



Admissions Policy and Procedure

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School (DRSS) is an independent school, kindergarten and playgroup founded on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. Our Kindergarten is a feeder for our school and a proportion of funds raised or fees collected by the school may be used to support the operations of the Kindergarten. The School operates in accordance with Victorian anti-discrimination legislation. DRSS does not discriminate in accepting applications for admission on the basis of race, colour, gender, sexuality, physical or mental disability, religion, national extraction or social origin. It is an equal opportunity school which aims to treat all applicants fairly and is open to all children of varying abilities.

Choosing a school for your child is an important decision. We encourage you as parents to find out as much about our school and Steiner Education as possible before you enrol, in order to make the best informed decision. We strongly encourage you to attend a school tour and/or an annual Open Day prior to enrolment.

How to Apply

After the initial inquiry and conversation with the Enrolment Officer, an information pack is forwarded to prospective families and booking into a tour is arranged. A tour of the school is an essential part of our enrolment process as it provides families with a feeling sense of the school, an understanding of how our staff and students interact and an insight into how the curriculum is taught in the

classroom. Families are required to attend a school tour early on in the enrolment process in order to inform the decision to move ahead with application.

To apply for enrolment, please complete an Enrolment Application form and pay the non-refundable application fee of \$100. Application does not guarantee a place, but ensures your child will be put on our waiting list. When a place becomes available for a student, parents will be notified and invited to attend an interview with the appropriate teacher.

During the interview with the teacher, you will be asked about your child's health and developmental history, siblings and any significant circumstances in the family history. You will be 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.

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 consider what a new child will bring. As part of the interview process, children will be asked to meet with learning support staff to assess the child's learning needs.

If the interview is mutually successful, your child will be invited to visit the class for a trial before a final decision is made. If your child is offered a place in a class, you will be asked to complete a Student Enrolment Form. The Student Enrolment Form must be returned to the school office together with the \$500 refundable entry bond before your child will be allowed to start in the class. (Please see "Refundable Bond" below).

Prior to commencement you will also be asked to complete electronic Family & Student Data Collection forms, as well as Student Conveyance Allowance and, if applicable, Camp Sport and Excursion Fund Applications and provide any relevant medical forms. You are also required to provide an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register and a copy of your child's Birth Certificate or extract. Kindergarten placements will not be confirmed until these documents are received or you qualify for an exemption. The Immunisation History Statement is the only document Kindergartens may accept. Families with current parenting orders or intervention orders need to supply copies to the office.

Prior to enrolment, all new families are required to meet with the Business Manager to confirm their fee payment schedule.

Any enrolments will be subject to our Terms and Conditions document and our Fee Policy which can be found on our website.

Withdrawing a Student

One full term's notice in writing must be given to the Enrolment Officer if withdrawing your child/children from the School (including Kindergarten). If the required notice is not provided, one full term fees (i.e. one quarter of the annual fee) will be charged. "One full term" means a complete school calendar term.

Additional Needs

Families have an obligation to disclose any physical, learning or behavioural needs of the child at the time of application.

If your child has learning difficulties, an assessment by an external 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, further 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 have the opportunity to bring these findings to the College of Teachers to enable a decision regarding the application for enrolment, or acceptance of Class One readiness in the case of a child currently in Prep. The Care Group will be informed of the College decision.

Offer of a Place

Acceptance of a place in Kindergarten does not automatically provide a place in the School. However, the School makes every endeavour to ensure that where possible and subject to adherence by the parents with all school policies and demonstrated alignment with the School's philosophy, a place will be made available to the child at the School. Priority will be afforded to potential students based on the selection criteria set out in the Admissions Policy. During Term 2 of the Big Kinder year, teachers and the Enrolment Officer will use the following selection criteria to offer places in the School. Students in Big Kinder, Forest Playgroup, and other students on the waiting list will be considered in this process.

Selection Criteria

The following criteria will be used when offering a place in the School in the order listed.

1. Siblings of current or past students at the school
2. Demonstrated compatibility of the philosophy underlying Steiner Education with the beliefs and practices of the adults in the child's home environment.
3. Demonstrated ability to pay kindergarten/school fees.
4. Children currently enrolled in Big Kinder or Forest Playgroup.
5. Children of teachers at DRSS.
6. Past students, children of past students, students transferring from other Steiner schools, children of past DRSS teachers
7. Application date
8. 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. The minimum age cut off for each grade are listed below:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Little Kinder | 4 by December 31st of the current school year |
| Big Kinder | 5 by December 31st of the current school year |
| Prep | 6 by December 31st of the current school year |
| Class One | 7 by December 31st of the current school year |
| Class Two | 8 by December 31st of the current school year |
| Class Three | 9 by December 31st of the current school year |
| Class Four | 10 by December 31st of the current school year |
| Class Five | 11 by December 31st of the current school year |
| Class Six | 12 by December 31st of the current school year |

Children born in October and November are considered to be “on the cusp” and may be interviewed by more than one teacher to determine the best placement.

Class Caps

To ensure the needs of students can be met, classes are capped at the following numbers unless special circumstances apply.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| Little Kinder | 22 students |
| Big Kinder & Prep | 27 students |
| Classes 1 – 4 | 28 students |
| Classes 5 & 6 | 25 students |

Parent Responsibilities

Families are encouraged to contribute as members of the DRSS community. It is requested that all families participate in fund-raising activities and working bees. Family participation not only plays an integral role in the running of the School, it also helps families to feel involved and fosters a sense of community.

In order to determine a family's demonstrated compatibility with the philosophy underlying Steiner education, the following factors will be considered:

- child's exposure to media via technology
- attendance at parent teaching meetings, school working bees, school fair, open days etc
- willingness to follow DRSS dress code guidelines
- strong and nurturing family rhythms and routines

Non-Admission

The school may, at its discretion, refuse an enrolment at any time. Continued enrolment is dependent upon adherence to the school's policies and procedures. The school may, at its discretion, cancel the enrolment of any student who places, or whose parent places, the good order of the school into jeopardy.

Complaints Handling

The School has a Complaints Handling Policy which is available on the school's website at drss.vic.edu.au/resources/policies and a hard copy is also available on request from the school's Enrolments Officer.

Students and parents have the opportunity at all times to discuss particular concerns with the relevant staff member closest to the issue. If a satisfactory resolution is not resolved or the matter is of sufficient seriousness a formal complaint can be lodged.

Privacy Statement

The following information describes how the school uses and manages personal information. The various forms used by the school ask for personal information about your child as well as family members and others who provide care for your child. We collect this information to register your child and allocate staff and

resources to provide for their educational and support needs. All staff at Dandenong Ranges Steiner School and the relevant Government Departments are required, by the National Privacy Principles contained in the Commonwealth Privacy Act, to protect the information provided by you.

The School typically collects personal information by way of forms filled out by parents, face-to-face meetings or interviews and telephone calls. Occasionally, people other than parents and students provide personal information to the school, for example a report provided by a medical professional or a reference from another school.

TYPE OF INFORMATION REQUESTED

Health

Health information is requested so that School staff can properly care for your child. This includes information about any medical condition or disability your child may have, medication your child may rely on while at school, any known allergies and contact details of your child's doctor. The school depends on you to provide all relevant health information as withholding health information may put your child's health at risk.

Family Details

Our school requires information about all parents, guardians or carers so that we may take account of family arrangements. Family Court or Magistrate Orders setting out any access restrictions and parenting plans should be made available to the Teachers and Office Staff. *Please tell us as soon as possible about any changes to these arrangements.* Please contact your Teacher or the Office Staff if you wish to discuss, in strict confidence, any matters relating to family arrangements.

Family background information

This includes information about a person's country of birth, aboriginality, language spoken at home and parent occupations. This information is collected

so that the school receives correct funding for our students. It is also used by State and Federal education departments for monitoring, planning and resource allocation. All of this information is kept strictly confidential and the Department will not otherwise disclose the information to others without your consent or as required by law.

Emergency Contacts

These are people that we may need to contact in an emergency. Please ensure that the people named are aware that they have been nominated as emergency contacts and agree to their details being provided to our school.

Immunisation status

This assists us in managing health risks for children. This information may also be passed to the Department of Human Services to assess immunisation rates in Victoria. Information sent to the Department of Human Services is aggregate data so no individual is identified. An Immunisation History Certificate from the Australian Immunisation Register is required under Victorian Legislation for all students enrolling in Kindergarten. Kinder enrolments are not secure until this document is provided to the office.

Visa status

If you hold a temporary visa, you are required to disclose this information upon enrolment to ensure our School complies with policies and legal requirements. If your child does not have an Australian birth certificate or passport, the office will request a copy of a current visa. This information is required to enable Dandenong Ranges Steiner School to process your child's enrolment. The enrolment agreement will remain valid as long as the visa is current.

Disclosing personal information

The School may disclose personal information, including sensitive information, held about an individual to:

- Another school;

- Government departments;
- Medical practitioners;
- People providing services to the School, such as specialist visiting teachers;
- Anyone to whom you authorise the School to disclose information.

Sensitive Information

Sensitive information will be used and disclosed only for the purpose for which it was provided or for other directly related purposes, unless you agree otherwise, or if the use of disclosure of the sensitive information is allowed by law.

Management and Security of Personal Information

The School's staff are required to respect the confidentiality of pupils' and parents' personal information and the privacy of individuals.

The School has in place steps to protect the personal information the School holds from misuse, loss, unauthorised access, modification or disclosure by use of various methods including locked storage of paper records and password access rights to computerised records.

Updating personal information

The School endeavours to ensure that the personal information it holds is accurate, complete and up-to-date. A person may seek to update their personal information held by the School by contacting the School Office Staff at any time. The National Privacy Principles require the School not to store personal information longer than necessary.

Accessing your child's records

Under the Commonwealth Privacy Act, an individual has the right to obtain access to any personal information which the School holds about them and to advise the School of any perceived inaccuracy. In most circumstances you may access your child's records by contacting the Office. If you have any concerns

about the confidentiality of this information please contact the Office. The Department of Education can also provide you with more detailed information about privacy policies that govern the collection and use of information requested on these forms. Please call the Department's Privacy Manager on (03) 9637 3601 if you would like this information.