

...where children **love to learn**

Lower School Handbook

School Year 2020-2021



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CONTENTS

Welcome	3
Frequently Asked Questions regarding Steiner Waldorf Education	4
Cambridge Steiner School and the Steiner/Waldorf Curriculum	7
Early Years Department.....	7
Lower School	8
Attendance	12
Other Lines of Communication	13
Concerns and Complaints.....	13
Finance and Administration	14
Class and School Support Structures.....	15
Lower School Rules.....	17
Practical Matters	17
Medical Matters	20
Policies.....	21
Health and Safety	22
Equal opportunities	23

WELCOME

Many different paths lead children and their parents/carers to the Cambridge Steiner School. We are delighted you have chosen to become part of our school community and we welcome you to our Lower School. We provide a rich and unique curriculum where learning is surrounded with an imaginative and creative methodology and delivered in such a way as to strengthen the intellectual, physical, social and emotional skills of each individual child.

This handbook contains some important information about how the school works. By consulting it you will be better informed and feel more at home. We hope that you will find this handbook informative and inspirational and that it will encourage you to become involved in the many areas of school life where parents make such an important contribution. We would welcome any suggestions that may help us with future versions.

Many thanks,

Sarah Fox

Education Manager

'Our aim is to provide a truly inspirational education where our children develop a love of learning and are prepared to go out into our ever changing world as creative, resourceful and self confident young people with the life skills to succeed.'

Background to Cambridge Steiner School

The first Cambridge Steiner Kindergarten opened its doors in 1994, the Lower School in 1999, and we moved to our own premises in 2007 where the two Kindergartens and Lower School could be housed together. The school now offers Early Childhood provisions of Parent and Child sessions, Kindergartens running from 8.30am – 3pm and a Lower School for children from 6 to 14 years of age (8.30 – 3pm). Our Upper School (14 – 16 years) is due to open in September 2021.

The Cambridge Steiner School is one of more than 900 Steiner Waldorf schools in over 60 countries worldwide¹. Each school shares a curriculum and a teaching method which fosters the child's healthy development and stimulates the child's enthusiasm for learning. Each one of the schools is part of its local cultural community, yet all have something in common — a genuine respect for the individuality of each child.

The Cambridge Steiner School endeavours to develop the unique human potential of each individual. Thus, in our school there is no room for discrimination against any person or group of people on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, faith, disability, age, marital status or sexual orientation. This encompasses equality of opportunity and an appreciation of the diversity of the children, staff and parents/carers served by the Cambridge Steiner School.

¹ The majority of Steiner Schools call themselves Waldorf schools after the founding Waldorf School in Stuttgart,

Germany.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING STEINER WALDORF EDUCATION

When do pupils begin formal learning?

Pupils start formal learning, i.e. writing, reading and numeracy in Class 1 at the age of six; the norm in many European countries and an approach supported by a significant body of research. Cognitive skills can be introduced with relative ease if children first have the opportunity to develop speech, co-ordination and their relationship to themselves, others and the world around them during the pre-school years and in Kindergarten.

How do we know that pupils are making progress?

Ideally the teacher stays with one group of pupils throughout their years in the Lower School and his or her knowledge of the child is therefore very extensive. An emphasis on formative and ongoing assessment reduces the dependence on, and the anxiety related to, testing. Teachers and parents work closely together in order to build a picture of the child that helps everyone to understand and support that child's development. Parents receive a detailed written report at the end of each school year.

How do pupils succeed academically?

The vast majority go on to higher education and to a huge variety of career paths. They tend to stand out for their strong, independent learning skills, motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

What is a Main Lesson?

Each day opens with a Main Lesson which lasts approximately two hours and will focus for up to four weeks on one core subject drawn from the broad curriculum. The Class Teacher endeavours to

integrate a range of artistic activities, techniques, delivery methods, learning styles and resources to encourage the child's enthusiastic immersion in the subject.

What part do festivals play?

Festivals, both seasonal and those adapted from the culture that is local to the school, play an important part in the life of the child. These festivals serve to awaken the child's natural reverence, recognition of the mood that is appropriate for such occasions and a respect for the spiritual essence that exists in us all. Festivals also provide an opportunity for participation and celebration by the whole school community.

What is eurythmy?

Eurythmy is a form of movement that attempts to make visible the tone and feeling of music and speech. It helps to develop concentration, self-discipline, spatial and aesthetic awareness and sensitivity to others. Eurythmy lessons follow the themes of the curriculum, exploring rhyme, meter, story, and geometric forms.

What place does sport have in the curriculum?

Games and sports are an integral part of the social and cultural life in our school. They promote physical agility, grace, social awareness, self-esteem and co-operation. In the first years of the Lower School the emphasis is on games that are introduced through imaginative pictures in which the children experience numerous different roles and contexts. These games help to build the basic skills needed for all sports. They tend to be more fluid and less competitive than conventional sports. There is no clear winner or loser. As they move through the school, proto-sports such as bench ball are introduced. From Class 6 children take part in a range of formal sports.

What does CSS recommend about television viewing and IT?

A familiarity with all the technologies that surround us and influence our lives is an essential part of a complete education. There is growing evidence, however, that too much 'screen time' is detrimental to children, and Steiner schools do not shy away from engaging in critical debate about the appropriate use of computers, TV and films.

At Steiner schools, computers are generally used by students at secondary age and not earlier. Steiner pupils very quickly master the necessary ICT skills and many go on to successful careers in the computer, film and TV industries.

Who was Steiner and what is anthroposophy?

Rudolf Steiner was born in what is now Croatia in 1861. He wrote and lectured on a wide range of contemporary issues including architecture, medicine, philosophy, science, economics and social reform, as well as education. Steiner Waldorf schools, biodynamic agriculture and a variety of therapeutic and curative initiatives are amongst the most well-known practical applications of his work.

Our approach to education is based on Steiner's educational insights, specifically those that relate to child development. These form one aspect of what Steiner called 'anthroposophy', literally 'human wisdom' or 'knowledge of the human being'. These ideas are contained in Steiner's approximately 4,000 lectures and some 50 written works. Many of these can be accessed online at the Rudolf Steiner archive at www.rsarchive.org.

What provision is made for pupils with different learning needs?

We take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils when planning lessons. We are currently developing our special educational needs and

disability (SEND) provision.

How is the children's behaviour managed?

All Steiner schools have behaviour management policies stating clearly their approach to discipline, which is neither rigid in the traditional sense nor free in the progressive sense. Each school day is clearly structured. There are clear expectations and clear boundaries.

Children learn best when they feel secure and when they know what to expect. A warm, well-structured environment gives them essential support in finding out about the world and themselves in an age-appropriate fashion.

In addition, our school has an anti-bullying policy in place and takes bullying very seriously. Please raise any specific concerns you might have as soon as they arise with your class teacher.

What if a child does not get on with their Class Teacher (given that the teacher may be with the child for a number of years)?

The teacher's professional responsibility is heightened when children are in their charge for a number of years. Problems cannot be 'passed down the line' but have to be addressed. The teacher and children come to know and understand each other in a deep way, respecting both strengths and weaknesses. The children feel themselves to be known, the teacher feels more accountable, and the working together between teacher and parents becomes more meaningful.

How do pupils cope if they transition to secondary school?

If pupils leave for secondary school, then their time at CSS will have prepared them well for the challenges ahead. The confidence instilled in children as they experience the Steiner approach appears to stand them in good stead when they make the

transition. Secondary school teachers have consistently commented that children educated in Steiner schools are independent learners who have developed their natural love of discovery and exploration.

For further reading:

Waldorf Education by Christopher Clouder and Martyn Rawson (Floris Books).

Understanding Waldorf Education by Jack Petrash (Floris Books).

These are basic and accessible source books with information about anthroposophy in general and give a clear picture of Steiner Waldorf education.



“The purpose of education is to enable the mind, to fire the imagination, to fortify the will, and to quicken the initiative for life.”

Rudolf Steiner, 1861-1925

CAMBRIDGE STEINER SCHOOL AND THE STEINER WALDORF CURRICULUM

EARLY YEARS DEPARTMENT

Our Early Years setting provides flexible educational provision for children from birth to 6 years of age.

This includes:

- Parent and Child/Baby Groups for children from birth to 2 or 3 years of age.
- Buttercups Kindergarten for children from 2 years of age.
- Kindergarten provision for children aged 3 -6.



Together our kindergartens provide a creative and nurturing learning environment, which also includes weekly visits to the nearby woodlands for the older children.

Kindergarten provision is from 8.30am to 3.00pm, for a minimum of four days a week (optional 1pm pick up). Late afternoon provision is available 3-5pm Tuesday-Thursday.

The Early Years teachers strive to build a bridge between home and school and to form a connection to each child's family. The education is based on Rudolf Steiner's insights and a deep understanding of child development. Children of this age learn through imitating the world around them. We aim to provide an example worthy of imitation, and to nurture the child's imagination through providing opportunities for creative play, singing, poetry, stories and puppet plays. The seasonal festivals are an important part of every school year and are celebrated by all the kindergartens and classes throughout the school, and most often are shared with family and friends.

Being in nature and experiencing the seasons is an important aspect of our education, so all of our kindergartens spend a considerable amount of time outdoors.



LOWER SCHOOL

The children enter Lower School the September after their sixth birthday.

The core of the curriculum is the Main Lesson, typically taught in three week blocks of two hours each morning. These lessons include topics such as literacy, numeracy, farming, geography, botany, mythology etc. They are taught in an imaginative, experiential and age-appropriate manner, with the children producing their own written and illustrated books. The Class Teacher takes the Main Lesson blocks and integrates literacy and numeracy as well as practical and artistic activities such as painting, drawing, modelling, drama and movement, music and gardening. In Steiner schools the children begin writing and reading later than in mainstream schools. This we believe to be more appropriate to their development.

Subject teachers support the Class Teacher with French, German, Outdoor Education, Eurythmy, Handwork and Music.

Harvest of Work

At the Harvest of Work, the children share with other classes, parents, relatives and friends some of their work from the classroom. It takes place on the last day of every half-term at 2pm.

Class Plays

Individual classes present plays throughout the year to which parents, friends and families are invited.

Seasonal Festivals

These play an important part in the life of the school. They are celebrated throughout the school and bring children, teachers and parents together at significant times of the year. We believe festivals bring a strong

feeling of rhythm to the year, an awareness of the seasons and a sense of continuity from year to year.



Modern Languages

Learning foreign languages is an integral part of Steiner Waldorf education. At the Cambridge Steiner School, French and German are offered from Class 1 onwards.

Strings Program

Music is an integral part of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum, underpinning the students' daily life throughout their time at the school. As part of the Steiner music curriculum, all class 3 and 4 students learn a stringed instrument, which as Rudolf Steiner explained, help ground the children in the practical and tactile activity of playing an instrument. This is particularly relevant at this stage in their development as they go through the '9-year-change,' moving from the ethereal stages of early childhood into knowing themselves as individuals. As well as grounding the children's prior experiences of singing and listening to music, the string instruments help enable the children to express themselves, the subtle vibrations opening their heart at this crucial stage of development.

Lower School Classes

In September 2020, there will be five class groups: combined Class 1 and 2, combined Class 3 and 4, Class 5, Class 6, and combined Class 7 and 8.

School Day

8.30am – 10.30am: Main lesson
10.30am – 11.05am: Snack and Break
11.05am – 12.30pm: Lessons
12.30pm – 1.30pm: Lunch and Break
1.30pm – 3pm: Lessons

Lessons begin **promptly** at 8.30am. Children should arrive between 8.15am and 8.25am in order to be sitting at their desks for 8.30am. The school takes responsibility for supervising children from 8.15am. Children arriving before 8.15am remain the responsibility of their parents. Wednesday afternoon is optional for Class 1 and 2 (early pick up at 1pm).

Class 1 (ages 6 and 7)

The Class 1 child is eager to learn and express themselves through reading and writing. Numbers and letters are presented in exciting and imaginative ways that feed their enthusiasm. Teaching is pictorial and imaginative: the aim being to stimulate the intellect through activity, rhythm and imagination. Time is spent laying down good habits of classroom life and work, cultivating reverence for nature, respect for others, and learning to connect with and care for the children's environment. The children need fantasy and imaginative pictures, and so learning is enriched through fairytales.

Class 2 (ages 7 and 8)

In Class 2 the children are growing increasingly aware of themselves and each other. They hear fables, where the characters encounter problems with others when their boastfulness, cunning or pride cloud right

judgment. These themes can be explored through drawing, writing, modelling and role-play. They are balanced by hearing legends of the saints, who use their skills and gifts to aid others. Cursive writing is begun and composition is introduced, which aids spelling. Reading skills continue to develop. Maths work builds with mental practice and longer exercises, moving on to larger numbers, number bonds and working further with the four processes. Geometrical form drawing is begun.

Class 3 (ages 8 and 9)

Class 3 sees the child's awareness move further out into the world, so we look at farming, building and trades to learn an appreciation for how the things we need for a comfortable life are produced for us by the hard work and effort of others. This can be accompanied by practical projects involving growing vegetables, weaving baskets, grinding flour and baking bread. There are many trips in connection with these topics. Stories now are from the Old Testament, including Genesis and other creation stories. The children begin to write full sentences from stories and activities, explore nouns, verbs, adjectives and punctuation. In maths, practice of all 12 times tables continues; long multiplications and long divisions are introduced, as well as money handling and change. Various forms of measurement – linear, liquids, solids and temporal are studied at this age.



Class 4 (ages 9 and 10)

In Class 4 the children are ready for more of an academic challenge so they engage with fractions and the relationship of human beings to the animal kingdom. The aim is to meet the children's growing interest in the world and to provide more opportunities for independence in their work. Mythology is now introduced, especially the Norse Myths (also known as the Edda) and in form drawing Celtic knot work in particular is explored. In English, grammar work covers the tenses and parts of speech. In maths, fractions are introduced using all four processes and measurements, and area work is continued. There are Main Lesson blocks on local geography and local history, beginning with the school grounds and leading on to sightseeing trips and the two-day walking trip to Ely. Other Main Lesson blocks explore the form and functions of the human being, leading to an understanding of the animal world; this is followed by a more detailed study of some animals. The children also start making reports and work on a project.

Class 5 (ages 10 and 11)

By the time the child reaches Class 5 they have achieved a kind of elegant balance in the proportions of their body and the ripeness of their intellect. Mythology now approaches early history, looking at the early civilizations of India, Persia, Babylonia and Egypt, moving on to Classical Greece. The year culminates in a trip to the national Olympic Games staged by all Steiner schools.

Geography becomes regional, with a study of the British Isles, and nature study takes the form of botany. English work develops with direct speech, converting from active to passive voice, punctuation, more tenses and vocabulary work. In maths, the

decimal system is introduced, as well as percentages. All previous mathematical subjects continue to be practised.

Class 6-8 (ages 11 – 14)

From Class 6-8, pupils enter into puberty and the first birth pangs of individuality are felt. The child experiences a yearning for independence together with underlying anxiety, emotional vulnerability and mood swings. Authority is openly and critically questioned, and parents and teachers are challenged accordingly.

In terms of the child's readiness for learning, one sees the faculties of scientific, abstract and causal thinking come to the fore, and the child develops a growing appetite for factual knowledge about the world around them. The child demonstrates an emerging potential for self-reflection, which becomes a new teaching opportunity.

During this period, the teachers have several key aims and objectives. They need to direct the pupils' interest and attention strongly into the world, and provide the pupils with new perspectives and opportunities to explore different ways of seeing the world. They are increasingly called upon to take greater initiative and responsibility for self-directed learning and individual judgment. Their powers of observation are developed through a variety of media, and work throughout the curriculum cultivates a sense for social responsibility

Class 6 (ages 11 and 12)

In Class 6 the children are on the cusp of adolescence. The dawning of a new-found capacity for careful observation and for forming judgements is harnessed with the introduction of formal science. The class explores the familiar sensory phenomena of sound,

light and heat but with a new and more conscious focus in their first Physics Main Lesson, as well as later studying static electricity and magnetism.

History emerges out of mythology with Alexander the Great and then the Romans. Their mathematical knowledge is applied to the real world in a Business maths block. Geometry is formally introduced.

Nature study moves still further from the human being and the children encounter the density of the earth in geology and in woodwork lessons.

Class 7 (ages 12 and 13)

Main Lessons in history explore the Middle Ages, The Renaissance and the Age of Discovery. In astronomy they study the night sky and in geography they study one continent, focusing on the cultural, material and economic conditions of the different societies. Science continues with Mechanics, Inorganic Chemistry and Combustion. Human biology focuses on health and hygiene, respiration, circulation, digestion and some relationship and sex education. In maths they are introduced to graphs and algebra and continue with geometry. English brings composition, business letters - and poetry in a 'Wish. Wonder and Surprise' Main Lesson.

Class 8 (ages 13 and 14)

In the final year with their Class teacher, each pupil undertakes a substantial independent project of their own choosing whilst as a class they prepare a full-length drama production. Physics covers magnetism, electricity and electromagnetism. Organic chemistry studies substances that build up the body whilst biology focuses on the skeleton, muscles and the human eye and ear. Meteorology is introduced. History covers major trends in Western culture since the 17th century to the present, including the English Reformation and Civil War and the American, French and Russian Revolutions. English looks at literature studies, creative writing and narrative, and descriptive

prose. Maths moves to more complex arithmetic using roots and powers, compound interest, surface areas and volume. Platonic Solids are calculated and constructed, whilst algebra continues with the theory of equations.

Combined Classes

Combined year-group classes are the norm in many smaller schools across the UK and around the world - in both Steiner and other state and independent schools. The classes consist of children covering an age range of more or less two years. There are many ways to teach combined classes, and the Steiner Waldorf curriculum lends itself particularly well to this approach.

The Steiner curriculum has been likened to an ascending spiral - subjects are revisited several times, with each new exposure affording greater depth and new insights. As the children grow and move up the school, they naturally encounter the development of each subject. A combined curriculum gives a valuable opportunity for this to happen over an extended period of time, with some children deepening their experience of a subject they are returning to, whilst others are experiencing where the curriculum will take them in the future.



Above all, the role of the teacher becomes key to delivering material that fosters the unique educational needs of each child. Often the teacher will present the same content to the class as a whole, but will deliver it with differentiation in an age and ability appropriate way.

There are many advantages, both social and academic, to this form of learning. The children gain experience from helping and being helped by others across a broad range of subjects, which reinforces the recapitulation, or re-living of material - a key element of the Steiner Waldorf approach.

Cambridge Steiner School has a single Class 5 and Class 6 at present, alongside three combined classes, each class comprising children of two academic year groups: Classes 1 and 2, Classes 3 and 4 and Classes 7 and 8.

Further Curriculum Information is available on our school website.

ATTENDANCE

The law requires that parents ensure all children of compulsory school age receive full-time education during term time, unless they are being home-schooled (in whole or in part).

Our teaching methods place great importance on the whole class achieving continuity in its learning, and we regard any unnecessary absences as detrimental.

We regard punctuality as healthy and appropriate and consider avoidable lateness as hampering a pupil's development—and indeed the learning of the whole class.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a

medical appointment.

- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time, in writing.
- Making requests to the for any authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

The school expects attendance of at least 96%. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via an email or letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning and settling in time. Where there has been more than 10% lateness over a term parents will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents to seek support and advice to address these issues.

See also the Attendance Summary Information for Parents handout, Attendance Policy, Register Use Policy and Procedure, and the Absence Request Policy, all are available on our website or can be viewed at Reception.

Collection Consent Forms

We are not permitted to allow children to be

collected from school by any person not authorised by a parent/carer in advance. If you have asked somebody else to collect your child, please inform us in writing or by email, or complete a Collection Consent Form.

Late Collection

When the Lower School day is finished and a child is not picked up on time, the teacher takes responsibility for the child for another 10 minutes (until 3.10pm). After this, the teacher will take the child to the School Office and parents/carers will be called. In the case of a child not being collected and no contact being made within 45 minutes of the usual collection time, the school will ring the Cambridgeshire Direct Contact Centre to discuss their concerns and ask advice. A record will be kept. Please read the Late Collection Policy on the website.

OTHER LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Notice Boards

There are several notice boards around the school to support communication with parents. Please check for information. If you wish to display any information in the school please speak to the Receptionist.

The School Newsletter

It is **essential** that all parents read the newsletter as it contains a diary update, information on events, things happening in the school and other news of interest. Important emails are sent out directly to parents but in general news is sent out via the newsletter. Please make sure you read this so that you do not miss anything important.

An up-to-date calendar can also be found on our website, which includes all term dates.

Please make sure we have your current contact

information and let Reception know of any changes.

Please remember to also check your child's bag daily for correspondence.

Queries and Questions

Please speak to your child's Class Teacher at an appropriate time regarding questions concerning to your child's education and welfare, ideally at the end of the day. For other queries, please talk to your class representative, the School Receptionist, or the Education Manager in the first instance.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

We try to deal with concerns swiftly and openly and before they become a serious issue or complaint. If you have a concern, please bring it to our attention as soon as possible by contacting the most appropriate person. Should the concern be about your child/your child's education, then in the first instance please speak to your child's teacher. General concerns can be brought to the attention of the Education Manager.

If you have a serious concern, a complaint or feel your questions/worries have not been properly addressed, please make an appointment to speak with the School Business Manager, who acts as the Complaints Co-ordinator, and who will deal with your complaint in the most appropriate manner or pass it on to the most appropriate person. Should the issue remain unresolved, please contact the Trustee responsible for concerns and complaints (see school noticeboard for a list of current Trustees and their duties). You may also wish to view the school's Complaints Procedure, which is available on our website or from the School Office.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Cambridge Steiner School is an independent school that relies almost solely on parental input and contributions (financial and otherwise) for its financial and environmental wellbeing. We aspire to offer the best Steiner education that we can within the resources available, and the provision of those resources is a community responsibility.

If you have any questions about financial matters, please make an appointment to see the Finance Manager.

Fees

Our Fees and Financial Information leaflet is available from the School Office or on our website and includes details of the Early Years Funding available for 3 to 5 year olds. More details can be obtained by contacting the School Office.

Fees become payable **in full** at the start of each term. You may pay by standing order, bank transfer or through your employer's salary sacrifice scheme (until your child is of compulsory school age). The method of payment should be agreed with the School Business Manager.

All fees are reviewed and may be revised annually and, as such, all financial agreements are renewed or replaced on an annual basis. You will receive a new invoice at the start of each term. Please note you will only receive one invoice per term. It is your responsibility to make arrangements to pay your fees on time.

Early Years Funding

Our school is registered as an Early Years Provider and therefore children between the ages of 3 and 5 are entitled to Early Years Funding for up to 15 hours per week. Children become eligible from the term after

they turn 3 through to the term they turn 5. If you wish to know more about Early Years Funding, please speak to the School Business Manager. Further details can also be found on the Early Years Website at: http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20064/childcare/249/free_childcare_for_3_and_4_year_olds

Sibling Discounts

These are currently available for siblings of children already enrolled in the school. Discounts will be applied to the youngest child/children. Please see this year's Fees Information sheet for more information.

Bursaries – Fee Assistance

Please ask at the School Office or go to our website for our Bursary Fund Policy, which gives full information about the bursaries potentially available to families who are unable to meet the full cost of fees for either Kindergarten or Lower School. It is important that parents/carers apply before the Bursary Application deadline for each school year. Late bursary applications will not be considered, except in exceptional circumstances.

Handing in Notice

We require **one half term's notice, in writing** to terminate a child's place, otherwise the fees will be charged for the coming half term. For example, if a child is not returning to the school for the next academic year, please remember to hand in your notice in writing to the Education Manager before the first day of the final summer half term. If notice is not given, a half term's fees for the autumn term will be charged. In addition, please remember that deposits are only returnable when all fees are paid in full.

Reception and Administration

Please see Reception for general queries or

information. Reception is open daily on Mondays to Fridays from 8.15am to 3.15pm. The school can be contacted by telephone on 01223 882727 or by email at: reception@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk. When Reception is unattended, the answer phone will be on and all phone messages are checked regularly.

For administration queries, please speak to the Receptionist who will direct you to the appropriate person. For non-urgent queries, please email the school at reception@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk. For admissions queries please contact our Admissions Coordinator at admissions@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk

The School Office is open from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

CLASS AND SCHOOL SUPPORT STRUCTURES

The Role of Parents

As we see it, the primary role of the parents in school is to work with the teachers to support their child's growth and development. You can help to do this by endeavouring to create a healthy environment at home and by attending the termly Parents' Evenings. It is at these Parents' Evenings where you will gain the most insight into what your child has been doing each day at school. Our school is also an interdependent community. We believe that being part of a warm, vibrant, active and supportive community is an important experience for our children. In order to maintain a beautiful and safe environment at our school and to help create an efficient and vibrant community, the role of parents entails certain responsibilities:

- **To read the school newsletter**

The newsletter is our main means of communication, so it is essential that you read it to keep up-to-date

with what is going on.

- **For one member of each family to attend the Annual Community Workday and the Annual Garden Day.**

"Many hands make light work". There is nothing that builds a sense of community so much as working together. These days are also essential for ensuring that the garden is well kept and to help keep on top of maintenance.

- **For at least one member of each family to volunteer at the May Fair and/or at the Advent Fair for a minimum of three hours.**
- **To cook one dish for the May Fair and the Advent Fair.**

The Advent Fair is the big community event of the year. It is a magical occasion when we all come together to prepare the school, crafts, food, music and more - and particularly to make the day a rich and exciting experience for the children. . It opens the school to the wider community and is also an opportunity for present and ex-Steiner families to meet one another over coffee and cake or while dipping candles etc. It raises funds for the school and is great for publicity. The fair relies entirely on the voluntary work of the parent/staff community to organise and to run it on the day. If you are interested in getting involved with the planning and running of the fair for the coming year, please contact your child's teacher or class representative.

Please note that what is listed here is a minimal requirement. Parents take on numerous other responsibilities that are crucial to the healthy running of our school such as: being a trustee, running groups, being a class representative and helping with school trips. We also encourage parents to come forward if they have skills that they would like to share with the children. Recently we have had parents share their

knowledge of Neolithic fire lighting, weaving and chess, to name a few.

We appreciate that we all live under the pressure of time. We believe that the level of involvement that we are asking for, while significant, is reasonable and manageable. If you experience it as otherwise, please do let us know. We hope that you will also feel supported and enriched by being part of our community.

Class Representatives

Each class in the school has a class representative (class rep). These are parents who help the teacher by supporting communications with parents, helping to organise class events and various other activities. The work of the class rep is very much valued in the school. Please speak to your child's teacher if you are interested in becoming a class rep.

Parents' Evenings

Parents' evenings can be fun, an opportunity to socialise, do a craft, learn a song or perhaps experience activities your child does during the school day. These are held once a term and provide an opportunity to discuss the class as a whole. Teachers will address matters relating to the curriculum, teaching methods and the children's stages of development. It is also an opportunity to talk over general matters relating to the class. Please make sure that at least one member of your family is present. Please let us know in advance if you cannot attend and make sure you get all the important information from your class rep.

Individual Parent-Teacher meetings

We monitor your child's progress in order to be aware of her/his needs and to provide continuous support whilst in Lower School. We are always happy to have

a quick chat at the end of the day if the teacher has no other commitments. For any longer discussions or concerns, please arrange an appointment. Before school and during the morning, the teachers are there for the children, and conversations with parents are a distraction both for the child and for the teacher. For any urgent questions, please send an email to the teacher. We strive to respond as soon as possible.

The Class Teachers have meetings twice a year with the parents/carers of each child. Teachers will send out invitations and put a timetable for consultations by their class notice boards.

Home Visits

Sometimes Class Teachers like the opportunity to visit their pupils' homes at a convenient point. This helps to give a more complete picture of each child and also strengthen the connection between home and school.

Child Study

The teachers might ask your permission for a Child Study. Lower School teachers try to study different children through the year to further develop their teaching skills that support the children.

School Reports

A full school report for each child is issued at the end of the school year, and the teacher will also meet with you to discuss your child's progress over the year.

Workshops, Talks, Study Group and Craft Groups

The school arranges workshops and talks for parents with the view to enriching the cultural life of our community. Many parents find their way into our community through participating in craft groups. Please check the notice boards and school newsletter for information.

Open Mornings

Throughout the year we hold regular Open Mornings for people wishing to find out more about the school. These are an opportunity to view the Kindergartens and Lower School and ask any questions you may have about Steiner education or our school. If any parents think they might be able to spare an hour or two to help on an Open Morning, please let Reception know.

LOWER SCHOOL RULES

These rules concern health and safety issues and it is therefore the responsibility of every adult to make sure that all children—and adults!—comply.

Rules for Public Spaces

Always respect one another and school property.

Always walk in the corridors—no running!

Indoor voices in school please.

No cycling, skating or scootering in the corridors.

Read the Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy - Lower School and the Positive Playground Behaviour Policy and Procedure on the school website.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

The school is committed to ensuring a safe physical and emotional learning environment for all children. Bullying is not acceptable in any form, and staff work actively with our Positive Behaviour and Discipline and Prevention of Bullying Policies. Teachers will follow up incidents promptly whenever they are noticed or reported, and generally the teacher will be able to resolve the matter on the spot.

All reported incidents are recorded and anyone with concerns about bullying should in the first instance inform the child's teacher.

Class discussions are held from time to time, during which pupils and teachers can bring concerns.

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Equipment for the Lower School

We ask that children keep at school the following items, labelled with your child's name:

- Wellington boots.
- A raincoat with a hood and robust waterproof trousers.
- A woolly hat during winter and a sun hat and long sleeved top for summer.
- A pair of plimsolls marked with the child's name.

NB summer rain can be heavy and persistent - children will need light waterproofs for the summer term.

Please await your teacher's instructions before acquiring the following:

- A recorder (Class 1 approximately £23)
- Eurythmy shoes (when needed, £6.50)
- Violin/ Viola / Cello (Class 3, prices vary, support available)
- Ink Pen (Class 4, approximately £5)
- Geometry Set (Class 5, approximately £5)

You will be invoiced for the above items at the start of the relevant term.

Dress Code

Children should wear comfortable, clean and tidy clothing that allows them to be active.

The reason we need to emphasise when or where certain clothing is appropriate is, firstly, so that inappropriate clothing does not disrupt pupils' education, and secondly their clothing does not compromise pupils' health or safety.

- Please ensure that children do not come to school with torn or dirty clothing.
- Garments that are dominated by large logos, large pictures and/or loud lettering are not appropriate school-clothing. 'Large' would be something that could not easily be covered by the palm of your hand. Visible labels and logos should not be larger than a small strip or a 50p coin.
- Pupils should not have any underwear showing nor should they have bare midriffs or chests.
- Jewellery should not be worn in the Lower School. Those with pierced ears may wear studs or small earrings. Jewellery worn in other pierced areas of the body (other than the ears) is not allowed and pupils will be asked to remove these items.
- Hair dyeing, nail polish and make-up are not permitted.
- Pupils with long hair must tie it back for certain lessons, e.g. in movement lessons or certain craft lessons, and should keep a hair band in the school for this purpose.

A child wearing inappropriate clothing can expect to be asked to change or wear the clothing inside out and where inappropriate clothing is repeatedly worn the parent(s) will be notified.

The garden can get extremely muddy during the winter months. From after the October half term pupils will be expected to wear a **waterproof coat and trousers** at play time each day. All children should have a **pair of wellies** that are kept at school. From class 6 the daily wearing of waterproofs in the winter months is discretionary, providing this freedom is not abused. Older pupils need to ensure they still have waterproofs and wellies/ hiking boots in school each day, should the need to wear them arise.

Homework

Homework is given to encourage independence, both in self-organisation and in the work itself. It will help establish good habits for use now and in the future.

Any homework given should be completed by the pupil and handed in at the time agreed.

Pupils, teachers and parents alike should respect all schoolwork.

Food

The school seeks to support their pupils' healthy diet and encourages parents to give their children nourishing and healthy food for snack and mealtimes.

The school has a 'no nuts in school' policy to protect the children with nut allergies.

Pupils should also not bring chewing gum, chocolate, sweets, crisps or drinks that have added sugar or sweeteners to school without permission from the Class Teacher. Birthdays and festivals are special occasions – exceptions should first be discussed with the Class Teacher.

Birthdays/Cakes

Birthdays are celebrated in the class and the birthday child's family is asked to bring in a cake to share with the other children. Please discuss class allergies with your child's teacher.

Toys and the Use of Electronic Media

A pupil wishing to bring a toy or other personal item to school must first gain consent from their Class Teacher. This includes items such as trading cards. The teacher reserves the right to confiscate such items and will return them to the child/parent at a convenient time.

Mobile phones are banned from lessons and have no

place anywhere in school during the school day. If a child needs to make a phone call they may ask their teacher for permission to do so at Reception. Mobile phones needed for after-school-day communications must be kept turned off in school bags. The school cannot be held responsible for the loss of a mobile phone. Such equipment can be confiscated if misused. Please see the 'Safeguarding Policy' on the school website.

Lost Property

Lost property can be found at Reception. Please check from time to time. All clothes left at the end of term will be given to charity.

School Trips and Camps

Classes have trips, walks, camps and other outings during the year. Parents are advised by their Class Teacher of arrangements and any costs before the event. School rules apply on all trips.

Teachers follow the guidelines and policies. Risk assessments for trips can be seen in the School Office on request. Parents are asked to sign and return a consent form for all trips not covered by the annual consent for fixed outings.



Parents may be asked to assist with trips to keep costs down and to ensure adequate adult supervision. DBS (disclosure and barring service) checks are required for parent helpers accompanying classes. These need to be arranged early in the year as they can take some time to complete.

Television

Steiner school teachers advise that young children do not watch television or play on the computer, especially on school days. There is strong research data to confirm the ill-effects on the physical, emotional and social development of young children who watch TV. The teachers strive to stimulate lively pictures in the child's own imagination and these are undermined by the passivity induced by TV/electronic media. Please talk to your child's teacher for more information or advice on this issue.

Smoking, alcohol and drugs

The Cambridge Steiner School will not allow smoking, possession or partaking of alcohol or drugs on the premises at any time.

Dogs

Dogs are not permitted on the school premises beyond the car park (except for guide dogs or hearing dogs).

Recycling

Children are taught to care for the environment as part of their lessons. The school has a developing recycling and composting programme.

Site Security

For security and safety reasons, the school is required to know who is on the site. Parents are welcome to drop off their children from 08.15 – 08.30 hrs and to

pick up their children from 14.50 to 15.15hrs. If parents need to access the school at any other time they will need to sign in (and out when they leave) at Reception, wear a visitor's badge and will be accompanied by a staff member throughout their visit.

Overseas Pupils

Periodically the school is contacted by overseas Steiner School pupils and au pairs who wish to visit us or arrange an exchange/stay with a family in this country. If you are interested in such an arrangement, please ask Reception for details and to see the correspondence. From time to time, details are also published in the school newsletter and placed on the noticeboards.

Car Park and Car Pooling

Safety is our utmost concern, and parents are responsible for ensuring that their children are supervised in the car park and on the road outside the school at all times.

Please do not park in the restricted areas or in the areas reserved for Eddie's Pool at any time.

The school wishes to be environmentally responsible and to encourage all safe means of transport, in particular where it reduces the number of cars on the roads. Many parents find sharing rides to school invaluable. Do liaise with other parents in your area or put a notice in the school newsletter (via the Receptionist) to organise car-pooling.

School Bus

There is a dedicated bus which runs from South West Cambridge into school in the mornings and back at 3pm. This is a parent led initiative, please ask at Reception for further details.

Bad Weather and Snow

If there are seriously bad weather conditions or it snows heavily:

- Tune into BBC Radio Cambridgeshire in the morning (95.7 FM, 96 FM, or DAB) or HEART FM for an announcement of school closures.
- Where possible, there may also be a message on the school answerphone and/or website.
- The message will be distributed through the emergency contact tree (involving staff and class representatives).

Complete closure means that no teachers will be in attendance. However, partial closure means some teachers will be in attendance offering supervision of children.

MEDICAL MATTERS

The school has appointed first aiders who will deal with first aid. However, we are not able to administer general medication, including analgesics. If a child becomes unwell during the day, the parent will be contacted and the child kept comfortable until they can be collected. If you collect your child during school hours, please ensure that you sign your child out at Reception.

First aid supplies are available in school, and kits are taken on all trips. No internal remedies will be administered as these are regarded as medication.

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their contact details are up-to-date and they can be contacted at all times, should their child become ill and need to go home during the school day. Parents are also expected to keep their teacher informed of any changes in their child's care arrangements, either temporary or permanent.

If a child has a chronic health condition, parents must

notify the school on admission of the child. Allergy and Medical Forms are available from Reception. Completed forms are kept in your child's file and a copy in the first aid cupboard for speedy identification and treatment. The condition should be discussed with the teacher and, if necessary, an emergency supply of any medication kept at school.

If a pupil requires prescription medicines, parents are required to complete a Parental Consent for the Administering of Medication Form, at which point the school will consider accepting responsibility for administration of the medication. The school is unable to administer any form of authorised medication (such as inhalers) without written parental consent and instructions.

Where specialised first aid training is required, the school must be notified so that the necessary training can be undertaken.

It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school if your child's condition worsens or otherwise changes.

Illness

When children are ill, please keep them at home until the condition has passed and notify Reception as required. Children should not return to school for a period of 48 hours after they have suffered a high temperature, diarrhoea, an infectious illness, or have been vomiting.

Please notify the Education Manager of any infectious illnesses, such as mumps, measles, German measles, chickenpox etc. Please note that some infectious diseases are notifiable and, where this is so, the advice of the health authorities will be followed. The school reserves the right to exclude pupils with notifiable infectious diseases in consultation with the health services.

In an emergency, the school will endeavour to contact

parents at the earliest opportunity.

Head Lice ('Nits')

Head lice are a perennial problem in all schools. Please check your child's scalp and hair roots regularly. Please notify the school if you discover your child does have head lice and treat promptly. The school will notify parents if there is a case of headlice in the class.

POLICIES

The school's policies and procedures, both mandatory and those that the school wishes to share, are available on our website www.cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk. Please ask at Reception if you would like a copy of a particular policy. All our policies and procedures are subject to regular review to keep them in line with current regulations and best practice.

Policies and procedures include:

- Attendance Policy
- Assessment Policy and Procedure
- Bursary & Hardship Fund Policy and Procedure
- Camera and Mobile Phone Policy
- Complaints & Concerns Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Curriculum Statement
- Data Protection Policy
- English as an Additional Language
- Extreme & Outdoor Weather Procedure
- Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policy
- E Safety Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Food Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

- Late Collection Policy
- Non payment of fees Policy
- Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy - Lower School
- Positive playground behaviour policy and procedure
- Prevention of Bullying Policy
- Pupil Acceptable Use Policy
- Register Use Policy and Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy [SEND]
- Stretch and Challenge Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Travelling To and From School Independently Policy

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Cambridge Steiner School is committed to ensuring a safe physical and emotional learning environment for all pupils and ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all who work in the school. The general medical care of children is held to be primarily the responsibility of parents. Please ensure the school has up-to-date contact information in case we need you in an emergency.

The school has a Health and Safety Policy and a Health and Safety Officer. This policy meets the statutory requirements and sets out the areas that require guidelines and procedures to be followed.

All staff and those on the school site for lawful purposes are bound by the provisions of the Health and Safety Policy including contractors, parents, visitors and volunteers. Parents with questions and concerns about health and safety should contact the Health and Safety Officer or view our Health and Safety Policy online.

Safeguarding Children (Child Protection)

The school has appointed Designated Safeguarding Persons [DSPs] who ensure that our procedures and practice for safeguarding children comply with the statutory regulations (The Children’s Act 1988) and the guidelines set by Social Care. The procedures are set out in the school’s Safeguarding Policy, available on our web site. All staff and volunteers who have contact with children are subject to an Enhanced DBS check (formerly CRB), and any other vetting as required by law.

Parents will normally be consulted in any safeguarding matter involving their child. However, the child’s interests are considered paramount, and the school will in all instances act on the advice of Social Care and the statutory guidelines.

E Safety

Cambridge Steiner School is committed to ensuring children and young people are safe both in the real and **virtual world**. E Safety is incorporated in our E Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Pupil Acceptable Use Policy.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and online resources are increasingly used across the curriculum. We have an Online Safety Curriculum that begins at compulsory school age and is continually reviewed and developed in line with national recommendations.

Curriculum

From kindergarten onwards we teach children about healthy and safe relationships through: stories; imitation; looking after each other and our things; sharing and seeing each other’s gifts and qualities; building relationships with the child and their family; promoting peer support; promoting a healthy lifestyle; and developing an understanding of positive risk through things like our outdoor curriculum.

Technology Curriculum

We start teaching the children about the concept of 'technology' from kindergarten with the introduction of using tools (such as carding wool, knitting etc). This 'technology' curriculum progresses through our outdoor curriculum where children make their own flint knives for example, and learn how tools can be useful, but dangerous if used incorrectly. In Class 6 children are formally introduced to ICT. Our aim through this approach is to slowly build a broad understanding about the nature of technology and therefore critical thinking about how and when information technology is useful or potentially unsafe.

E-Safety

Although we do not teach ICT as part of our curriculum until Class 6 we recognise that children need to be educated to stay safe online when outside school.

Kindergarten to Class 3 – We deliver E-Safety awareness through bi annual special assemblies (Classes 1-3) followed by recall and discussion with Class Teachers, and in small groups for the older kindergarten children (Sunbeams). We raise awareness about how technology is used and use pedagogical stories to give important messages about staying safe online. Additionally, teachers are informed and able to respond and guide children if the topic arises in class. If there are specific concerns about a child and their internet use this is addressed with parents and a supportive plan developed.

Classes 4 – 8 – We hold half termly Internet Safety Lessons following our Online Safety curriculum. In addition, we use opportunities in everyday discussions with pupils and parent/teacher consultations to address specific issues as they arise.

Parents are key partners in this work and we offer education through information on our website,

parent meetings/consultations, the termly safeguarding bulletin and termly parents safeguarding meetings to help their children understand and navigate safely through their internet use.

Parents are expected to participate in this work. The biggest protection the children can have comes from the relationship they have with their parents, teachers and friends. We continue to develop a healthy dialogue with parents about all aspects of their children's well-being. Our approach is built on a mutual relationship of trust, honesty, commitment and co-operation.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The school aims to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, can access the curriculum. Our SEND Policy is an integral part of our Equal Opportunities/Inclusion Policy and accords with the current Code of Practice, which can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Cambridge Steiner School recognises and has regard for all pupils' religious persuasion, ethnic origins, cultural and linguistic background or disability, so that each child is valued as an individual without racial or gender stereotyping. We aim to promote equality of opportunity for all. Our children will be helped to develop a positive self-identity and to value and respect all cultural and ethnic groups through our resources and activities. The school is committed to ensuring access, as far as is reasonably possible, to all facilities for staff and pupils.

If you have any questions or concerns about this, please contact Education Manager or the staff member responsible for Diversity and Equality. There is a school Diversity and Equality Group that meets regularly.

Thank you for reading this handbook. We welcome any feedback.