



Grana
STEINER SCHOOL



Early Childhood Parent Handbook 2021

Orana Steiner School

Vision, Principles and Introduction

Vision Statement

Our highest endeavour is to provide a purposeful education that will inspire the students to achieve to the best of their individual ability, work creatively and become aware of themselves as spiritual beings who will contribute positively to global social change.

Guiding Principles

We work within the school's vision to:

- Encourage a lifelong love of learning
- Respect the growing child and their stages of development
- Provide a supportive environment for spiritual development
- Strive for a balance between academic, artistic and practical learning experiences
- Foster an understanding of the human being as informed by Rudolf Steiner
- Foster self-confidence in the students
- Inspire a healthy respect for and responsibility toward themselves, each other and the environment

Introduction

Orana Steiner School has a detailed set of policies and procedures relating to its operations. The policies are available on the Orana website. Procedures relevant to early childhood are available upon request.

Our policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and parents are notified of any modifications and/or additions that may relate to them or their children. Parents and families are also advised of changes via the website, the Leaflet and Seasons Newsletters.

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) and the Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010), and following an assessment by our Regulatory Authority, ACT Government Education and Training Directorate, Children's Education and Care Assurance, Orana Steiner School Early Childhood Centre and Kindergarten was issued an overall rating of Exceeding the National Quality Standard in 2013.

A Global Education

Orana Steiner School was established 40 years ago in Canberra and is part of the world-wide educational movement known as "Steiner" or "Waldorf" Schools. Dr Rudolf Steiner established the first Steiner school in Stuttgart, Germany in 1919. Today there are around 1,200 schools across five continents and more than 2,000 kindergartens in 60 countries.

Steiner Schools draw the greatest numbers of independent School enrolments. Scandinavia, Great Britain, North and South America, Asia, India, New Zealand and Australia all have numerous Steiner Schools many of which offer education from pre-School to Year 12. In Australia, there are some 40 Steiner Schools and Orana is one of the largest and oldest in the country.

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Philosophy of the Orana Early Childhood Program

'The basis of Steiner education is a study of human being and developmental psychology presented by Rudolf Steiner (1861 – 1925) in his volume of lectures entitled Study of Man. Since then, differentiated work has extended the fields of developmental physiology and psychology, methodology and didactics, as well as the number of new teaching subjects all of which now belong to the foundation of Steiner education. It is a pedagogy that has its origin in the child and its goal is to develop each child's individual potential. It takes cultural diversity into consideration and is committed to general, human ethical principles (cf. U.N. General Agreement on Human Rights, December 10, 1948, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, November 20, 1989, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 13, 2008). Educators and teachers require teacher training in Steiner education and are obliged to undertake a form of self-education which is appropriate to Steiner education, as well as further continuing professional development.'

International forum for Waldorf/Steiner Schools, Hague Circle

The Orana Steiner School Early Childhood Program endeavours to lay the foundation for physical health and vitality, for wonder and an interest in the world, for the inner readiness to learn and discover the world through personal experiences, for the ability to have meaningful relationships, and for lifelong physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development. The teachers accord equal value to developing the cognitive, social, emotional and physical abilities of each child, with the aim of supporting the healthy development of each child's positive self-image, confidence and sense of belonging.

The early childhood years focus on the healthy development of the child that is fostered by a warm, trusting and guided atmosphere that leads to security, confidence, gratitude, goodness, joy, wonder and reverence. Transition from home or day care to Orana is endeavoured to be made with love and care by providing a homelike atmosphere in the rooms. The teachers believe in the importance of a healthy partnership with parents and caregivers and acknowledge that parents are their child's first educator. And while Orana Steiner School is non-denominational and Christian based, cultural, religious and family diversity is respected and honoured and the teachers undertake to understand the child's surroundings, family, community and culture. Hence, each child is received with reverence and respect for his or her individuality, and is encouraged through positive modelling and example, to respect themselves and others. Parental support for the Steiner philosophy, curriculum and program, and an honest and respectful communication between the parents and teacher is vital to building on the children's strengths, skills and knowledge to further their learning.

The teachers themselves participate in continual self-education in order to carry an inner attitude that is worthy to be in the presence of

young children. This is founded on the belief that ultimately, one of the most profound influences on the child, is who the teachers are as human beings, and who we are becoming and how. This philosophy provides a deep understanding of the task of early childhood education and provides a platform from which we embrace and link our daily practices to the early years learning.

In our program, the child is recognised as a threefold being of body, soul and spirit, on a path of evolutionary development. This recognition provides a foundation for the daily activities in the rooms and for the relationship between the adult and the child. Deepening in one's understanding of Anthroposophy and child development as well as practicing reflective teaching and child observation, all help to support Steiner's indication of the need for teachers to teach out of Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition, and establish an ethical and moral tone in the room. The teachers carry an attitude of gratitude, reverence and wonder for the world that the young child witnesses and this enables the child to develop the capacity for love, devotion and dedication in service to the world in later years.

The children are encouraged to learn by imitation and habit and through repeatedly doing tasks that have been intentionally placed before them. In practice, teaching is led by example and the program is integrated and holistic rather than subject based. Learning is experienced through play and the arts and it does not need to be conceptualised or verbalised to be understood. Thus the teachers observe what the children do and plan without taking them out of their experience into concept. The nature of this experiential learning encourages the children to be self-motivated, and allows them to understand the world in a most age-appropriate way: through active imitating, exploring, and feeling, touching and doing.

The environment is ordered, clean, natural and organic and is set up in a way to safeguard healthy play. It is imbued with love, beauty and goodness, where the children's senses (of touch, warmth, balance, wellbeing, movement, taste, smell, vision and hearing) are nourished and where children play imaginatively and creatively, developing within their own world through play. The focus of the program is to create an authentic environment that encourages direct experiential learning and one which fosters the young child's physical, social and emotional development, speech and oral language development, mental abilities and attitude towards learning. The virtual world of information and communication technology is not formally introduced in the early years, however the children may express aspects of this form of technology in their activities and play.

Play is recognised as a serious and vital activity through which the children's powers of creativity, imagination and initiative are cultivated. Little children learn through play, approaching it in entirely individual ways and out of their unique experience of the world in which they live. Therefore, the teacher's role is to prepare the environment, both physical and social, and safeguard the space and time for play with her active presence, rather than instructing or directing the children. By holding healthy inner thoughts, intentions and imagination and creating an environment that supports the possibility of healthy play, including physical surroundings, furnishings and open-ended play materials, the children are enabled to be confidently and safely immersed in the activity, where they can explore their world and freely find their way into play which arises from imitation and an intrinsic motivation. This is then carried by their own will and engagement with others. This type of play is often referred to as 'self-directed play' or 'creative free play'.

The daily routine is rhythmical and harmonious and emphasis is given to creating security through regular patterns of activities both within the day and over each week, thereby supporting the child's healthy physical and emotional development and laying the foundation for resilience. The familiar daily rhythms

and activities provide a context where the need for verbal instruction is reduced and the children are able to internalise the activities without explanations. A cyclical pattern is reflected in themes or work related to the seasons of the year and the festivals, and they reflect the interest and developmental stages of the children. Good habits of behaviour and life skills that are cultivated in the early years become the foundations for learning in the Primary School years and beyond.

The expansive, creative self-directed play is balanced by the adult-directed, rich artistic activities such as Circle Time (movement and speech through singing, rhythmic games, verses, poetry and stories), Story Time (storytelling and puppetry), crafts and handwork, drawing and painting. The teachers also engage in meaningful domestic activities that provide a model for the children to imitate, such as cooking and baking, washing, polishing, sweeping and gardening, laundry and cleaning, creating and caring for the materials in the room. These activities are integral to the program, reflecting the children's concerns, needs and interests, and they occur daily in a meaningful and authentic context where the children are required to concentrate on the tasks at hand. The activities are adjusted to the capabilities and skills of the children and are in accordance with the child's natural inborn need for activity. Through imitation they provide opportunities for the children to experience the inner attitude of devotion, care, sense of purpose, engagement and creative spirit of the teachers. Daily, seasonally and through special occasions such as the festivals, the experience of wonder for the world and joy and enthusiasm for simple tasks is nurtured.

The program also aims to enrich the children's oral language and to provide opportunities for them to develop social awareness through encouraging daily respectful interactions with each other. In addition, developing the children's senses and motor movement to become autonomous and independent are all seen to be important for the children to become effective communicators¹. This is in recognition that it is only after the children have mastered these skills and are beginning to form picture memory,

that they are then ready to accept abstract and intellectual concepts. If children do not have the opportunity between the ages of 5 and 6 years to apply their imaginative will to the social tasks of being with and helping others in an unreflected and intuitive way, their subsequent social competence and positive communication skills may be limited in their development. Within the rich oral language environment, preparatory reading and writing skills are actively supported, building a solid foundation for the more formal learning of reading and writing in the Primary School years.

The Orana Steiner School Early Childhood program incorporates the *National Steiner Curriculum, Australian National Curriculum* and the Early Years Learning Framework, *Belonging, Being and Becoming*.

Reference:

- Hague Circle, (2009) *International Forum for Waldorf/Steiner Schools*.
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- Jaffke, Freya, (1991) *Work and Play in Early Childhood*. Floris Books: Edinburgh.
- Jenkinson, Sally, (2001) *The Genius of Play*. Hawthorn Press: UK
- Large, Martin, (2003) *Set Free Childhood*. Hawthorn Press: UK
- Long-Breipohl, Renate, (2010) *Supporting Self-directed Play*. Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America: US
- Oldfield, Lynn, (2001) *Free to Learn*. Hawthorn Press: UK
- Patzlaff, Rainer, (1999) *Childhood Falls Silent*. Australian Association for Rudolf Steiner Early Childhood Education.
- Rawson, M. & Rose, M. (2006) *Ready to Learn*. Hawthorn Press: UK
- Winn, Marie, (2002) *The Plug-In Drug*. Penguin Books: New York.

¹ It is understood that up until the age of around 4 years, young children are more inclined to play alongside other children. After 4 they prefer to play increasingly with their peers and engage, given the right encouragement, in constructive social interaction. This marks a significant development, which needs time to mature and become structured. Many children are quite capable of applying their intelligence to tasks such as learning to read and write. However, without the opportunity to develop social awareness of others through creative self-directed play, literacy can become an anti-social activity rather than a means of communication and sharing. The listening and oral language skills, the social interaction and initiative that children can develop at this age in a structured Early Childhood setting should not be underestimated.



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General Guidelines for Acceptance into Early Childhood Program

The School requires that the child be three years old in order to join our Early Childhood program. However, as each child is unique, whether or not the child is ready for school may be discussed with the teacher at the interview. It is important that the child is toilet trained and does not need to be breastfed during the school day.

Each of the four Early Childhood Groups consist of mixed ages; children who are 3.5 years old and turning 4 (Pre-preschool or "Pippis"), 4 years old and turning 5 (Preschool), and 5 years old and turning 6 (Kindergarten) and the

gender balance in each group is carefully considered. There is also a separate and fifth Early Childhood Group for children who have just turned 3.5 years old (Pippis and Periwinkles). Offers of placements are given after an interview or when vacancies arise.

Enrolments are accepted throughout the year, although not usually in term 4.

Periwinkle, Pippis and Preschool children may attend 2 or 3 consecutive days or 5 days per week.

Kindergarten age children are required to attend 5 days per week. All Kindergarten children progressing to Class One in the following year must have turned six by the end of December. The criteria for Class One Readiness is usually discussed at a parent evening and "Class One Readiness" interviews are held during Terms 3 and 4.

The Admissions Process

- The enrolment process for the Early Childhood Program begins in Term 2 of the year prior to your child attending Orana. It is recommended that parents/care givers attend an Early Childhood Tour prior to submitting an Expression of Interest. It is advisable that you also attend a Primary School Tour so that you are informed of the educational approach as fully as possible before proceeding with the admissions process.
- Once the Expression of Interest is submitted, your child will be placed on the waitlist and you will receive an email response from the Admissions Officer within five working days, acknowledging receipt of your interest. If you do not receive the acknowledgement, please contact the Admissions Officer on 02 6287 8301 or admissions@oranaschool.com
- The submission date for the Expression of Interest is a major factor when offering places at Orana Steiner School. Preference is also given to children of permanent staff, siblings, children who have attended Playgroup and children of former students as well as students who are transferring from another Steiner school.
- Families are responsible for keeping their contact details up to date with the Admissions Officer. Any changes need to be made in writing via email and any changes made shall be confirmed via email.
- An Information Questionnaire will be sent to you to be filled and returned to the Admissions Officer. A signed acknowledgement that the Early Childhood Handbook has been read and understood also needs to be given to the Admissions Officer, who will then arrange your interview time with one of the teachers.
- Please bring your child to the interview as well as any questions you may have. You will also be asked to confirm your child's attendance days.
- The Admissions Officer will formally advise you of the outcome of your application by sending you a Letter of Offer along with the relevant Enrolment Forms. The Enrolment Forms need to be returned within three weeks in order to guarantee your child's placement.
- Please note that an interview does not guarantee a place at the school and your interviewing teacher may not be the teacher of your child.
- In November, families who have returned the Enrolment Forms will then be invited to attend an Information Evening with your child's teacher. During the Information Evening, your child's teacher will share practical housekeeping matters, details of the Early Childhood program and expectations for your child's first day.
- Please give a term's notice in writing for Withdrawal of Enrolment to avoid a withdrawal fee.

Welcome

Every year as the summer holidays draw to a close an air of excitement surrounds the Early Childhood grounds. The doors of that wonderful kingdom will soon open. Children, parents and teachers have waited with great anticipation for the first day of school.

Then, at last the day arrives. Parents depart with one last good-bye kiss, entrusting their little one to the teacher's care. The child's day is very full – imaginative play, outdoor adventures, painting, baking, lots of singing and stories. When parents arrive to collect their children, their eager questions about the day's activities are often answered by dreamy gazes. "Nothing" seems to be the usual answer to the question, "What did you do today?"

Once we realise that young children mostly live in the present moment, and understand that it is difficult for them to recount the day's events, we soon learn to interpret their way of sharing them; perhaps we hear a fragment of a song or a line of a verse, or the name of a new friend.

So how can we build a healthy bridge between school and the home for the children? Parents are invited to share their questions and concerns at parent evenings, in scheduled workshops and seminars, and in conversations with their teacher. It is our hope that we can all grow and learn together in a true spirit of community.

Rhythms and a Typical Day

Children are anchored by the rhythms of the world in which they live; from the rhythms of breathing in their bodies to the daily rhythms of sleeping and waking. The yearly cycle of the seasons and the rhythmic procession of stars across the heavens are all part of life's experience. Children flourish when their daily activities are arranged rhythmically to reflect the natural order of life.

Thus, the activities flow with a sense of "breathing in" and "breathing out," from the quiet moments of Story and Rest Times to the activities of Circle Time and vigorous work and Play.

Each teacher creates the rhythm for her room. Typically, the day may begin with a walk through the school's bushlands (breathing out), followed by Circle Time when the teacher weaves seasonal songs, poems, rhymes, finger games with gestures and movement. It is a time that requires concentration and group participation (breathing in). This is followed by the expansive and creative, child-initiated, self-directed play that unfolds into purposeful, imaginative and active playing (breathing out). The children may also participate in artistic activities (breathing in) and cooking during this time. After tidying up (breathing out), a Story (breathing in), and Lunch, the children continue their play in the gardens and the sandpit (breathing out). Finally, the children return to the room for a quiet time of resting on individual mattresses in order to digest the day's events (breathing out). The day ends with afternoon tea and good-bye songs.

In this way, the children are carried along by the regular rhythms of the day. It will be most helpful to the child if they are also nourished by regular rhythms at home. As difficult as it is in these modern times to establish set meal times and bedtimes, we strongly encourage you to do so. Please ensure that your child's bedtime is no later than 8:00pm so that he or she is well prepared for an active and happy day. Please feel free to contact

your teacher if you would like some ideas for making the transition to bedtime.

Each room will have on display a more detailed schedule of the daily timetable, mealtime menu and weekly activities. The day begins at 9am and ends at 3pm. The teachers are on duty from 8:30am.

Food

In keeping with a wholesome atmosphere, environment, and activities for the children, we are committed to providing three meals each day, for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. We use wholegrain organic and Biodynamic fresh ingredients of the highest quality where possible. Our lunches are simple, wholesome and nourishing and follow a weekly rhythm, augmented daily with chopped fresh vegetables with hummus for morning tea and platters of chopped fruits for afternoon tea. A typical lunch menu for the week may be: savoury brown rice, rye bread rolls with cheese and salad, savoury millet muffins or golden millet bake, frittatas and vegetable soups.

If your child has allergies or special dietary requirements, please speak to his/her teacher, as we endeavour to cater for all children. The cost for the ingredients are included in the fees and families are asked to contribute fruit and vegetables each day for the shared vegetable and fruit platters.



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Clothing

As the days are filled with active work and play both inside the room and in the playground, it is very important that the children are dressed in appropriate clothing. All children need to be dressed practically and according to the weather forecast to allow them to happily experience nature and the elements. During the hotter months children need to wear tops that covers the shoulders and during the colder months, children need to wear long pants that cover the legs. Natural fibres are recommended, along with sturdy shoes. Thongs, crocks and dress sandals are inadequate for the daily activities and should be left at home.

Broad-brimmed hats need to be worn throughout the year for outside play and for cold days a beanie is also needed. Please find ones that your child will be happy to wear. For convenience, hats may be left in the rooms.

The following is a list of clothes we would like each child to maintain in her/his school bag: two pairs of socks, two pairs of underwear, two pairs of pants, a shirt and a jumper. The items should be clearly labelled with your child's name. Wet or dirty clothing will be sent home at the end of the day. Please remember to replace any clothing brought home.

For rainy days, gumboots and a raincoat with hood or rain hat are needed. These may also be left at school. Each child will also need a plain pair of comfortable inside shoes that are not slippery on the floors and can be easily managed by your child to take on

and off. While Orana Steiner School does not have a uniform, we ask that you do not send your child with commercial or movie character images printed on clothing, school bags and slippers as this will affect the imaginative play of little children. At the teacher's discretion, inappropriate clothing will be changed to more appropriate clothing for your child and the benefit of others. We also request that children are not to be dressed in black clothes as we wish to create an environment that reflects the spectrum of colours of the rainbow.

Health

The teachers take a special interest in your child's health and will make every effort to support you in keeping your child healthy. They are also happy to discuss any concerns you may have. A well-rested child who is dressed warmly in winter and protected from the sun in summer and who is fed a wholesome diet is best prepared to withstand the onslaught of winter colds and health ailments. It is normal, however, for children to experience sicknesses as they grow.

The teachers are sympathetic with working parents and understand the desperate feeling of needing to work when a child is sick. However, in the event that your child shows signs of being unwell, please make alternative arrangements so that he or she can be in a quiet and restful environment for recovery. The lively early childhood rooms are not soothing environments for children who are ill. We also urge you to arrange back-up childcare in order to contain infections and minimise the spread of illnesses and to support the wellbeing of others.

If your child is absent please email Info@oranaschool.com or call the office by 9:00am so that they can inform your teacher. If your child falls ill during the day we will contact you or your nominated carer for your child to be collected.

After an illness, children often appear healthy in the morning but are still not up to the vigorous activity of the day. Please allow your child at least one full day of rest after an illness.

It is preferable that children are given medicines at home. If a child must take medication during the day, it must come in its original container with the physician's instructions. Parents will also need to fill the medication register, giving full instructions, signed and dated and hand the medication directly to the teacher. Children are not to have medications kept in their school bags. Vitamins and cough drops are treated as medication.

In an emergency we will use the information you have provided regarding contact numbers, physician's name and

phone numbers, and specific instructions. In the event that parents or guardians cannot be contacted, your signed consent will allow us to give the medical attention your child might need.

Please advise the School Office and your teacher of any special medical conditions such as asthma, epilepsy, severe allergies or anaphylaxis that your child may have and provide a Medical Action Plan signed by your doctor to help staff take the appropriate care for your child.

The School must be notified immediately if your child is diagnosed as having any of the following conditions: Head Lice, Chickenpox, Measles, Whooping Cough, Ringworm, Hand-Foot-and-Mouth, German measles, Mumps, Conjunctivitis and Impetigo. Children with these conditions must be kept at home until they are no longer contagious. If unsure, please ask your teacher regarding the exclusion periods for each of these illnesses.

In regards to vaccinations, the School's view is that it is the parent's right and responsibility to choose whether to vaccinate or not. Information about vaccination campaigns will be made available through email communications and on notice boards and parents must take responsibility to act according to their convictions.

The School is required to keep records of your child's vaccination status. Where a child is not vaccinated, a parental letter stating the same is requested. If an outbreak of a notifiable disease were to occur, children not vaccinated for this condition are required by government health authorities to be excluded from School during the outbreak.

We are also required by the Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT) to report to government authorities where there is a belief on reasonable grounds of any physical and sexual abuse.

Festivals

The rhythms of the year are marked through the changing seasons and the coming and going of festivals. As the year weaves from one festival to another we are provided with a true reason for preparation for these festivals and celebration. For the young child the preparation is half the joy: decorating the room, baking special treats and learning songs and crafts chosen just for that particular festival. The stories that are told give the children a pictorial understanding of the festival and speak very deeply to them without our having to explain.

Each room has a nature table which changes with the seasons, bringing into the room a subtle way to note these changes. Autumn brings harvest, fruits, nuts, berries, grains and boughs of changing leaves. The Winter garden is bare but probably most awe-provoking. Spring bursts forth with flowers and life. Children love this table. You might let your child have a small table or a windowsill at home to create his or her own nature table with seasonal findings from walks or outings.

We hope to bring a better understanding of these seasonal festivals in our parent evenings, for it is the celebration of festivals in our community which is one of the most deeply fulfilling experiences for both young and old. We may also add celebrations that honour the culture or religious traditions of our families in any given year.

Birthday Celebrations

The teachers regard your child's presence in the group as a blessing and are grateful for the opportunity to express their appreciation on his or her birthday. Each teacher has a slightly different way of honouring and gently acknowledging your child at this time. Most often, a birthday story is told which describes a simple and age-appropriate picture of the human birth experience. A festive morning tea or lunch with a cake then follows singing. The simple but unique birthday celebration given by each teacher can be a memorable occasion for your child. Please remind your child's teacher at least one full week before the birthday.

A verse for the night before the birthday

*When I have said my evening prayer
And my clothes are folded on the chair
And mother switches off the light
I'll still be years old tonight.
But from the break of day Before
the children rise and play Before the
darkness turns to gold
Tomorrow I'll be years old.
... kisses when I wake
... candles on my cake!*

Signing In and Out

The Early Childhood program at Orana Steiner School is a licensed facility and it is a requirement by regulation that parents or an authorised adult sign their children in and out on a daily basis. Your full and legal signature is required. Every parent or other authorised adult has access to his/her child at any time during hours of operation.

Morning Arrival

After signing in, please bring your child to the teacher so that he or she can be greeted. Teachers will not be available to discuss questions from parents; however if you need to inform the teacher of something concerning your child, please do so briefly or give the teacher a note containing the pertinent information. Pick up time is a better time for short discussions, or you can make a time to meet the teacher to discuss any concerns.

Pick-up Time

Please be prompt in picking-up your child at 3.00 pm and help to put his/her slippers away and take home any clothing that belongs to your child. This small act will support your child to form good habits in caring for their belongings.

Remember to sign your child out, from which time the legal responsibility for the safety of your child on the grounds and in the car park is passed back to you. If you wish to designate another adult or an older sibling to pick your child up, please speak to your teacher and fill out an Authority to Release Form.

Punctuality

Please ensure that your child arrives by 8:50am, in time for the commencement of the day. Teachers are on duty from 8:30am to 3:30pm. Please do not leave your child unattended on the school grounds outside of these times. We offer Before School Care from 7:30am and After School Care until 5.55pm each day. Separate enrolment forms are available on the school's website.

Parent Evenings

Throughout the year, your child's teacher will schedule a series of class meetings. These meetings are opportunities to discuss how things are going in the class and to learn more about child development and Waldorf/Steiner education.

They also provide important social aspect to help build the community and foster friendships between families. Please ensure that at least one representative from your family attends.

Parent – Teacher Interviews

Parent-Teacher interviews provide an opportunity for sharing information, concerns, progress and goals for your child. Through these conversations we are able to deepen our understanding of your child as well as strengthen our work together. These are usually scheduled in term 2 and 4 and at other times when needed. Please feel free to arrange an appointment with your child's teacher when you feel one is needed.

Sometimes, your teacher may request a home visit in order to strengthen the connection between home and school, or to provide an opportunity to understand your child more deeply. The teachers are always grateful for communication from you about significant circumstances or changes in your child's life.



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The teachers strive to create an environment in which young children feel secure, loved and are recognised as spiritual beings.

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Electronic Media and the Young Child

The presence and strong effects of television, DVD and other electronic devices such as tablets and mobile phone games in a child's life are often clearly seen in the room. The child may lack concentration and focus, speak in the tone of a certain character or may seem "stuck" in play, unable to extend and allow the creativity to flourish. Other negative effects may manifest in a child who cannot sit still during story time, to imagine or follow the story. This makes it a distressing time for your child instead of a time of wonderment and delight.

There are many well-documented effects of the electronic media on children; for example violence, hyperactivity and lack of attention span, or the inability to complete tasks. Perhaps the greatest loss is the dimming effect it has on the child's wonderful imagination, that which provides the foundation for learning and growth. The teachers fully recognise that electronic media is in the domain of the family and that it is up to you to decide for your child. However, in order to support your child and the teacher, we ask that he or she does not engage in screen time in the mornings before school or before bedtime, as it will affect the quality of your child's day at school or your child's sleep.

Instead we encourage you to explore the alternatives such as cooking, sweeping, washing dishes, yard work and gardening, carpentry or shoe polishing. And of course, playing. The teachers would be happy to share ideas or suggest other alternatives.

Loud music and too many audio books can also be harmful to the young child, if they are a substitute for the live human voice. For more information about the effects of media on the developing child please see the book list at the back of this Handbook.

Discipline

In the early years, we strive to understand the nature of the young child and create a routine that allows for an appropriate balance of "breathing in" and "breathing out" activities. This can eliminate some of the difficulties that are often found in early childhood settings. Consistency in the rhythm and predictability in the routine allows the children to know what is expected of them, providing the children with the security that they need.

Teachers model ways of resolving issues or conflicts among the children. When required, teachers may use "time-in" (instead of "time-out"), a period of time spent working with or helping one of the adults, until the teacher feels that the child is ready to re-join his or her classmates. It is worth noting that children often model socially inappropriate behaviours from children's TV programs, DVDs and computer games.

If difficulties are persistent, the teacher may request an interview with the parents. The adults can then assess the situation and work together to find ways to help the child express him or herself in more socially appropriate ways. Sometimes children can also be helped by changes in diet and daily routines at home. It is important that parents inform their child's teacher of changes in circumstances at home.

Most importantly, we wish to emphasise that honest and open communication between the adults is most helpful for the children during these formative years.

The Work of the Teacher

The task of education in the first seven years is to help the child develop physically in a healthy way, and especially to protect and stimulate the developing senses. This provides the proper foundation for the future development of the child's social, academic, and spiritual life. The teachers strive to create an environment in which young children feel secure, loved and are recognised as spiritual beings.

The child's security arises out of being surrounded by beauty and goodness and by experiencing the certainty of a predictable and rhythmic life. Daily, weekly, and yearly rhythms help to instil a healthy 'habit life'. The teacher and her assistant endeavour to provide order and purpose in practical activities, set boundaries and help to bring harmony between the children in their group.

The child feels loved when warmth permeates the atmosphere and joy is the mood with which work is done in the room. The child feels recognised when the teacher meets him or her with an earnest attempt to understand (along with the parents), the uniqueness of each child; this is done without judgement and through observations, study and meditation.

The teachers recognise the social elements of their work in the school as a whole, and that in this social realm, the parents are equal partners. Communication between the parents and teacher therefore needs to be respectful, honest and supportive. The attitude that pervades the relationships between the adults in the room is a respect for the destiny that has brought them together. This creates the space for courageous communication in both speaking and listening, out of which we as colleagues can develop ourselves further.

The need for the continued inner work of the teacher is implied by all of the above. Young children learn by imitating the adults and the environment that surrounds them, therefore the teacher must strive in thought, word and deed to be worthy of imitation by the young child.

Resources – Parenting and Waldorf/Steiner education

There are many books about Waldorf/Steiner education and child development from the Waldorf/Steiner perspective. The Orana Steiner School has a library of books which parents are welcome to borrow. Here are a few which have proven helpful to parents with young children. These books can be found or ordered from most bookstores and online.

The Education of the Child

The Way of a Child – A.C. Harwood

Work and Play in Early Childhood – Freya Jaffke

Children at Play – Heidi Britz-Crecelius

The Genius of Play – Sally Jenkinson

Free to Learn – Lynne Oldfield

The Well Balanced Child – Sally Goddard

Eternal Childhood – Karl Koniga

What is a Waldorf Kindergarten? – Sharifa Oppenheimer

The Blessings of a Skinned Knee: Raising Self-Reliant Children – Wendy Mogel

The Incarnating Child – Joan Salter

Phases of Childhood – Bernard Lievegoed

Storytelling with Children – Nancy Mellon

Beyond the Rainbow Bridge All Year Round – J. Patterson & P. Bradley

Festivals, Family and Food – Diana Carey & Judy Large

Heaven on Earth: A Handbook for Parents of Young Children – Sharifa Oppenheimer

The Disappearance of Childhood – Neil Postman

Endangered Minds – Jane Healy

Failure to Connect – Jane Healy

Your Child's Growing Mind – Jane Healy

Why Children Don't Listen – Monika Kiel-Hinrichsen

The Over-Scheduled Child – Nicole Wise

Magical Child – Joseph Chilton Pearce

Smart Moves – Carla Hannaford

Simplicity Parenting – Kim John Payne

Who's Bringing Them Up? Television and Child Development – Martin Large

Parenting from the Inside Out – Daniel Siegel & Mary Hartzell

Last Child in the Woods – Richard Louv

The Plug-in Drug: Television, Computers & Family Life – Marie Winn

The Power of Play – David Elkind

The Hurried Child – David Elkind

Morning Verse

Good morning dear earth
Good morning dear sun
Good morning dear stones, dear
flowers each one, Good morning to
the beasts and the birds in the trees,
Good morning to you and
Good morning to me.

Meal Time Blessings

Morning Tea

Blessing on the blossom
Blessing on the fruit
Blessing on the leaf and stem
Blessing on the root.

Lunch

Earth who gave to us this food
Sun that makes it ripe and good
Dearest earth, dearest sun
Thanks we bring to you each one.



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Our Vision is to educate and inspire students to achieve their best, work creatively and become aware of themselves as individuals who will contribute positively to global social change.

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General School Information

Term Dates

Term dates are set each year in consultation with the College of Teachers and usually coincide with ACT Government School terms although there are exceptions such as the winter break which is usually three weeks. Standard public holidays (e.g. Canberra Day, Easter, Queen's Birthday) are observed. Term dates are available from the School Office and the School website.

The first Monday before the start of Term 1 is generally a pupil free day and is used as an opportunity for professional development for the teachers. However, please note the days may change from year to year and will be confirmed in the School publications and on the website.

Special Events

Open Days, Festivals, Working Bees and Fairs are held during the year. More information about specific events and their role in School life is included in the School Leaflet and on the Website.

Office Hours

The School Office is open during term time between 8:30am and 3:45pm Monday to Friday.

Before and After School Care Program

The Orana Before and After School Care program aims to provide a high quality, safe environment for the care of children that is compatible with the Steiner approach to education.

The services operate within the school grounds and care for up to 40 children. Before School Care commences at 7:30 in the morning until the beginning of class. After School Care operates from the end of the school day until 5:45 in the evening, each weekday.

Bookings are essential as places are limited and cannot be guaranteed. Some parents may be eligible for a child-care rebate from Centrelink. Please email support@extend.com.au with any enquiries or visit our website for more information.

Social Activities and Spring Fair

Social activities such as Community Markets are organised by the Parents & Friends Association (P&F) with the help of particular classes in the School. The Spring Fair is a major fundraising event as well as an important annual social event. The weekly Craft Group gatherings are held on weekends during term time and all parents are welcome to participate regardless of level of skill.

Transport

ACTION currently provides School buses to and from Orana for children living in North Canberra, Woden, South Canberra, Belconnen and Tuggeranong. Please contact ACTION or the School Office for details of these services. Please inform your teacher if you require your child to be escorted to the bus stop.

Q City buses provide a service to and from Queanbeyan and from Griffith and to Yarralumla. Transborder Buses provide a service to and from Yass. Details are available from the School Office.

Students' Behaviour on Buses

For the benefit of all, students' behaviour on buses needs to be considerate and cooperative and not impinging poorly on others. Intimidating behaviour is not acceptable.

Any student who feels threatened on the buses is invited to report complaints. The following procedure will ensue:

1. Student/ parent brings a complaint to any teacher.
2. The complaint will be recorded with the Assistant Principal.
3. The Assistant Principal will clarify the situation with the students involved as soon as possible.
4. An offender will be warned that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and told why this is so. The offender will be asked to offer alternative responses and be coached in this. The warning will state that any similar complaints within the next 2 weeks will lead to his/her being put off the bus for up to one week. Parents will be phoned and the situation fully reported.
5. A further verified report within the fortnight (above procedure) means that the student's parents will be phoned and the student not be allowed to travel on the bus for 1 - 5 days.

Please note that most bus companies have their own codes of behaviour and the right to uphold these requirements. Please ensure you and your child/ren are familiar with their expectations.

Parking

Please do not leave children unattended in parked cars.

The Amphitheatre

- Do not leave vehicle when using short-stay pick up/set down car park area.
- Please use parking bays for long term parking.
- No parking in designated staff parking areas.
- Do not park close to pedestrian crossing or bus turning areas.

Hill Campus

- Car parking is available alongside the entry road and in the car park at the top of Unwin Place.
- Please do not park on lawn areas or bus drop-off and pick-up areas.
- Please be aware that "car park conversations" in parking areas significantly increase safety risks to children due to decrease in supervision of children.
- Carefully check the way is clear when reversing and if possible reverse park in the car parks.

When driving elsewhere in the vicinity of the School grounds

PROCEED SLOWLY AND WITH GREAT CARE

Books for Borrowing and Purchase

Books and articles relating to education, parenting, child development and the work of Rudolf Steiner are available for parents to borrow from the School library in the Parent Library Section.

A further selection of books plus other items such as indoor shoes, modelling wax, children's books, crayons, pencils and paints are available for purchase from the Orana P&F Shop, located near the Classes 1 and 2, on the Hill Campus.

School Publications & Noticeboards

The School produces the Orana Seasons each term and a fortnightly school Leaflet. These publications are sent to all parents via email and are also available on our website. The publications contain information for parents from the School Board, the Principal, College of Teachers, the Ancillary Team, Parents and Friends Association (P&F) and other members of the School community. A parent noticeboard is in the School Office displaying copies of the School Leaflet and Orana Seasons and other information of interest to the School community from Steiner Schools elsewhere in Australia. General information noticeboards can be found on external walls at the Amphitheatre and Hill campuses and the Senior Resource Centre.

Communication

The following guidelines are to facilitate clear communication between staff and parents and complement the regular, informal communications that already take place between members of the

School community.

The School uses a number of means to communicate with the parent body including School Box, the School Leaflet and Orana Seasons, Annual School Report, Class Notes, the School Office Notice Board, Parent/Teacher Meetings, P&F Meetings, the AGM of the Canberra Rudolf Steiner School Association (CRSSA) and the School website.

Individual Communications

Parents are encouraged to speak with their children's class teacher to clarify any questions relating to the curriculum, activities, or the culture of their class. Parents are also welcome to contact the Director of Early Childhood or Deputy Principal if they have any questions in relation to the running of the School. When difficulties are not resolved in relation to the School generally or between teachers and parents, the Grievance Procedure should be followed.

Complaint Handling and Grievance Procedure for Staff and Parents

Parents and staff may sometimes feel they have experienced unreasonable treatment, disadvantage or distress which they would like to complain about (a grievance). Normally, such grievances should be dealt with as expeditiously and informally as possible, in order to maintain the important social relationships which underpin the school community and provide the basis for offering a supportive and caring education and working environment. However, should such matters become a formal grievance, substantive and procedural fairness must be accorded the parties.

This system is not designed for the handling of grievances brought by students against other students, as those matters are better dealt with under the school's Behaviour Management procedures. This procedure covers the following categories of grievances:

Student and Staff, Parent and Staff, Staff and Staff, Staff and Employer

This procedure also meets the School's obligations under Section 94 of the Education Act 2004 where it states:

1. The proprietor of a non-government school must develop and implement a complaints procedure for the school.
2. The proprietor of a non-government school must, as soon as practicable, investigate any complaint about the administration, management and operation of the school that, in the proprietor's opinion, is not a frivolous or vexatious complaint.

A copy of the full Complaint Handling & Grievance Procedure for Staff and Parents is available from the School Office.



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The College of Teachers is comprised of teachers and staff at the school who are committed to initiating and implementing the educational aspects of the school.

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School Organisation

Orana Steiner School is a registered non-profit Association (Canberra Rudolf Steiner School Association Inc.). The Orana Steiner School Board is the overall governing body of the school. Its responsibilities include overseeing the management of the school's financial and other resources, administration, communications, enrolments and staffing.

The members of the Board are: three nominated by the College of Teachers, three elected by the School Association, the Principal, a representative of the P&F and two advisory members nominated from the College of Teachers. Additional members can be co-opted by the Board itself.

The Principal is responsible for all management aspects of the school. The Senior Management team manages the school according to the Board policy, as well as on advice from the College of Teachers regarding the educational, spiritual and philosophical aspects of the school. The Deputy Principals and Director of Early Childhood may be contacted with questions or concerns about educational matters that cannot be resolved between the teacher and parent.

The College of Teachers is comprised of teachers and staff at the school who are committed to initiating and implementing the educational aspects of the school. They carry and strengthen the educational and spiritual impulse for Orana. Matters of whole school curriculum, professional development and pastoral care are specific areas of the College's responsibility. The College meets once a week during the school term and various subgroups report regularly to it from the School staff.

Faculty staff meetings are also held on a weekly basis. These meetings can be attended by any employee at Orana and other people may be invited to attend on occasions. Study of Rudolf Steiner's indications in education, coordination and organisation of routine faculty business, and curriculum work and professional development are some of the areas covered by each Faculty meetings.

The College of Teachers and the Board are defined by the Constitution of the Canberra Rudolf Steiner Schools Association Incorporated. Membership of and participation in the Association is open to all members of staff, parents, guardians and members of the wider community who complete an application form for membership. These forms and copies of the Constitution are available from the School Office. Membership of the Association is a prerequisite for anyone wishing to serve on any of the official School bodies. Parents are encouraged to join and to be active in this area of the School's life.

The Parents and Friends Association (P&F) is a separate entity from the School Association with its own Constitution. It exists to support the Teachers' work through fundraising, social and community building activities. A representative of the College attends P&F meetings to report on the College and vice versa. All parents of children at Orana are members of the P&F and are therefore, welcome to attend meetings. Meeting dates are advertised in the School Leaflet and on the website www.oranaschool.com.



Orana
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