



For Rudolf Steiner Education

# PROSPECTUS

## CONTENTS

Steiner Education .....	3
About Rudolf Steiner .....	3
Philosophy of Steiner Education .....	3
Newcastle Waldorf School and its History .....	4
An introduction from the College of Teachers .....	4
Newcastle Waldorf School's History .....	6
Educational principles and practice .....	9
Class Structure and Progression through the Years .....	9
For Kindergarten.....	9
For Primary.....	10
For High School.....	11
Structure of Lessons.....	11
Adventure.....	13
Organisation .....	14
Governance.....	14
Enrolment .....	15
School Hours.....	16
Accreditation.....	16
Contact Information.....	16

# STEINER EDUCATION

## About Rudolf Steiner

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was an Austrian philosopher, literary scholar, architect, playwright, educator and social thinker. He is the founder of Anthroposophy, a movement based on the knowledge that there is a spiritual world accessible to pure thought through a path of self-development. Its practical applications include Waldorf Education, biodynamic agriculture, anthroposophical medicine, architecture and eurythmy.

## Philosophy of Steiner Education

*"The prime need of a teacher is not knowledge but the understanding of man."* Rudolf Steiner

Steiner education and teaching is based on the understanding of the human being comprised of body, soul and spirit. The whole of the human being is taken into consideration and education is thus viewed as an 'art'. The spiritual should not be neglected for the physical nor the physical neglected for the spiritual. The practices are based on reality and life: the whole child (thinking, feeling, and willing) discovers truth, beauty and goodness by making use of everything that is pictorial and tangible. This transpires naturally through the child's innate devotion and reverence of nature and the cosmos and comes into expression through art, music, language, fairy tales, poems and games.

The kindergarten years correspond to the period of intense physical growth, muscle and organ development. This is supported through imitation and 'good' will activities in a rhythmically structured day. The class teacher is able to nurture the primary years, where the child's emotions, imagination and feelings are emerging, through focusing on 'beauty' in artistic learning. In the high school, the students' minds are sensitively opening to their world and their

lessons involve greater thinking responsibilities and discoveries of 'truth'.

The curriculum, based on Steiner's indications, is responsive to the needs of the developmental phases of a child's life, giving particular emphasis on creating healthy foundations which support all the aspects of the growing child. The curriculum strives to develop individuals who are able to feel, think and act out of their own initiative so that they fulfil their potential in whatever purpose and direction they choose in life.

## NEWCASTLE WALDORF SCHOOL AND ITS HISTORY

### An introduction from the College of Teachers

Rudolf Steiner's indications for educational renewal are part of a general 'cultural' evolution. They provide the impulse upon which the school is based. Interpreting our times, our geographical location and the individualities of our students, is an ongoing process. It is a continually evolving union of our various cultural heritages with the elemental and natural forces of our place on the continent. It is a search for true identity as local, national and global citizens. Fundamentally, all our educational practices are directed towards this end. The Newcastle Waldorf School strives to be true to the human condition and archetypes represented in the natural world, whilst consciously marrying this with the demands of our modern society.

*Here, my child, is the little gold I have earned with the sweat of my brow, toiling from early morning till late at night. Take it and use it so you may learn something in the High School that will set you further on the path of life than I have been able to reach.*

So said the poor woodcutter to his young and diligent son, in the Grimm's Fairy tale, 'The Spirit in the Bottle', and so the heart of every devoted parent and teacher rises to the sentiment expressed therein, when they retell this story, so full of wisdom, to the children at their knee.

These parents and teachers are expressing a deep yearning for the evolution of the generations as we tread our way on earth and through time. For these individuals there is the will to help the children to go a little further in that evolution – a little closer to perfection - than their forebears had gone before.

It is the intention of the College of Teachers to make it possible for families to partake in this effort. Here you will find a strong endeavour to give the children a rich cultural experience and a solid foundation in the arts and sciences (through exposure to the classics and to the rigour of accuracy, precision and objectivity in mathematics) and further, the development of productive will, consistent with the developing feelings, that will lead, eventually, to the development in the individual of an inner moral strength. This moral strength is capable of mastering selfish behaviours, especially in the communal arena where sharing and goodwill are positive social qualities.

The fostering of imaginative consciousness is the nourishment which the young adult will be able to access when the age of discretion is reached: a time when decisions can be made for the future out of freedom of thought.

As Goethe says:

*The highest achievement of the human being as a thinking being is to have proved what is knowable, and quietly to revere what is unknowable.*

The care and education of the children of the Newcastle Waldorf School is the responsibility of the College of Teachers. The College is the heart of the school community and has a commitment to the

ongoing study of the work of Rudolf Steiner and the continuing development of the school.

The College has the responsibility of ensuring that the curriculum of the school, while fulfilling the requirements of the NSW Board of Studies, offers high cultural and moral examples of human endeavour. The teachers also ensure that our young children have space and time for creative play which will build a wonderful storehouse of inspiration. This balance in the curriculum creates an atmosphere of oneness or connectedness with all spheres of life – spiritual, cultural, emotional and practical.

The teachers share all the work of the school from the tasks of cleaning and maintenance, through to gardening and administration, in order to demonstrate to the children the wholeness that can be life and the joy of work. Parents are also invited throughout the year to join the working bees or to help out in other capacities if required.

The teachers of the school strive to provide examples to show the children that individuals can fulfil their own potential and at the same time work consciously as a group for a better society.

## Newcastle Waldorf School's History

In **1980** the school opened its doors for eighteen pupils and two teachers in rented premises at Adamstown.

In **1982** the school moved to its permanent home at Glendale. This originally consisted of a small cottage and several acres of concrete on which were turkey sheds. In the ensuing years the degraded land has slowly been transformed into four acres of vegetable, flower and herb gardens, beehives, paddocks for a cow, sheep, ducks and bantams, orchards of fruit trees and vines, and playing areas, sandpits, grass and shady trees.

In **1984** a separate kindergarten was built that was also used as a venue for school assemblies, concerts, plays, parent talks, and orchestra practice.

In **1986** another primary school room was added to the primary complex.

In **1987** a separate high school building with two classrooms and a storeroom was constructed.

In **1989** a laboratory and a store room was added to the high school.

In **1991** a new complex consisting of a kitchen, art room and library was built by the teachers with the help of some of the older students, who also assisted with the stained glass windows, tiling and other ongoing artwork within the building.

In **1995** a Federal Government Grant enabled the building and equipping of a new workshop in the place of the demolished former sheds. This has now been transformed into the painting and printing room.

In **1997** the school purchased the adjoining house on a two-acre block which was the site of horse stables. The house is now the school office.

In **1998** the fountain was designed and built by students and teachers, and a new lunch area added.

In **2001** the stables were demolished and a design and technology complex and multi-media facility were erected, which included a computer room, wood and metal workshops and a ceramics classroom that were designed, built and beautified by students and members of the College of Teachers.

In **2007** roofing for the lunch area was constructed with the help of Commonwealth funding.

In **2008** the new toilet facilities were built and the old site used to build a music practise room, laundry and storerooms, with the help of Commonwealth funding.

In **2011** construction of the School's multi-purpose hall was completed under the Commonwealth BER program.

In **2014** the school received full registration and accreditation for the Year 11 & 12 HSC. Work Started on a new year 11 & 12 building for our growing high school.

In **2015**, the Year 11 & 12 Building was completed and throughout the year work was done on the surrounding landscaping.



In **2020** we moved HSC students into the new music complex upstairs with the primary classes, one and two, occupying the lower classrooms.



## EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

### Class Structure and Progression through the Years

When a child is ready to move on from Kindergarten they begin their primary journey with their Class Teacher. This dedicated person guides them through their main lessons through the next 7 years of their education.

As they approach high school the influences widen to include a little more time with other teachers in the subjects of Music, Art and Woodwork. In high school itself they will have a broad range of specialist teachers while still being guided by their Class Guardian (often, but not always, the same person as their Class Teacher). This gradual widening of influences is, ideally, providing the child with a gentle awakening into adulthood and society.

### For Kindergarten

Before the age of six or seven, education proceeds by example and imitation. The kindergarten teacher acts and the children naturally and spontaneously imitate – all activities ideally derive from this



source, which is the primal will and sympathy of the small child with the moral guidance of the teacher. From the magic of nature's household, the rhythm of the day, and the great cycles of the moon and sun, arise impressions which transmute into story, song, poetry, play-acting, creative movement, drawing, painting, craft and

play. Flowing into these impressions, merges the great stream of myth and fairy-tale, our original cultural heritage. The child is

encouraged to participate in the great world which is at once good, natural, cosmic and human.

## For Primary

The 'golden years' of childhood extend from around the age of seven to about thirteen. Ideally, these are the years of 'picture consciousness', in which the beauty and wisdom of the world can be grasped through the most powerful of human emotions: reverence for the great powers of the Universe. The class teacher becomes a spokesperson for the mighty powers and beauty of nature, and an advocate for the great deeds of humanity.

In the lessons, nature and identification with the land provides the impressions or backdrop for the play of life, which is the transition from myth and legend to history, from the distant past to the present. All subjects partake of this whole.

English evolves the wisdom of speech and image from story to creative expression, literary appreciation, and cultural awareness. History, concentrating on significant biographies, is, in these years, essentially the story of humanity. Science and Geography classes, give a truly sympathetic understanding of mankind and the earth. Number and Mathematics, in the lessons, describe the rigour and order of the world and the ever changing parts of the whole; they are the most important training in disciplined thought which is a necessary human resource in this modern world. Artistic and cultural activities - singing, violin, recorder and lyre playing, individual instrument lessons, languages, painting, drawing, modelling, form drawing, drama, eurythmy, sewing, knitting, woodwork and crafts, evolve and develop throughout the primary years, yet are inseparable from the universal theme: nature and human kind.

## For High School

From the age of fourteen or fifteen to about seventeen, the first flowering and fruition of thought arise from the careful nurturing and guidance of the previous period. What was subconsciously grasped as picture consciousness, through the faculty of respect, now miraculously metamorphoses, through sexual maturity and the birth of the individual spirit, into freedom of creative expression and self-motivated curiosity about the secrets of the world. The teacher has now more a specialist role, from subject to subject, to encourage and inspire this awakening. From this period onwards evolves the quest for universal wisdom.

The overriding theme of Nature and human kind is unaltered but the pupils emerge increasingly as free-thinking, discerning and responsible individuals in relationship to the Universe, of which Earth and its history is the focus.

### Structure of Lessons

Lessons are taught in blocks of three or four weeks, to allow students to immerse themselves in the topic and cover it in depth. The subject is then allowed to rest in the subconscious until the next block, when it can be recalled afresh, developed and deepened.

The school day is divided into three parts: a morning main lesson, a middle lesson and a shorter last lesson. This rhythm is continued throughout the students' schooling.

The morning/main lesson begins with artistic warm-up activities such as singing, poems and movement, and concludes with a story which relates to the lesson theme; however, the main focus of the morning lesson is on subjects that engage the students' developing minds, so these are held at the beginning of the day when everyone is fresh.

The middle lesson encourages the feelings and the development of harmonious and rhythmical relationships to artistic activities. Where possible within the curriculum this includes cultural activities such as drawing, painting, poetry and creative writing.

The afternoon lesson may encompass activities designed to nurture the students' will, encouraging purposeful actions and healthy play.

In high school the mandatory key learning areas are taught using a similar three-week block structure to utilise the inherent strengths of concentrated study within each subject. There are three daily lessons with the addition of morning choir or eurythmy from 9:00 – 9:30. The subjects that all high school students participate in are English, Mathematics, History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Science, Design and Technology, Language, Eurythmy, Visual Arts, Music and PDHPE. Years 11 & 12 students get to study some of our board endorsed subjects such as Portfolio and Presentation or Philosophy.



## Adventure



The School is quietly proud of its ability to be able to safely nurture a sense of adventure in the students. There is no ban on somersaults or tree climbing, and the school, as a whole, excurses into nature usually twice per term. In addition there are primary and high school camps each year that involve hiking and orienteering in the wilderness. There are also special camps involving adventures in canoes and on mountain bikes for the upper high school. The teachers at the school are very experienced in outdoor activities and we rarely have the need to use specialist companies.



# ORGANISATION

## Governance

### The Board of Directors

The roles of the Board of Directors are to:

- Supervise Compliance and Risk Management
- Govern Finance
- Develop and maintain the strategic direction of the school

The Board of Directors comprises elected members of the school association and nominees of the College of Teachers (including the Principal/s). Membership of the Newcastle Waldorf School Association is open to all parents of the school for a small annual fee. Financial members are entitled to nominate for election as a director and to vote at the association's Annual General Meeting where directors of the Board are elected. All parents are notified of the date for the AGM and invited to join the NWS Association three weeks in advance. The notification letter provides more information about the Board of Directors' nomination process.

### The Principals

The Newcastle Waldorf School Principals hold fundamental positions within the School community. As required by NSW state legislation, the Principals' main role is to act as a mediator between the School and parents and Government bodies.

### The College of Teachers

The College is answerable to the Board in matters pertaining to law and economic management, but is independently responsible for all aspects of curriculum, teaching and supporting positive student behaviour and human resource management.

The members of the College attend formal weekly meetings. Cooperation between teachers is paramount, in order that individual pupils and classes receive optimum educational nurture and pastoral care. There is no hierarchy of authority and the good of the School is the overriding consideration at all times. Each member of the College is valued equally in terms of his or her expertise in areas of the curriculum and cultural life of the School.

## Enrolment

A general information afternoon is held on the last Monday of July and again on the last Monday of October from 4pm (talk at 4:30pm) where prospective parents are able to meet the Principals, the Kindergarten Teacher and other members of the College of Teachers, view student work and become acquainted with the philosophy of Steiner Education and the particulars of the Newcastle Waldorf School. A personal interview, conducted by a representative of the College of Teachers will be arranged for parents wishing to pursue enrolment.

Applications for enrolment at other times throughout the year can be made by contacting the school office. If there is a place in the class the class teacher/guardian will arrange a time for a face-to-face interview to discuss the potential enrolment.

All applications are processed in order of receipt but consideration is given to the applicant's support for the ethos of the school, siblings already attending the school and the applicant having attended another Steiner School.

The School does not operate a waiting list. If classes are full, applicants are asked to contact the School regularly throughout the year.

Once enrolled, students are expected to uphold the school's ethos and comply with the school's code of conduct as described in the Handbook to maintain their enrolment.

Signing the NWS Enrolment Contract involves acknowledgement and acceptance of the contents of the Newcastle Waldorf School Handbook (given to prospective parents and available for download on the school website). Information provided by parents/carers on the enrolment form is treated as confidential as detailed in the NWS Privacy Policy.

## School Hours

School runs from 9.00am to 3.25pm for upper primary and high school and 9.30am to 3.25pm for kindergarten and lower primary. High School students are often required to participate in music lessons/ensembles from 8:30am and sometimes after school until 4:30pm.

## Accreditation

Newcastle Waldorf School is a not-for-profit organisation, registered and accredited with the NSW Board of Studies from Kindergarten to Year 12. It is a member of Steiner Education Australia and the NSW Association of Independent Schools.

## Contact Information

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