

CASTLEMAINE STEINER SCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

CORE PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Steiner Curriculum has a coherent philosophy which underlies the learning activities which take place in the classroom. Everything that takes place within the Castlemaine Steiner School is based upon the core philosophy and the purpose of the school.

The physical structures, curriculum, teaching methods and programs are all deeply related to the fact that the school is philosophically human centred. A vital sense of the value of the human being is central to the school's existence. It pervades every aspect of the school's life. This understanding of the human being underlies the philosophical foundation of Steiner Education.

The important values that Steiner Education seeks to impart are:

- The value of the living, present human individual.
- The importance of the wholeness and integration of the threefold human faculties of thinking, feeling, doing.
- The importance of human development throughout all stages of life in unfolding the human potential.
- The value of human interrelationship and interaction.
- The value of the human's relationship to the world.

These values are considered by the school community to be of the highest order. Our school seeks to develop an Art of Education which protects, promotes and takes its purpose from these values.

The role of the school is to provide a safe haven wherein each human being is developed and strengthened and ultimately provided freedom through the development of his/her potential. It is only with this sense of humanity firmly rooted in each individual that the student can be challenged to grow towards wholeness.

STEINER EDUCATION

This section makes explicit how the Steiner educational philosophy is linked to the learning activities in the curriculum. It is only in this context that our curriculum can be understood.

The Purpose of Education in Steiner Philosophy

- The purpose of education in Steiner philosophy is:

(a) To provide a high quality education, so that students develop into balanced adult individuals;

(b) To develop

- . intellectual, artistic and manual skills,
- . necessary knowledge, and
- . a love of learning

so that students will be able to work competently in the world;

(c) To awaken the social conscious

(d) To cultivate the means of self-expression

(e) To develop the spiritual self

- Rudolf Steiner expresses the overall purpose as follows:

"Our overall purpose must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives."

- Steiner educational philosophy is a holistic one which includes body, mind and spirit.

Harmonious Development of the Child's 3-fold Nature

- The Steiner curriculum is broad and comprehensive. The content of the curriculum matches the particular phase of the child's physical, mental and emotional development.

Kindergarten/Preparatory class

In the pre-seven age of kindergarten/preparatory class the Education is centred upon meeting the needs of the child's developing will. Children at this level are not instructed or directed but are given a caring environment which provides many possibilities for positive sensory and will activities.

This vital and purposeful activity of the Kindergarten/Preparatory class child is simply called **play**. The child's work at this stage is play. Out of this activity of play, within the carefully managed environment and with the materials provided, a strong imaginative fantasy develops. This faculty is not called upon at this stage other than by the child itself.

Classes 1 to 8

The second stage of child development, covering the period roughly from Class 1 to Class 8, has attempted to cultivate a rich feeling life, a strong sense of imagination and picturing ability, and an appreciation of beauty and aesthetics. Students have also been linked thoroughly to how humankind has reached its present stage of development.

The change of teeth (6 – 7 yrs) is the beginning of the primary phase of schooling. Due to the balanced possibilities provided in the first phase the child's most important physical formative process is completed.

The emerging capacity of memory and imagination are now ready to be called upon and exercised. Through this working, together with a strong emphasis on rhythmical and musical activities the feeling life of the child is developed.

Strong rhythms in lessons (within each day, each week, each year) as well as stories of nature, mythologies and metaphors concerning life, all work to strengthen the child's inherent forces (their feeling, imaginative faculty) and provides them with a knowledge that lives.

To the extent that the teacher is the one who brings all of this into the child's experience, we speak of this as the phase of authorship or authority. It is of great importance that our primary teachers are artistic; that speaking, moving, drawing, writing and singing are all developed artistically and imaginatively in order to cultivate the feeling life of the child.

We are conscious that during the Primary phase there is a burgeoning thinking faculty. Our discipline in the Steiner School is to work together the child's development phases with the tasks and subjects of teaching in an optimum manner.

The Steiner Primary phase is completed at Class 8 when the students are 14 years of age. Hence they have had seven years to develop the feeling imaginative faculty.

The Steiner Approach to Curriculum

- Steiner education seeks to develop all the necessary 'academic' and intellectual abilities (eg in reading, writing and arithmetic) that are required for adult life.
- Steiner Education aims to provide a healthy balance of artistic and practical activities alongside the academic activities. It has a special commitment to the development of an awareness of beauty in each child both through the special emphasis placed on painting and calligraphy as well as helping each child to develop musical and craft skills. So-called 'non-art' subjects such as mathematics and communication, carpentry and knitting, sports and languages other than English are taught imaginatively and artistically.
- Grounding children in their cultural heritage is considered essential to the full development of each individual's potential.
- Eurythmy, a specially devised system of bodily movement, holds a special place in the Steiner curriculum as a means of developing each child's educational potential and balance between the spheres of feeling, thinking and doing.

- Each of the key learning areas is enriched by the special approach suggested by the Steiner Philosophy and this is elaborated upon in the separate course documents.

The Steiner Teacher

- The Steiner teacher has a particular commitment to providing learning opportunities which generate a genuine enthusiasm for learning within each student.
- The Steiner teacher is committed to 'bring out the best' that each student is capable of achieving in each activity and subject taught. The classroom environment is therefore not one of competition between students but rather one of support and nurturing for every student and for the class as a whole. Over time each student should come to appreciate and respect the capacities and qualities of each of his or her classmates.
- The promotion of self-esteem for each child is central to the teaching and learning practices that are adopted in a Steiner Education.

Castlemaine Steiner School Primary Specialists

The Primary teaching staff involve a wide range of specialist teachers. These teachers are part time and teach Handwork, Music, Spanish, French, PE, Eurythmy, Horticulture, Cooking and Support Education (Special Needs Resource and Extra Lesson).

School Hours

Classes P – 8 commence at 8:45
Prep finishes at 3.00pm
Classes 1 to 8 finish at 3.25pm

Teaching staff are required to be in attendance by 8.30am each morning. Teachers do not leave before 3.30pm. There are two College of Teachers meetings per week from 4 – 6 pm. One of these meetings is for study, child study and curriculum work, whilst the other is for educational administrative work including policy development and review.

Timetable

In the Class Teacher period the students continue to have their own curriculum content presented in Main Lesson blocks by their Class Teacher. Specialist teachers are timetabled into periods outside the Main Lesson. The Class Teacher is responsible for revision and other areas of the curriculum not covered by specialist teachers.

The daily schedule, Monday to Friday, is as follows:

.8:45am	MAIN LESSON
TO	Roll Call, Rhythm Period (Speech, Music, Movement)
10.45am	Main Lesson Content
11.00am	Recess

11.30am	MIDDLE LESSONS
TO	Lessons of 45 and 40 minutes for specialist or revision lessons
12.45pm	
1.00pm	Lunchtime
2.00pm	AFTERNOON LESSONS
TO	Lesson can be arranged according to need e.g.
3.25pm	Handwork, Art
	Reading, Class Discussions, Games
	Music, Library, Sport, Eurythmy

'Main Lesson' Teaching and other lesson curricula

One distinctive feature of Steiner schools is their use of 'Main Lesson' blocks for core teaching. These blocks run for 3-4 weeks, based on a learning area that matches well the average stage of development and learning needs of the class, and constitute the first and major lesson each day. They also include some components of verse recitation and singing, mental arithmetic, physical activity, recorder playing and other activities, all designed to 'wake up' and 'warm up' the children for active involvement in the Main Lesson. This warm-up period forms a large component of the Main Lesson period in Classes 1, 2 & 3. It becomes briefer, but still essential throughout the grades.

Steiner teachers see the Main Lesson's great strength as being in providing continuity of thematic teaching over an extended period, and in the deep exploration of particular subject areas that it allows in an integrated way.

In any year there is a balance amongst the major core areas of English, mathematics, the arts, sciences and humanities, and is sequentially based from year to year.

Steiner Education Internationally

Castlemaine Steiner School is one of over 500 schools worldwide that is based on the educational philosophy, and curriculum and teaching practices, indicated by Rudolf Steiner. There are large numbers of Steiner schools in Europe, particularly in (the former West) Germany and Holland, in North America and Australasia.

Steiner education is recognised and accepted by educational authorities in all these countries as a valuable educational system that uniquely complements government and other independent schools. Steiner schools in these countries are registered, and their courses up to year 12 accredited, almost as a matter of course, provided they can demonstrate delivery of the internationally recognised curriculum and teaching practices associated with a Steiner school. The educational philosophy itself is well understood and accepted worldwide.

Steiner Education in Australia

In Australia there are over 40 Steiner schools, many of which are relatively small and still growing primary schools; some which have not advanced yet beyond the end of the junior secondary school phase and a few which are fully established and accredited high schools to Class 12. Castlemaine Steiner School is actively involved in Australia's Association of Steiner

Schools, (SEA), and draws support, advice and assistance from the more established schools when needed.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Rationale

Castlemaine Steiner School is one of over 500 Steiner Schools world-wide. They are based on the indications given by Rudolf Steiner, who demonstrated how a school curriculum might develop clarity of thought, sensitivity of feeling and strength of will.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the curriculum from classes KG to 8. The College of Teachers, the body responsible for the educational impulse of Castlemaine Steiner school, has developed this curriculum in the light of Rudolf Steiner's indications. Each teacher presents this artistically and imaginatively while remaining within the guidelines as set out in this document.

Overall Aims

At Castlemaine Steiner School, we aim to:

- provide a balanced education of the highest quality
- inspire within the children a love of learning
- provide them with skills and means to work competently in the world
- provide them with values that will enable them to find their path in life

The Class Teacher Purpose

The class teacher stays with the class from Classes 1 – 8, thus playing a vital role as educator, guide and protector. The teacher endeavours to stand before the class as a representative of the human being – providing not only continuity from class to class, but an authority that the child can trust.

The teacher can therefore develop a strong relationship and deep understanding of the child's academic, social and emotional needs. There is also an ongoing connection with the child's family which can assist with the teacher's perception of the child.

The class teacher's purpose is to enliven all that is brought to the child with imagination and creativity. As the primary school child lives in a world of pictures, the teacher uses this medium through story-telling and description. A balance is created between intellectual work and creativity.

The Curriculum

The Steiner curriculum integrates the humanities, arts and sciences, and strives to give the students a picture of the whole world.

Subjects are studied in relation to each other, so that the children perceive their unity, and do not have them split into separate compartments. Music, creative arts, handwork and languages are integrated into the lessons.

Every lesson involves the head, the heart and the hand, so the children can be involved in a balanced and creative learning experience.

The aim is to educate not just the intellect, but the whole child.

The Main Lesson

The Main Lesson is taught in the first two hours of each day. A particular subject is studied for 3 – 4 weeks and to allow for a deep and enriching learning experience to take place. The Main Lesson endeavours to unite all the powers of the soul by engaging the child's thinking, feeling and willing.

The curriculum is based on the major epochs of history, from the folk wisdom in fairy tales, the human qualities in animal fables, the Celts, the deeds of great people and their connection with nature, to the mighty legends from the Old Testament, Norse myths and ancient Indian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman myths and odysseys. Mathematics and science are also taught in the Main Lesson in addition to language and the humanities.

We encourage the children to present their work artistically and with care. Through the experience of intellectual and practical work, they can *live* major historical periods and stages in human development.

Practice Lessons

In the middle period of the day, **practice sessions** take place, to cover the subjects not being taught in the Main Lesson. Other more rhythmical subjects such as LOTE, music and art are also taken at this time.

After lunch, the activities are will-oriented, where crafts and manual skills are developed. These include gardening, games, wax, modelling, craft and bushwalks.

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Updated: Danilo Paglialonga (24/08/2016)

Signed: Principal

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