Dandenong Ranges Steiner School
Parent Handbook
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. 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 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. 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 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 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 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 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**: 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 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**: 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**: 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** 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 developing school, there are many tasks. The full participation of all families is required to carry our school through these early years. 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, 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. 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.

COMMUNICATION

News Sheet
A fortnightly whole school News Sheet is circulated to all families. It includes announcements from both staff and committee as well as community notices. This is automatically sent via email. Please let the office know if you would like to also receive a hardcopy.

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 they are not to be 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. Please ask your class teacher for direction.
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 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 and artistic, 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. It 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 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 and we meet fortnightly. 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.

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

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, 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 Medical, Emergency & Permission Form will be notified.

IMMUNISATION

Parents are required to provide a School Entry Immunisation Status Certificate.
EMERGENCIES

Please ask the office if you would like to see our Containment & Critical Incident Plan & Procedures. The School (Playgroup, Kindergarten, Prep and Primary) will close on days when the Fire Danger Rating is "Extreme" or "Code Red". Parents have the option of keeping their child at home on days when the Fire Danger Rating is "Severe". A day with a Fire Danger Rating of "Severe" or above will also be a day of Total Fire Ban. Further information on Fire Danger Rating is available from the School office or from the Country Fire Authority website.

In the event of an emergency in this area, all children will be evacuated 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 children.

EVACUATION & FIRE DRILL POLICY & PROCEDURES

An emergency is any event, arising either internally or from an external source, which may adversely affect some or all of the occupants within the school and which requires an immediate response.

To ensure that the likely types of emergencies that may occur at this school can be handled safely and effectively, the school implements the following practice:

- notifying staff of a planned evacuation drill
- holding regular evacuation/fire drills. These will be planned to occur at different times of the day and week
- informing parents when an evacuation occurs through the News Sheet
- notifying the school community of evacuation procedure by publication in the Parent Handbook and by having the procedure available for perusal in each teaching space.

Immediately after an evacuation drill, key participants shall attend a debriefing session and evaluate the procedure. Where any deficiencies are noted, amendments shall be made to the Procedure.

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 that incidents are managed 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
- Retrieve Student Data Collection Forms
- Retrieve Student medications
- Assemble class quietly and in an orderly manner.
- Exit the room closing the class door behind
- Each classroom teacher to check other designated areas as follows:
  - Class 1 teacher to check Building 2 (Class 1 & 2) Toilets
  - Class 2 teacher to check Building 2 (Class 1 & 2) Teachers’ Room
  - Class 3 teacher to check Building 3 (Main Bldg) Toilets
  - Class 4 teacher to check Building 4 (Class 4 & 5) Teachers’ Room / Storeroom / Kitchen
  - Class 5/6 teacher to check Building 4 (Class 4 & 5) Toilets

All classes are to use designated exit points and then proceed to the assembly area in front car park.

At the assembly point each teacher must:

- Call Attendance Roll
- Immediately report unexplained absences to Chief Warden
- Remain at assembly point until all clear is given
CONTACT DETAILS

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

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

Updated Jan 2013
# Dandenong Ranges Steiner School

## Term Dates 2013

**(Version January 2013)**

### Term One

**Wednesday 30 Jan - Thursday 28 March**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues 29 Jan</td>
<td>Staff Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 30 Jan</td>
<td>Students Commence – Classes 2-6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kinder &amp; Prep family interviews commence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 31 Jan</td>
<td>Students Commence – Class 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 11 Feb</td>
<td>Students Commence – Kinder &amp; Prep</td>
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<td>Tues 19 Feb</td>
<td>Shrove Tuesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 5 Mar</td>
<td>Curriculum Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 11 Mar</td>
<td>Labour Day Public Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 21 Mar</td>
<td>Primary School St Michael Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Fri 29 Mar)</td>
<td>Good Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mon 1 Apr)</td>
<td>Easter Monday</td>
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### Term Two

**Monday 15 Apr – Friday 21 June**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 25 Apr</td>
<td>Anzac Day Public Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 11 May</td>
<td>Harvest Market &amp; Open Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 12 May</td>
<td>Mothers' Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 17 May</td>
<td>Curriculum Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 10 June</td>
<td>Queen's Birthday Public Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 14 June</td>
<td>Reporting Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 20 June</td>
<td>Primary School Winter Festival</td>
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### Term Three

**Monday 15 July – Friday 13 Sept**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 12 Aug</td>
<td>Curriculum Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 1 Sept</td>
<td>Fathers' Day</td>
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### Term Four

**Monday 7 Oct – Friday 13 Dec**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun 20 Oct</td>
<td>Spring Market &amp; Fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 21 Oct</td>
<td>Rest Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 4 Nov</td>
<td>Reporting Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 5 Nov</td>
<td>Melbourne Cup Day Public Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 20 Nov</td>
<td>Curriculum Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 12 Dec</td>
<td>Primary School Christmas Festival</td>
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