

Admissions Procedure (Kindergarten & Lower School)

Reviewed by: Rebecca Mitchell

Reviewed: February 2019

Next review: February 2020

Related Policies: Admissions Policy, SEND Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy

Endorsement

Full endorsement is given to this policy by:

Name: Joel Chalfen

Position: Cambridge Steiner School Trustee

Signed:



Date: February 2019

Our Aims and Values

Steiner Waldorf education aims to be a comprehensive education. Any child's right to apply for this education should not be affected by race, gender, faith, disability or social background. We hope you will find our admissions process clear and efficient, and in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy. We aim to process each application in a timely way, at best the process should take no more than 30 days in term time (term dates are available on our website) from receipt of the completed application form and **all** supporting documents. Please be aware that there are times when the process will take longer and we appreciate your consideration in this matter. We hope that you have been able to inform yourself about Steiner Waldorf education and have attended an Open Morning, talks and/or workshops held by the School, and have visited our website www.cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk. In addition, there are many sources of information from books or via the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship website (www.steinerwaldorf.org).

Process

1. Enquiries

Your enquiry about our School will be noted, and your contact details will be recorded for correspondence and stored electronically in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. An Information Pack containing our Prospectus and fees information will be sent to you and you will be invited to one of our monthly Open Mornings and informed about any family workshops and events taking place. If you would like to speak to our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo), please let us know and we will be happy to arrange a time.

2. Open Mornings and School Events

We strongly recommend that you visit our School prior to completing your application form. Please see our website or contact the school for dates of our forthcoming Open Mornings and any scheduled family events.

3. Application

Once you have visited the School and decided to proceed with your application, please complete your application (<http://www.cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk/admissions/procedure.html>), enclosing **all** the items as detailed below and return in person, by post or email to the address shown:

1. The application form
2. The registration fee of £60 (non-refundable). Please make cheques payable to Cambridge Steiner School.
3. A copy of your child's birth certificate
4. Copies of any relevant School reports (**required** if your child has attended a different School/setting previously)
5. Medical reports (if these would help the School to meet your child's needs, according to the information you give us in the application form).

Admissions Officer
Cambridge Steiner School
Hinton Road
Fulbourn
Cambridgeshire, CB21 5DZ
admissions@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk

4. Acknowledgement

The School will aim to acknowledge receipt of your application within five working days. If you have not yet attended an Open Morning, you will be invited to do so. Please note that the application processing period of thirty days begins from the date we have received all required documents and information. Should there be no vacant places in the appropriate class for your child, this date will also serve as the date he or she is entered onto the School or Kindergarten waiting list.

5. Financial Arrangements and Assistance

Please read the fees and financial information provided. Please note that these may change from year to year. If you wish to enrol your child for part of a year, your fees will also be calculated pro rata from the start of the term/half term. If you are unable to pay the fees in full and would like to apply for assistance from the School bursary fund, please ask for a Bursary Application Form to be sent out to you at this stage. If you apply for a bursary, you will be asked to provide some information to evidence why you require assistance, and a meeting with members of our Bursary Committee may be arranged. Please be aware that bursaries are limited and applications are usually only accepted once per year in the Spring. We welcome donations to increase our capacity to offer them.

6. Meeting

As part of the application process, you and your child will be invited to an informal meeting with your child's prospective teacher. This meeting will last for approximately an hour, and we hope that during this time you will share with us a picture of your child, that your questions will be answered, and that we will also have the opportunity to share more with you about the educational practice and intentions of Steiner Waldorf education and the ethos of our School. We hope it will also help you and your child to become more familiar with the setting. During the meeting we will also provide some informal activities for your child which will help us consider how best to meet their needs. You may also be offered some visits to the child's prospective class to extend the process of learning more about your child and helping them to become familiar with our school.

7. Acceptance

Once your application has been processed and where we are able to offer you a place, you will receive a Letter of Acceptance and an Admission Agreement. The offer is subject to the receipt of the £500 deposit (per child) and the signed Admission Agreement Form within 14 days of receipt of your offer letter. The Admission Agreement states the conditions of entry and undertaking by parents/guardians when the offer of a place is accepted. This constitutes a legal contract (contingent on any special conditions in the Letter of Acceptance), and an agreement to pay the fees owed as detailed in the finance information previously provided. The Admission Agreement also requests permission for the School to send relevant information (reports, etc.) to your child's new setting when he or she leaves our School (unless this permission is withdrawn in writing, the School may not contact individual families for permission when a child's new setting requests this information from us). You will receive a Parents' Handbook, which contains a great deal of useful information about how the School is run. You will be asked to sign a form stating that you understand and agree to the contents of the Parents' Handbook as we feel our Steiner Waldorf Education is a cooperative effort between School and home. You will also be asked to make yourselves familiar with our school policies which are available on our website.

When you return the signed Admission Agreement accompanied by the £500 deposit, this constitutes the formal acceptance of the offer and your child will be added to our Admissions Register. You will then receive all the legal, medical and financial forms which need to be completed and returned to the school before your child starts at the school.

8. Oversubscription

Where a place in your chosen class/Kindergarten is not available at the time of application, you will be invited to be put on our waiting list. Similarly, if your child is too young to start Little Kindergarten, or Kindergarten, or if there are no available places in any of the Kindergartens or Lower School classes appropriate for your child's age, you will be offered a place on our waiting list. In this instance, as stated in Section 4, the date the School receives your completed application form and all supporting documents will constitute the date on which your entry onto the waiting list commences.

Cambridge Steiner School is committed to providing equal opportunities for all families wishing to access provision at our setting. To that end, our process is clear, non-discriminatory, consistent with the school's charitable objectives and in line with equal opportunities law & the Disability Discrimination Act.

When there is no oversubscription and places are available, the School will use no selection criteria other than 'best fit' (in terms of demand for sessions and sessions available). When places are oversubscribed, the School (in the form of our Admissions Team, and never any single individual) will use the following criteria, which are listed in order of precedence, and which are used where all else (e.g. 'best fit') is equal:

- Children of staff members
- Children with siblings already attending Kindergarten or Lower School classes
- Children progressing from Parent and Child groups at Cambridge Steiner School
- Children coming from other Steiner Waldorf schools
- Length of time on the waiting list

9. Enrolment and Admission

Once all forms have been received and financial arrangements have been made (including £500 deposit per child and Admission Agreement Form) your child can be formally enrolled at the School (entered onto our Admissions Register) and may begin at the agreed start date. This then constitutes the official closure of our admission process. If your child's

start date is not at the beginning of the academic year, the Admissions Officer will coordinate a starting date with you. Where the School and or parents feels that it would be appropriate to your child's needs, his or her initial transition into the School or Kindergarten may be staggered (i.e. starting with a smaller number of days/hours). This will always be agreed with parents in advance and will not incur a reduction in fees.

Please be aware that voluntary withdrawal by a child's parents/guardians after formal acceptance has been confirmed and the contract is signed is subject to a full half term's notice (notice given on or before the first day of a half term and expiring at the end of that half term) or a half term's fees in lieu of notice being payable. This is the case whether withdrawal takes place mid-term or at the end of a school year.

10. Allocation to a Class or Kindergarten

Lower School-aged children will be allocated a class according to their age. In order to allocate a place for Early Years children in one of our Kindergartens, the Admissions team will meet with the teachers to:

- Look at the number and days of sessions applied for and where the 'best fit' is;
- Consider the overall balance within the individual groups (e.g. comparative numbers of boys and girls, children's ages, the needs of individuals within the group);
- Consider the child's individual needs;
- Consider the parents'/carers' preferences (you may express a preference for woodland days or other days on your application form, but please note that the final decision on placement will rest with the Admissions team).

You will normally be informed of your child's allocated class within seven days of the allocation meeting.

11. Transition from Little Kindergarten to Kindergarten

Children enrolled in Little Kindergarten are automatically eligible to transfer into one of the 'big' mixed age Kindergartens (3 – 6+ years of age), and parents are not required to complete a new application form. However, for those children not transferring into Kindergarten, parents must give a half term's notice or half a term's fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible for both parents/carers and children. This is likely to include 'taster visits' to the new Kindergarten during the preceding term, as well as a meeting with the new Kindergarten teacher.

12. Transition from Kindergarten to Class 1

Children enrolled in Kindergarten are automatically eligible to transfer to Class 1 (6+ years of age), and parents are not required to complete a new application form. However, for those children not transferring into Class 1, parents must give a half term's notice or half a term's fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible for both parents/carers and children. This is likely to include 'Sunbeam' sessions during the preceding summer term, as well as a meeting with the new Class teacher.

13. Other Commitment

In addition to the financial contribution (i.e. the fees), we ask for a commitment to the School as a whole through participation in our voluntary support programme. It is important for parents/guardians to be aware of this commitment before they send their children to the School. Cambridge Steiner School enjoys a strong community of parents, guardians and friends of the School, and all parents and guardians are expected, where possible, to help with

miscellaneous tasks such as gardening, publicity or general maintenance work within the scope of their available time, and we warmly welcome parents to contribute whatever other time and support they are able to offer. We are always in need of people with a diverse range of skills, including those with building/carpentry skills, those who are artistic or who possess financial/administrative skills, or who have an interest in fundraising activities and events (see further information on our website). We do understand that some parent/guardians are able to give more time than others, and that circumstances change from time to time, but we do hope that all families will support the School to the extent that they are able, thus balancing the load and ensuring a positive, productive School community. This assistance is very much appreciated, and forms an integral part of the School's ethos.

14. Policies and Information-Sharing

The School has a range of Policies which you are able to access via our website (www.cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk) or ask at Reception. If you have any questions or concerns, please view the particular policy in question in the first instance. If you then wish to speak to someone in person, your child's class teacher, the Receptionist, Finance Officer or the School Manager will be happy to help.

Please be aware that the School may need to share some confidential information (regarding fees, income, contact details, your child's needs, etc.) with relevant parties within the School (for example, the School Manager, Finance Officer, the SENDCo, the Bursary Committee, etc.). Information will only be shared when strictly necessary, and with full adherence to the Data Protection Act and best practice guidelines.

We invite you to contact us at any time during this application process with any questions, suggestions or comments which might help us make this run more smoothly.

15. On leaving the Cambridge Steiner School

When your child leaves the Cambridge Steiner School we may ask you to complete an exit questionnaire and/or attend a meeting with the School Manager to talk about any feedback you may have about the School, and anything we can do for you during the transition to your child's new School. During any meeting, an 'exit interview' form will be used and all parties will sign at the end of the meeting.

Please Note: A half term's notice of leaving must be given or a half term's fees in lieu of notice being payable. This is the case whether withdrawal should take place mid-term or at the end of a school year.

Further Information Regarding Application

Cambridge Steiner School is committed to providing equal opportunities for all children, and will do its best to meet the individual needs of all applicants, where this is reasonably possible. Should your child need special assistance in the Kindergarten or in the Lower School, you will have a meeting with the teacher and/or the Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator (SENDCo) to establish what help is needed to meet his/her needs, and what can be provided. You will also be offered one or more 'taster visits', during which your child will attend the class for a suitable period. To further establish if the school can meet your child's needs, a transition meeting between the parents/carers, the teacher, the SENDCo, and possibly the School Manager and other appropriate professionals (e.g. care workers or medical staff currently working with your child) will also be arranged. If it is agreed that it will be possible for your child to access our curriculum and the Kindergarten or School will be able to meet your child's needs, and you have completed the application process, you as parents/carers, the teacher and the SENDCo will draw up an individual Risk Assessment pertaining to your child attending the setting, as well as an Individual Care/Education/Behaviour Plan (ICP, IEP, IBP) as appropriate.

Please note that the Kindergarten may be able to access some limited funding to assist children up to the age of compulsory schooling (five years) only. While we will liaise with external agencies and try to provide appropriate support and resources for all children with additional needs applying to our Lower School or Kindergarten, we cannot guarantee this funding as each application is assessed on an individual basis.

Irrespective of your child's individual needs on their admission to the School or Kindergarten, if the Kindergarten or School feel that his or her needs have changed over time and that your child requires more support than they have hitherto received, you will be invited to meet with the teacher and the SENDCo to discuss how the Kindergarten or School can try to meet those needs. As stated above, it may not be possible for the School to do so if this would require access to additional funding which will be unavailable if your child has reached the compulsory school age. If your child is still Kindergarten age, it may be possible to apply for Local Authority funding to meet these needs, but this funding cannot be guaranteed as it will be assessed by the Local Authority as to its priority. If, however, parents are able to fund the required resources to meet the child's needs, this will be considered.

If children attending Kindergarten are receiving additional support through Local Authority funding, their continuing needs will be re-evaluated before they reach compulsory school age (the start of the term after the term in which the child turns five). Continued attendance in our Kindergarten and into the Lower School from compulsory school age (and the cessation of any SEND funding) will depend on their needs at that time and the availability of resources in order to ensure a programme to meet their individual needs. After the age of five, parental contribution towards expenses for these resources may be necessary if they are to continue at Cambridge Steiner School. In some circumstances, where appropriate funding and/or support is not accessible (beyond the age of five), the School may reach the conclusion that it is not possible to provide the specific support or resources that your child needs, but this will be a last recourse and all possible steps will be taken to try to avoid this outcome. Please see our SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Policy for more information on the resources and assistance the School and Kindergarten are able to provide.

If we are unable to offer your child a place at our school, you will receive a letter explaining why within five days of the decision being made. You will have the right to appeal this decision within 15 days from receipt of the letter. You will then have the right to an independent appeal, and the appeal procedures will be enclosed with the letter.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Admissions Procedure, and we look forward to welcoming you and your family to Cambridge Steiner School.