integral part of the Steiner curriculum by its ‘learning through making’ basis. It develops the children’s fine motor skills and ability to following verbal instructions. Items made are real things that serve real needs. Many items made will be used by the children themselves in the classroom, such as recorder bags, cushions and slippers. Craft is taught throughout the school years by a specialist teacher.

**Music**

Music is fully integrated in all lessons through song and movement, providing mood and emphasis. Throughout the primary years, recorder playing is taught. From Class Three, individual, 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.

**Threefold Group Movement**

Threefold group movement is a movement-based therapy designed to help children integrate co-ordination 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 the beginning terms of Class Two. Thereafter, any specific needs are addressed individually. Fees for this program are added to the school fees during the relevant terms.

**Threefold Therapy/Extra Lesson Program**

This program is designed to develop the children’s movements and is based upon the premise that difficulties in reading, writing and arithmetic could be due to inadequate spatial orientation, poor body geography and to sensory integration difficulties if a person has missed a stage in the first seven years of development.
It is conducted by a trained therapist and is provided as individual sessions. A teacher may suggest extra lesson work for a particular child to support the work being done in class. New students coming into the school after Class One are usually required by the class teacher to have an Extra Lesson assessment.

German

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 mainstems of modern philosophy have found expression.

Computers & Technology

The Steiner Educational philosophy believes 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 program.

Behaviour Management Program

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 from 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.

The Steiner Education philosophy holds 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. It is important that time is allowed to find a mutually convenient time to discuss concerns as afternoon pickup time is not always suitable to teachers.

Parent Responsibilities

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

- provide 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.

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, Parent/Teacher meetings, rosters, etc..

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 need a wide brimmed or neck protected hat in Terms 1 and 4. They also need a waterproof coat and hat in Terms 2 and 3. They need comfortable shoes, boots or supportive strap sandals. Hair needs to be held back off the face. It is best to tie back shoulder length or longer. Our Clothing Policy is available for perusal in the office.
School Community

The DRSS is supported by a strong community of parents and others. There are many extra efforts being made by the DRSS community to support and enhance the children’s journey through school. We encourage new and existing families to participate in some of the school's extensive community activities. It’s a great way to get to know other families and enjoy the vibrant community here at the school. Many jobs around the school are performed voluntarily and you are invited to participate and 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.

Working Bees

Working Bees are scheduled, up to four times per year, for parents to be involved in general maintenance, spring cleaning & special projects. At least one parent from each family is expected to attend at least two working bees per year. Families who are unable to fulfil this requirement will be asked to pay a Working Bee Levy. In addition to attending Working Bees, regular contributions to other Groups also qualify for withholding the working bee levy from your family’s account. Please note that a minimum of 10 hours work is required.

Publicity and Fundraising

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School Publicity Group provides one of the many hands offered by parents to the school. Our objectives are to increase awareness and exposure of our school, with the intention of creating strong public identity, ultimately increasing enrolments. We endeavour to do this through practical means such as regular market stalls, library displays, website improvements and paid advertising. The Group has recently combined with the Fund-Raising Group and, in addition to the above, will oversee special fund-raising events as well as ongoing, smaller fund-raising activities.

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 publicity and fundraising event.
Open Day

Our Open Day is intended to showcase the work of the students to the wider community. Students in Classes 1-6 are required to be at school on Open Day.

Parent Library

In addition to the collection for students and a collection for teachers, we have a small Parent Library available to all families. It is housed in two locations - in the foyer outside the office and in the Community Room at the Early Childhood Campus. You may borrow and return from either location. Anyone interested in helping with the management of these collections is welcome to contact the Librarian.

Communication

News Sheet

A fortnightly whole school News Sheet is circulated to all families and members of staff. It includes announcements from management and staff as well as community notices. It is automatically sent via email, and each family also receives a hard copy via their oldest child's 'pocket' (see below), unless otherwise requested.


Pockets

Each child is allocated a 'pocket' where notices etc. are placed for collection. These are located outside each classroom. You may also use these pockets to leave notes for the teacher however we ask that they are not used for purposes unrelated to school.

Notice Boards

School notices are placed on the notice board outside the main (admin) building. There is a general noticeboard inside the foyer.

Communication Procedure

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School values and encourages open communication. Therefore, if you have any question at all about your child, the school or procedures, we ask that you bring it directly to the relevant person or group concerned. A copy of the Communication Policy with details of how to bring
a concern or grievance is available from the office. The College of Teachers is responsible for educational policy, curriculum and staffing. The Committee of Management is responsible for finances, regulations and operations.

**Exit Interviews**

Families who choose to withdraw their child will be invited to attend an exit interview with the bursar and/or their child’s teacher.

**Philosophy**

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School is a co-educational school conducted in accordance with the educational indications of Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). This education is creative, artistic and academic, stimulating the imagination of the child, and thereby strengthening each child’s thinking, feeling and ability to do. By fully exploring the wealth of world wisdom from ancient times to our present age, the school will resource children for the challenges of today, fostering a deep love of humanity and the world around them. Located within the Hills District, the Dandenong Ranges Steiner School offers a unique rural setting. Underlying the school’s activity and focus is the integrity of the Bio Dynamic Gardening and Farming occurring on site. This is supported by the Bio Dynamic Association.

**Democratic Principles**

The programs and teachings of the School support and promote the principles and practices of Australian democracy, including a commitment to elected Government, the rule of law, equal rights before the law, freedom of speech and association and the values of openness and tolerance.

**Administration**

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School Association is incorporated in Victoria with Consumer & Business Affairs.

The School is registered as an Independent School with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). It is also a member of Steiner Education Australia (SEA -formerly the RSSA) and of Independent Schools Victoria (ISV -formerly the AISV).The Kindergarten is registered as a Licensed Children’s Service Centre with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Is also a member of the Australian Association for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Education. The Playgroup is a member of Playgroups Victoria.
The Committee of Management

The Committee of Management is comprised of two representatives elected from the membership of the Association, two representatives of the College of Teachers and up to two others 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. Meetings are held fortnightly and are open to all interested families. The Chairperson must be notified of intention to attend.

Admissions Requirements & Enrolments Procedure

Please refer to the Admissions Policy and Procedure that you received in your Information Pack. This document is also available from the school office and can be accessed from the school website.

Fee Policy & Schedule

Please refer to our separate Fee Policy and Fee Schedule that you received in your Information Pack. This document is also available from the office and website.

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. For Prep hours please refer to the Kindergarten Parent Handbook.

Absences

If your child is sick, on holidays or unable to attend school, the school must be notified. This may be by phone or in writing.

Illness

If your child is unwell, s/he needs 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 child's Family Data Collection Form will be notified.
Immunisation

Parents are required to provide a School Entry Immunisation Status Certificate. Information on how to obtain a Certificate is available from the school office or from the Victorian Department of Health:

Emergencies

An emergency is any event, arising either internally or from an external source, which may adversely affect some or all of the occupants within this school and which requires an immediate response. Please ask the office if you would like to see our Containment & Critical Incident Plan & Procedures.

Evacuation & Fire Drill - Policies & Procedures

Policy
The School will close on days when the Fire Danger Rating is Severe, Extreme or Code Red. In the event of a threat in the area, all children will be evacuated with their teacher. Please do not attempt to come into the area. Parents will be notified by SMS when it is safe to collect their child/ren.

To ensure that the likely types of emergencies that may occur at this school, can be handled safely and effectively, DRSS will implement the following Evacuation Drill practice:
- notification to staff of a planned evacuation drill.
- regular evacuation/fire drills. These will be planned to occur at different times of the day and week.
- notification to the school community of evacuation procedure, by publication in school handbook and having the procedure available for perusal in each teaching space.
- Immediately after an evacuation drill, all Wardens shall attend a debriefing session and evaluate checklists. Where any deficiencies are noted, amendments shall be made to the Procedure and, if necessary, the Containment & Critical Incident Plan

Procedure
As staff may be required to self-manage incidents until such time as emergency services are able to respond, the following procedure is to be practiced to ensure the management of incidents safely and effectively.

In the event of a fire or evacuation:
An alarm will sound throughout the school

In an evacuation, the teacher must:
- close the windows
- retrieve Attendance Roll, Student Medications, Evacuation Pack
- assemble class quietly and orderly
- exit the room closing the class door behind
- classroom teacher to check other designated rooms:
  - Class 1 teacher to check adjacent toilets
  - Class 2 teacher to check teachers' office
  - Class 3 teacher to check teachers' storeroom/kitchen
  - Class 4 teacher to check toilets
  - Class 5 teacher to check library
  - Class 6 teacher to check main building toilets

All classes are to use designated exit points and then proceed to the assembly area in school hall.

At the assembly point, the teacher must:
- call Class Roll
- immediately report unexplained absences to Chief Warden
- remain at assembly point until all clear is given (ON-SITE DRILL)
  or
- all class teachers will then move their class group of students in an orderly manner and accompany them onto waiting buses, beginning with Class 1 through to Class 6.
- Chief Warden signals for buses to proceed in one movement off site to either Fountain Gate Shopping Centre, Narre Warren or Wellington Park Shopping Centre, Rowville. (OFF-SITE DRILL)

Once in a safe area, the students must be kept within the defined area and not allowed to stray.

Contact Details

Primary (Crystal Brook) Campus, postal address and contact details:
11c Duffys Road, Emerald VIC 3782
Phone 03 8790 4797
Fax 03 8790 4793
drss@ozemail.com.au
www.drss.vic.edu.au

Early Childhood Campus
51 School Road, Menzies Creek
Prep 03 5968 2630 (emergency only)
Kinder 03 5968 2122 (emergency only)