

**RINGWOOD WALDORF
SCHOOL**

**Parents Handbook
2015/2016**

Telephone: 01425 472664

E-mail: mail@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk

Limited Company registered as a charity No. 1158673

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This Parents' Handbook, which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis, is distributed to current parents of Ringwood Waldorf School and represents part of the commitment of the school to keep parents well informed on aspects of school organisation and management policy by providing useful information. In turn this is seen as deepening understanding and thereby enabling parents to offer their support to the school and the education it provides. This benefits the education of the children.

Feedback and suggestions for future editions are welcome and should be addressed to the Administrator.

In these pages we hope you will find the answers to most of the common questions you may have. Please be aware that this Handbook deals mainly with matters of organisation, policy and management. It does not seek to address questions of curriculum or pedagogy as it relates to child development or the deeper spiritual understanding that underlie and inform the education. The College of Teachers encourages parents to take up their own study of child development as it relates to the curriculum and pedagogy so that they may share together the educational journey with their children and deepen their own understanding. The school supports this study in various ways which are outlined elsewhere in this Parents' Handbook. In addition, relevant aspects of child development are presented at Parent Evenings. The Parents' Library also has many books to assist parents.

Ringwood Waldorf School is fully committed to offering the best Waldorf Education that it can within the resources that are available and operates on the principle of continuous improvement.

There is also a section on school policies included as well as a recommended reading list.

*“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



INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Ringwood Waldorf School

Ringwood Waldorf School is a company (no. 8645246) and registered charity (no. 1158673). The school has been in existence since 1974.

The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship

Ringwood Waldorf School is a full member of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship, where it is also represented by that body on the **European Council of Waldorf Schools**. The Fellowship forms part of an ever growing world-wide educational movement.

You can find more information on the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship at www.steinerwaldorf.org.uk.

Friends of Ringwood Waldorf School

Three former Activities of the Sheiling Trust form part of the movement of intentional Camphill Communities: The Sheiling School offers residential, as well as day and weekly placements for children with special needs; The Lantern is a community for adults with special needs, and Sturts Farm is a land-based community, also for adults with special needs, specialising in organic and Biodynamic farming.

Proprietor

Ringwood Waldorf School.

Chair of Trustees – Veronica Smith

Veronica can be contacted via the school address.

Please address correspondence to:

Veronica Smith
c/o Ringwood Waldorf School
Folly farm Lane
Ashley
Ringwood
Hants
BH24 2NN

Telephone messages can also be left at the school and will be passed on. Telephone 01425 472 664

SECTION I

GENERAL INFORMATION.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

This section of the handbook is designed to answer any common questions you may have. It includes school dates and times as well as information on more specific subjects such as music, Learning Support, rest and sleep and electronic media. We hope you find it helpful.

a. TERM DATES

AUTUMN TERM 2015

Start:	Thursday 3 rd September
Half term Break	Monday 19 th October to Friday 30 th October
End of Term	Friday 18 th December 1.00 pm

SPRING TERM 2016

Start	Thursday 7 th January 2016
Half Term Break	Monday February 15 th to Friday February 19 th
End of Term	Thursday 24 th March 1:00 pm

SUMMER TERM 2016

Start	Monday 18 th April 2015 (2 nd May Bank Hol)
Half Term Break	Monday May 30 th to Friday 3 rd June
End of Term	Friday 8 th July 1.00 pm

b. SCHOOL HOURS

Parent and Child Group

For children up to Kindergarten age, these groups are facilitated by experienced early childhood practitioners with the support of the parents who attend the sessions. The aim is to nurture and support both the adults and the children, and ease the transition from home to school life. Groups are held in the Parent and Child Group building, near the Kindergartens.

The groups are inspired by the indications given by Dr. Rudolf Steiner as to what is appropriate and nourishing for the very young child.

Emphasis is on simplicity, homeliness, repetition, imitation and imagination.

The groups run from 10.00am – 12.00 noon or 1.30pm – 3.30pm.

Sessions take place on Monday a.m., Tuesday a.m. & p.m., Wednesday a.m. & p.m. Thursday a.m. & p.m. and Friday a.m.

Parents wishing to attend should complete the application form available from the school office. There is currently a waiting list for places in the groups and parents are advised to place their child's name on the waiting list as soon as possible to ensure a place is available by the time their child is ready to attend.

Progression to kindergarten requires a separate admission application and is not automatic, although children who have attended a Parent and Child Group will have priority (depending on spaces) in accordance with the admission criteria of connection (sic. with the ethos). **Parents are therefore advised to ensure that their child is on the school's waiting list if they wish to apply for a place in the kindergarten.**

Kindergarten

The Kindergarten follows the rhythms of nature and has a weekly rhythm with its special activities for each day. There is also always time for creative play, a time during which children form friendships and learn social skills such as sharing and turn-taking.

Kindergarten groups are made up of children from age three to rising age seven.

A three to four year old child will usually begin with two or three mornings a week.

This will build up in the Kindergarten to five mornings a week according to the child's needs, which are assessed by the Kindergarten Teacher in consultation with the parents.

Kindergarten hours are 8.25am to 12:45pm Mondays to Fridays. Teachers are there to receive the children from 8.15am. Prior arrangements should be made if your child arrives before this time.

Hours for Classes One to Eight

Classes One to Eight begin lessons **promptly at 8.25am** and children should arrive between 8.15 and 8.25am to ensure a timely and relaxed start to the day.

It is essential that children are punctual for the start of the day and parents are asked to support this.

All classes break for lunch at 1:00pm and classes that do not have afternoon sessions finish then (please see below).

Classes One to Five have afternoon sessions finishing at 3:30pm on the following days:

Class One: Wednesday

Class Two: Monday and Wednesday

Class Three: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Class Four : Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

Class Five : Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

Classes Six, Seven and Eight have full days all week finishing at 3:30pm

The Upper School Classes begin at 8.25am and end at 3.45pm. Lunch break is from 1.00pm to 1.50pm. Parents of Upper School students should note that in order to accommodate the curriculum the Upper School may from time to time, schedule an extra week of schooling, which will be notified before the start of the school year.

The school takes responsibility for supervising children from 8.15am. Children arriving before then remain the responsibility of their parents.

In the afternoons, it is necessary that children leave the school premises as soon as possible after school finishes. Parents should pick up pupils promptly at the end of the school day. Children should not be on site unless they have an approved reason for being there. Approved reasons include the duration of the private music lessons. Parents who are helping around the school should delegate the supervision of any accompanying children to a named person, not engaged in any other task. Normal school rules continue to apply as well as Health and Safety provisions and parents who are supervising should be aware of these, e.g. no kicking of balls in the courtyard.

Afternoon Session

In recognition of the wishes of some parents, and dependant on demand, the school may provide an additional afternoon session for children in Kindergarten and/or Classes 1 to 5. Afternoon sessions are currently provided on Monday to Friday.

Afternoon Sessions can be booked and paid for in advance each term. Sessions are also available on a casual or 'one-off' basis.

Sessions end at 3.30 pm and children are supervised over the lunch period. Lunch is provided. Please provide a change of clothing if your child is attending from Classes 1 to 5.

Afternoon Sessions are supervised by experienced teachers. Please see the office to register. Extension or reduction of the days is possible subject to demand and availability. The cost of afternoon sessions varies.

c. OFFICE HOURS

The School office is often staffed by volunteer parents under the supervision of the Office Secretary. The office will be locked when a member of staff is not in attendance.

The office is open daily on Mondays to Fridays from 8.25am to 3.30pm. If you have business in the office you would need to **complete it before 3.30pm**

When the office is closed the answer phone will be on. Messages may also be left in the mailbox located near the office. All phone messages are cleared regularly.

Alternatively the Bursar or Administrator may be able to assist you. **Please note that if their door is closed they are either out or in a meeting and should not then be disturbed except in an emergency.**

Much of the business conducted in the rear office and general office is of a confidential nature. **Please respect the office space and do not enter unless invited.**

d. PUNCTUALITY, LATENESS PROCEDURES AND ATTENDANCE

All absences and lateness are recorded in the class registers and form part of a student's educational record. Instances of persistent lateness are reported to the College of Teachers and you may be asked to meet with a group of College representatives to discuss and agree a strategy to ensure timely attendance.

1. Punctuality

Punctuality is of the utmost importance and is taken seriously. Please ensure your children are not late for school. Late arrivals into class are very disruptive and educationally punctuality is part of learning personal responsibility.

2. Lateness procedure

The register is called as soon as class starts and this is then collated in the office so that all children can be accounted for. It is important that the school knows who is on the site at all times.

Children arriving late (after the bell) must report to the office before going to their classroom.

Please remind your child or go to the office yourself to ensure that your child has been signed in to the register. If the office receives no notification of a late child, the staff will ring the parents to establish the whereabouts of the child.

3. Attendance

In Waldorf Education continuity is a vital factor: subjects are taught in blocks that often build one upon the other, so that **experiences missed are not easily made up at another time.**

All children are expected to attend for a full school year and when the school is open for instruction, except for absences due to medical reasons.

Please do not arrange for holidays to be taken in term time. The law requires that parents ensure that all children of compulsory school age receive a full time education and that they attend when the school is open for instruction.

At Ringwood Waldorf School we regard any unnecessary absence as educationally detrimental. As our scheduled holidays are significantly longer than in state schools and because we have a shorter school year we are unable to authorise pupils to be absent during term time. Ringwood Waldorf School has a 34-week year against a state school year of 38 weeks. These absences will therefore be recorded as unauthorised in the Local Education Authority Registers. Registers are inspected during all school inspections (Please refer to the Attendance Policy in the rear section.)

When a child is absent for the day because of illness the school must be notified **before school begins** via a written note to the office or by phoning the school and leaving a message on the answer machine or by e-mail. If a reliable message is not received the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be contacted by the school following the

taking of the register. Parents will also be contacted if the school does not know the child will be late and they have not arrived by the time the register is called.

You should notify the office each day that the child is ill.

Children returning to school after an illness are asked to bring a note to the office stating the reason for the absence so that the absence may be authorised in the Register.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised absence (see Attendance Policy)

- a. **Regulation 10 of the Education Regulations 1981** states that the school day must be in two sessions. This will normally involve separate morning and afternoon sessions.
- b. **Attendance registers** have to be called at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Schools also have to record in their registers whether an absence of a day pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised and the reason for the absence.
- c. **Authorised absence** is absence which has been authorised by an authorised representative of the school (College of Teachers). Parents or guardians may provide an explanation for a particular absence, but only the school can authorise it
- d. **Unauthorised absence** is absence without leave from an authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences and truancy. **Please note that individual teachers cannot authorise an absence.**

5. Leaving during school hours.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during school hours unless arrangements have been made by the parent(s) with the school.

Where this is necessary the Class Teacher and office should be informed **and the office advised when the child leaves the site**. Parents/caregivers collecting a child should advise the office BEFORE collecting the child. No child will be allowed to leave unless collected and accompanied by a parent or authorised guardian (or a person authorised in writing previously by the parent or authorised guardian).

The office must be informed when a child returns to school during the day.

If there is no one in the office the adult should write the child's name in the office book on the counter upon collection and upon return.

e. SITE SECURITY- please read carefully

For security and safety reasons the school is required to know at all times who is on the site. This applies equally to all adults as well as children. This is of vital importance especially in the case of fire.

We request that parents cooperate with the pick up and drop off guidelines outlined elsewhere. i.e. Kindergarten and Classes 1,2,3 are dropped off and picked up via the 1,2,3 garden/playground and not through the courtyard or back gate.

We also ask that all parents and children enter and leave by the front entrance. This should also apply if you are visiting the Lantern Centre. Please note that the school should not be used as a thoroughfare for this purpose

All parents entering the site for any reason during school hours must inform the office and again when leaving.

Peripatetic music teachers must also inform the office when they arrive and leave. In addition to this they are responsible for locking the space they are using after 4.00 pm.

All outside visitors must register in the office at all times and will be asked to wear badges while in the school so they can be identified. Any visitors on site without a badge may be challenged by a member of staff.

Parents attending Study Groups, Craft Groups or on the site for any reason during school hours must also notify the office on arrival and when leaving. A book is on the front counter for this purpose.

f. FOOD, REST AND TOYS

In the Kindergarten, morning snack is provided by the school. In the younger classes, morning snack may be provided by the parents on a rota basis unless otherwise agreed. Parents should ensure that their name is on the rota. In all other classes children bring their own mid-morning snack if they so wish, together with a packed lunch.

Food should be simple, balanced and nutritious. The school is supportive of appropriate diets for children as it has been shown that **many learning and behaviour problems arise from inappropriate diets.** Recent research has again confirmed this. **Party food such as sweets, chocolate, gum, fizzy drinks and so on should be kept for special occasions and are not allowed at school.**

Birthdays are celebrated in the class and children often bring a treat, such as a home-made cake to share, at the discretion of the Teacher. Please discuss this with your child's Teacher first.

Children have growing bodies and busy school schedules and need **regular and ample relaxation and sleep. Sleep is seen as being formative as well as restorative and is regarded as an integral part of the education at Ringwood Waldorf School because of its pedagogical influences.** We ask for parents to ensure that their children are in bed at a reasonable and regular hour. This routine also helps a child feel secure which in turn aids their confidence. The school feels strongly that arrangements for children to stay overnight with friends are only appropriate at weekends. Such visits often involve staying up late, which can lead to an over-tiredness that is disruptive to the child's school work.

Toys, electronic games, swap cards, skateboards, roller-blades and so on should be left at home for pedagogical reasons (see next article). A comforting soft doll or soft toy could be an exception for younger children by arrangement with the relevant teacher. Any item brought to school may be confiscated until the end of the day or, in persistent cases until the end of term.

Balls and other play equipment are made available for the children to use at school during supervised breaks. This equipment is suitable for use in the school environment and we ask that you do not bring other balls on to the site.

g. MODERN LANGUAGES

Learning at least one second language is an integral part of Waldorf Education and this is introduced in Class One. At Ringwood Waldorf School the languages currently are

French and German. Waldorf language teachers are in short supply and parents are asked to appreciate this fact in the knowledge that the school will use every endeavour to ensure that there is continuity in at least one language throughout the school. Parents of children who join the school in Class Five or later and who do not have an elementary proficiency in the language(s) being taught will be asked to arrange private lessons for their child so that they may settle into the class more smoothly.

h. ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND GAMES, TELEVISION, COMPUTERS, VIDEOS AND MOBILE PHONES

The experience of our teachers is that television and other forms of electronic media can significantly interfere with the harmonious development of the child. This is particularly so in relation to the will forces which require activity to develop appropriately. Our experience is now backed by significant research that has established that exposure to these forms of media is harmful to young children. Recent research, for instance, has clearly shown that despite the massive investment in technology by the government in schools, there has actually been a decline in standards. Technology has been shown to sap children's strength and creative energy and can lead to restlessness and poor concentration. Our teachers have found that exposure to these forms of electronic media are detrimental to the curriculum aims of Waldorf Education and for this reason their use is not sanctioned for young children.

Education is a social process involving human beings and we therefore do not support the concept of virtual classrooms nor on-line lessons.

Computers and electronic whiteboards are not used in the classroom until Class 9 at Ringwood Waldorf School for similar reasons. In Waldorf schools generally, computer studies are regarded as an Upper School subject (starting in Class 9). Classes 7 and 8 may use calculators and electronic spell checkers after the underlying processes are understood. Children with learning differences may be supported with computers or word processing machines in the learning support lesson in the middle and upper school.

Parents should be assured that children are not disadvantaged educationally by this policy and in fact some ex-pupils have chosen to go on to successfully study computer sciences and also to follow careers in programming, graphic arts and web design.

The school has information available to support parents in understanding its position on this matter and periodic talks are given on the subject. Particularly recommended are: "Remotely Controlled" by Dr Aric Sigman, "The Plug-in Drug" by Marie Win and "Who's Bringing Them Up" by Martin Large.

While it is appreciated that these views may be seen to be at variance with some mainstream opinion, the policy we have adopted is based on informed educational experience and understanding of child development needs.

We therefore ask that parents support our educational aims by adhering to the school's recommendations in this area.

This is a copy of the school's position for your information:

TV, SCREENS AND ELECTRONIC GAMES POSITION STATEMENT

Part I

Ringwood Waldorf School asks that parents keep their children's viewing of TV, movies and videos and electronic game playing to a minimum. In the case of younger children (under 9) it would be ideal if the regular possibility for such exposure is removed altogether. In the case of older children we ask that they do not watch teenage or adult-themed programmes or films.

We also ask that children do not have unsupervised access to the internet at any age during their schooling prior to Upper School.

While we respect your autonomy in this, it is important for us to help to develop and promote a consistent approach to this issue among the peer groups.

As a school we take the following approach:

- ❖ Screens and other electronic aids are not used in the classroom before Class 9. Any exceptions (e.g. projection) must be approved by the College of Teachers.
- ❖ Screen exposure and alternatives will be part of our annual parent education as well as our parent information meetings.
- ❖ Our standpoint on screen exposure will be specifically mentioned in the admission process.
- ❖ Regular reminders will be included in the school newsletter

There are some fundamental understandings around child development that amplify the detrimental effects of TV on young children, in comparison to adults. Children are not little adults. They have very different and wondrous attributes.

Children's brains and bodies are still being formed during those first seven years. It is not the case that this work is complete when they are born and they just become larger. They are actually finishing the work of building their brains and organs that began in the uterus. There are research studies that now link ADHD to children's early exposure to the fast moving, ever changing images of television. Of particular note are TV's effect on brain development, coordination and vision.

Children learn through direct experience. Children in the first seven years learn primarily through their limbs, through their will, and through their experiences. And all that involves moving. It involves practicing fine and gross motor skills. **Movement in early childhood prepares the way for later intellectual development.** Television immobilises children's bodies and eyes and separates children from direct experience.

Children learn through sensory experiences. During the first seven years of childhood children's senses are exceptionally open. They 'absorb' everything around them. For them there is no choice 'not to listen', or, 'not to see' – there is no filter, no protection. It all goes in and has an effect on their developing minds, social skills, feeling lives and will. Before seven the ability to distinguish between fact and fiction, reality and fantasy is not fully formed.

Children learn through imitation. Interacting with real people has an entirely different effect on development when compared with interacting with a computer game or television programme. Recent research reveals a loss of language skills to television watching.

Stereotyping, body image and advertising. TV actresses are on average 23% thinner than the average woman. A mixed message of 'thin is in' and 'eat', eat, eat' during advertising breaks is a dangerous combination for young people. The portrayal of what is 'normal' behaviour has widespread ramifications particularly when we look at sexual attitudes and behaviour in teenagers. TV advertising drives a materialistic youth culture whether the viewer is 3 or 13.

TV, SCREENS AND ELECTRONIC GAMES POSITION STATEMENT

Part 2

Process

It is not **generally recognised that the first issue around television viewing is not the content but the medium itself**. The Emery report (Australian National University) established that no matter what the program is, human brain wave activity enters characteristic patterns. Data is 'received' at a rate nerve pathways cannot cope with; this is particularly true in the case of young children. There is a deadening of thought life. The viewer becomes relatively passive or 'spaces out'. Active attention and the critical faculty are suppressed. After constant exposure to this process, the capacity of the organic system is dulled.

Content

1. Much modern TV and film content portrays violence (physical, emotional, social, racial, and verbal). This provides negative role modelling and a view of a world which is anything but 'good'.
2. Children are burdened with a flood of images and facts beyond their capacity for healthy assimilation and inner transformation.

In this respect, selective viewing, discussion and training in discrimination are not able to fully eliminate difficulties. The young child lacks the critical faculty and inner detachment. It is not just a matter of training but of innate disposition. It is natural for children to be affected by the images they take in. The young child's brain acts like a sponge.

3. Exposure to TV programmes, movies and advertising can raise unreal expectations and unnecessary social challenges.

Imagination, Fixed and Free

One of the key aims in our method of education is to help the child toward developing the faculty of free imagination. So, for example, we generally tell stories without offering printed pictures. Our words provide the raw materials; the child has to 'clothe' the story with their own images. **Television hinders the development of free imagination.** TV images for the young child are reality, they cannot yet separate what they see from what they internalise. The natural development of the child's imagination, therefore, is being inhibited. This may have long term repercussions, for it is the imaginative child who, later in life, will become creative and develop individual initiative. (See Rudolf Steiner's lecture 2 'Kingdom of Childhood')

Curriculum Delivery

Our teaching involves a three-day rhythm: telling a story one day, recalling it the next and writing about it on the third (or a similar progression over three days in other subjects). Sleeping on what they have received during the day and returning to develop it can be fruitless if there has been screen interference.

Children need to regurgitate screen images they have received in order to process them and this can be manifest through their artwork, movements, speech and deeds. As well as creating stumbling blocks for healthy physical development screen exposure can hamper children's ability to live into what they have learned (experienced) at school.

Brain Hemispheres, left and right

The process of viewing interferes with the development of harmonious communication between the two brain hemispheres. The left hemisphere, which deals with conceptual and logical skills, is particularly weakened.

Time Robbery: Aberrations in Children's Play: The Senses

Children's play patterns have changed dramatically in recent years; children in general play less. Play is often chaotic and sometimes violent.

Play is a child's 'work'. Free play develops faculties of creativity, imagination, and initiative.

Play is the key factor in the development of the lower senses (i.e. touch, movement and balance). A sound development of the lower senses is required before the higher senses may healthily unfold. (refer to The 12 Senses as described by Rudolf Steiner)

Lack of play experience may cause organic dysfunction (senses underdeveloped, retained reflexes, neurological disorders between left and right hemispheres). Rhythmical movement, as exercised in healthy play, assists in the building of nerve myelination, essential for bodily and mental functioning. Play is an integrating process for the child, both bodily, psychologically and socially. TV, computer games, and video rob children of the time to play.

It is possible that a child's behaviour and learning patterns are affected by screen time (viewing and playing). Children may be nervous, easily fatigued and have a low attention span.

There are of course social (family) circumstances involved in the TV issue; what can be done when a teenage sibling insists on viewing something inappropriate for the younger child? What happens when they visit friends and neighbours? These questions need to be considered in the light of the age of the child, the information here, and other factors affecting the child's development.

We are able to help, provide support and suggest strategies if required.

Issues at School and in our School Community

Many parents have chosen a Waldorf education for their child because of the emphasis placed on recognising and working with child development in a health-giving way. Our whole curriculum and everything we do is specific to the developmental needs of the child at particular ages. Screen exposure not only has an adverse effect on the child, but indirectly on the other children in the class. **Many parents endeavour to limit or avoid screen exposure and it can be disheartening when other children talk about their electronic experiences, or when screen-free children are inadvertently exposed to such media when playing with their friends.**

Some useful references: (available from the Parents Library)

Remotely Controlled – Dr Aric Sigman

Fools Gold – Alliance for Childhood

The Plug-in Drug – Marie Win

Endangered Minds – Jane Healey

Who's bringing them up? – Martin Large

After the Death of Childhood – David Buckingham

Amusing ourselves to Death – Neil Postman

i. GENERAL EQUIPMENT

All pupils must attend school with the following items:

Note: All items should be clearly labelled with your child's name.

Kindergarten

Please note: We ask clothing must not carry slogans, caricatures or cartoons. No black clothing or body suits should be worn and all clothing should be in good repair. Although the kindergartens are warm our weather is very unpredictable and it is helpful if children are dressed in layers so that clothing can be taken off and put back on as necessary. Rain or shine we play in the garden or go for a walk.

If the weather is forecast to be hot, sun block must be put on your child before coming to kindergarten.

Please remember that children play with water, sand and mud. Old but tidy clothes that can be washed are the most suitable. If you are going out afterwards then please bring some clothes that you can change your child into at the end of the kindergarten morning.

NOTE: TOYS FROM HOME SHOULD NOT BE BROUGHT TO KINDERGARTEN.

- Soft shoes or plain style slippers to wear in the kindergarten
- Sturdy shoes – not trainers or open toed sandals
- Wellington boots – to be kept in the kindergarten
- Raincoat – all year round (no umbrellas please), with hood or separate rain-hat
- Warm coat and hat in winter plus scarf and gloves
- Light jacket or fleece and sun hat in summer
- Cardigan or jumper all year round
- Tights or socks depending on the season, all year round
- Trousers for boys or girls
- Festival dress for celebrations
- Bag with a change of clothing – socks, tights, trousers/skirt, top, jumper, pants

Classes One to Four

- A painting shirt
- Wellington boots
- A raincoat with a hood or separate rain hat
- A warm hat during winter and a sun hat for summer.
- A pair of indoor shoes – plimsolls not slippers.
- An extra set of clothes in a bag.
- A cloth drawstring bag, clearly named, for Eurythmy shoes.

Classes Five to Eight

- A raincoat with a hood or separate rain hat.
- A fountain pen. Please await your teacher's instructions before acquiring this.
- A corrector pen. Please await your teacher's instructions before acquiring this.
- 12 Derwent or Caran d'ache soft quality, coloured pencils (not water soluble).
- A cloth drawstring bag, clearly named, for Eurythmy shoes.
- **Games Kit**

Classes Three to Ten

Note: Please check the timetable for times of gym lessons.

- Plain, royal blue, dark blue or navy blue **matching** tracksuit, i.e. trousers and sweatshirt. The tracksuit trousers need to be elasticated at the waist and bottoms of the legs. Small 'cargo' type pockets are acceptable. No hood on sweatshirt.
- Plain white T-shirt (no collar or buttons)
- Plain, royal blue, dark blue, or navy blue shorts.
- Plain white socks
- Trainers
(plain = no stripes, logo, patterns, poppers, vents etc.)

Please speak with the games teacher if you have any questions. Please also note that if children attend without their games kit they may be subject to the school's discipline sanctions.

- A bag (not plastic) to keep the games kit in and not too big please.
- **Classes 5, 6, 7, 8 and Upper School** – a gum shield is compulsory for playing Hockey.

Please also refer to section 4e 'materials' for information on the items children need for school.

j. LEARNING SUPPORT

Ringwood Waldorf School has a Learning Support Group (a College Mandate Group) with the mandate to consider the individual learning needs of each class and of each pupil. The group is coordinated by the SENCO – (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator).

The Learning Support Group coordinates the following provisions:

1. Remedial

The Learning Support Teacher is able to offer some individual remedial lessons. This is limited however by the overall needs of the whole school. In addition Learning Support Classroom Assistants may work with individual children in the classrooms or in small groups for literacy and numeracy. In some instances the school might also advise a parent to seek additional support outside the school.

Parents of children joining the school after Class 1 may be asked to arrange separate private learning support lessons as a condition of admission if their child has specific learning needs.

Referrals to learning support lessons are through the Class Teacher. Parents with concerns should first approach their child's teacher rather than the SENCO directly.

Parents may be invited to meet with the SENCO regarding their child.

2. Therapies. There may be occasions when the Learning Support Group will recommend additional curative or therapeutic work for a child in consultation with the school educational advisor. In this case parents either need to arrange this privately, or if there are a number of children who will benefit from a particular therapy the school will endeavour to arrange this and pass the cost on to parents. Parents will always be consulted first. The therapies that may be considered are: Art Therapy, Speech

Therapy, Curative Eurythmy and what is known as the Extra lesson which is a specific Waldorf lesson based primarily on movement.

3. Assessments. Whole class assessments are carried out in classes 2, 4 and 6 each year and this information informs both individual learning needs as well as the needs of the class as a whole. Where additional individual assessment is indicated this will be advised to parents by the SENCO. Reviews occur annually for classes 3, 5 and 7.

k. OVERSEAS PUPILS

We have a Visiting Students programme so that students from Waldorf Schools abroad may spend from 3 weeks to a year as participating students from Class 9 upwards. Accommodation is with school families or teachers and we would be pleased to add you to our list of families able to take visiting students as paying guests. A DBS check is required in such instances. Please ask the office to include you in the list, or for further details of what is required in terms of accommodation and care.

Any families wishing to arrange a visit for their own Upper School child should start making plans in Class 8 and consult with the Upper School teacher responsible for our own Visiting Students programme for advice on the most appropriate and beneficial times for a student to undertake such a trip. Most searches seem to be done through websites.

Periodically overseas Waldorf pupils and au pairs contact the school who wish to arrange a private exchange/stay with a family in this country. If you are interested in entering into such an arrangement watch out for details in the newsletter or on the office notice-board.

I. MUSIC

Music is a strong feature of Ringwood Waldorf School's curriculum.

In addition to lessons in class, in which all children learn to play the recorder and from Class 4 learn to read music, the school wishes to support and encourage children to learn an additional musical instrument. School facilities are made available after school on a no charge basis for private instrument lessons in order to keep costs to a minimum for parents. The cost of individual private tuition is the responsibility of parents as are the contractual arrangements.

The availability of spaces is limited and these are only made available when they are not needed by the school and are therefore subject to change.

Parents are asked to support their children by ensuring regular practice at home.

From Class 4 onwards all children take part in recorder ensembles and class orchestras, as well as the school choirs. This will involve some evening and week-end activities.

Parents are often invited to hear work in progress during Friday assemblies and concerts are often held at the end of a term.

Sandi Weir coordinates the music curriculum in the school and you are welcome to speak to her about choosing a suitable instrument for your child. There are pedagogical indications as to which instrument would be appropriate for each child and which can also aid overall development in many other areas

m. CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please inform the office of any changes to addresses or phone numbers. Please also let them know if you do not want this information published. The school e-mail can also be used:

mail@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk

SECTION TWO:

THE SCHOOL RULES.

Rules can be seen conceptually as common understandings and agreements that allow each individual to participate in the purpose of the school, which is the education of the children. Having clear behavioural boundaries supports children in feeling secure. Rules at Ringwood Waldorf School are pedagogically based and are the result of many years of experience. In addition, rules support your own family by helping with the inevitable peer pressures that arise as part of growing up.

Above all, rules are intended to support children on their educational journey towards freedom. (See 'Education Towards Freedom' by Frans Carlgren, Floris Books) by teaching them about responsibility, always, of course, in an age appropriate way.

It is very important then that the family and school work together with common and agreed values and we earnestly seek your support in the application of the school rules. In particular school rules should not be questioned or discussed in the presence of younger children.

a. DRESS CODE, CLOTHING, JEWELLERY, MAKE UP AND APPEARANCE

There is no school uniform at Ringwood Waldorf School, however **a standard of dress and appearance suitable for a centre of learning is expected at all times.**

The guidelines are designed to remove pedagogical impediments to the emerging being of the child. Parents are asked to support the teachers with these guidelines.

If a child arrives at the school and is considered to be in breach of the Dress Code and the guidelines, then their parent(s) may be contacted and asked to bring in a change of clothes.

These guidelines are made in the best interests of the education and your support is requested in meeting the set standards.

The school also seeks to avoid peer pressure based on brands and to allow children's emerging egos to develop and express themselves free of such constraints.

1. General.

Generally pupils' dress must be appropriate to the season and activity, while being comfortable, clean and neat, covering the body. Plain colours are preferred and the school requests that black should not be worn below Class 5.

Please be aware that weather conditions can change quickly and both weatherproof and warm clothing, including hats, should be available.

Pupils must wear plain neutral colours with no writing or pictures.

Extremes of fashion, fluorescent colours, army camouflage or strapped tops, hot pants or mini-skirts should not be worn. **Underwear should not be visible. This applies to all ages.**

2. Footwear

For safety reasons (games, woodwork, craft and science lessons etc.) only shoes with closed toes should be worn. The school requires that shoes be worn at all times and walking around in bare feet is not allowed. Sandals may be worn in summer, however shoes should also be available for the above lessons. Shoes should have flat soles

with heels no higher than one inch. Flip flops, sandals which do not support the foot at the heel, and crocs, are not suitable for school as they inhibit running, jumping etc. and may not be worn.

3. Naming

Please name all outerwear including footwear with your child's name. This makes it easier for staff to return lost property items.

4. Make up

No make-up is allowed in the lower/middle school, including nail polish. Children will be required to remove any make up or nail polish worn to school.

5. Hair

Hair that is longer than shoulder length should be clean and tidy and **kept off the face** by tying back (see also the medical section on 'nits'). Dyed hair, dreadlocks (except for genuine religious reasons), or hair ornaments and extensions are not acceptable.

6. Body piercing, tattoos etc.

Ear studs and sleepers only are acceptable. Any visible tattoo is not acceptable.

7. Jewellery

Jewellery is generally not acceptable as children need to be able to play and work safely. Therefore dangly earrings, bracelets and rings are not permitted. Some discretion may be used in Class 9 and above with regard to jewellery. But the Class Guardians word on this will be final.

8. Hats

Children are encouraged to wear a sun hat on sunny days and a warm hat on windy and wet days. These can be kept with other small items in a drawstring bag on the child's clothes peg outside the classroom.

9. Clothes on special Festival days

In order to support the mood of the day, parents must send their children in wearing appropriate clothing (e.g. no hoodies).

White Shirt Events

Michaelmas Assembly, Martinmas Assembly, Advent Garden, Christmas Pageant – if not in costume, Carol Service, Candlemas Assembly, Spring Festival, May Festival, Whitsun (as much white as possible).

For these events students must wear smart white tops/shirts, not T-shirts.

Dark trousers and skirts in a good state of repair please.

Waistcoats and stoles are allowed.

Other Colours

Michaelmas Dragon game for Classes 4 to 8 – red or blue top dependant on team.
St John's – colours of the fire.

Safety Points

Advent – no long flowing skirts or sleeves – preferably trousers. Hair tied back.

Ascension Day – sturdy footwear, sun hats, trousers and long sleeves (to protect from ticks). St John's – sturdy footwear and sun hats, no flowing skirts.

b. COURTYARD, FIELD AND MAIN PLAYGROUND RULES: In everyone's interests:

- Children must be outside after 10.40am during break time, and after 1.30pm at lunch time. Exceptions only for the sweeping groups and children whose names have been written on the blackboard by a teacher.
- Children may not go into the lobbies during break without a teacher's permission during morning break and lunch time.
- Waterproof coats and hoods or hats must be worn in uncovered areas when it is raining.
- Bicycles may only be pushed and skateboards carried in these areas.
- Only trees with painted lines may be climbed. The lines may not be crossed. Branches without lines may not be climbed.

These are not permitted:

- Kicking
- Throwing of hard objects
- Climbing on buildings
- Eating or drinking in the playground
- Retrieving things from outside play areas without a teacher's permission
- Running in the walkways

Classes 1, 2 and 3

- Coats are to be worn unless notified otherwise by a teacher
- Hoods/hats are to be worn in uncovered areas when it is raining
- Sun hats must be worn on sunny days during the Summer term
- Running is allowed on the wood chips and 'grassed' areas only
- The sandpit space and all other areas are 'no run areas'.
- No rough playing (e.g. wrestling, barging, hitting, kicking)
- Sand belongs in the sandpit only
- Sticks and ropes are for gentle games only
- Hard objects are not to be thrown. Nothing to be thrown against buildings
- Food and drink stays in the classroom
- Chalk is to be used only with a teacher's permission
- Fences and gates must not be climbed or swung on
- Trees are to be climbed only up to marker height
- Children may go into lobbies and classrooms only with a teacher's permission

Note: Parents supervising children after school when cleaning are particularly asked to be aware of these playground rules and to ensure that they apply them in order that there is consistency for the children.

c. GENERAL

- The school rules apply to the school premises at all times, and to school outings.
- Children should arrive before 8.25 so that they are ready to begin lessons at 8.25.
- Belongings are to be carried into school in suitable school bags, satchels or rucksacks. Plastic bags should not be used.

- Coffee, tea, fizzy drinks, sweets, chocolate and chewing gum are not allowed on school premises at all or on school outings.
- No children may leave the school grounds during school hours without the permission of a teacher.
- No parent/carers may enter the classrooms, lobbies or playground without the authority of the front office.
- Knives, matches, lighters, fireworks and cigarettes are not allowed in school.
- Toys from home (including balls), should not be brought into school except by special arrangement with a teacher, due to exceptional circumstances.
- Electronic games and personal stereos/MP3 players are not allowed in school at all.
- Mobile phones are only allowed to be brought on to school premises by Class 8 pupils and above and must be switched off and kept in the office. They may only be used after 3.30 p.m. and their use must be supervised by a teacher whilst on-site.
- No ball games allowed from 3.30 p.m. to 3.45 p.m.
- No litter may be dropped anywhere at any time. Parents who allow children to buy refreshments from the Lantern etc. must ensure the rubbish is put in the bin.

Please help us create a healthy learning environment throughout the school by ensuring that your child abides by these rules.

d. FOUND PROPERTY

The school does not accept responsibility for any loss or damage to clothing, personal possessions (except when formally on loan to the school for educational purposes) or loss of money (see 'pupils and money').

The school does provide a service for found property. It will be kept in the general office for a limited period of time (half a term) after which, if it is not claimed, it will be donated to a charity or may be sold. Generally speaking this will happen at half and end of term periods.

e. THE LANTERN CENTRE

Ringwood Waldorf School cannot accept any responsibility for pupils whilst at the Lantern Centre.

Children should be picked up from school straight after school and not asked to go to the Lantern Centre by themselves to be picked up later from there. This is particularly unsafe for younger children. If you wish to go to the Lantern Centre please pick your child up first and then go together.

g. CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Rudolf Steiner, in a lecture (Berlin 1.2.1916) distinguished between two facets of discipline: **Discipline to control and discipline to enable.** The Waldorf Teacher tends towards the latter, that is, discipline to enable the class to work fruitfully, to enable the harmonious inter-working of the many activities of the school and discipline

to support the development of the child. In the same lecture Dr Steiner spoke of the nature of punishment and the manner in which it can increase the depth, clarity and range of consciousness. Disciplinary measures taken by the teacher will depend upon, amongst other things, the age and temperament of the child and the nature of the misdemeanour. Measures taken will often include active parts of the lesson and the curriculum.

Any discipline aims to engender a spirit of mutual respect.

The school expects that children show a willingness to take part in lessons, to be properly equipped, to show respect for their peers, the teacher and staff as well as the buildings and school facilities.

The school asks that parents support the school by building respect in the home for the education and its aims with the children (this is a condition of admission on the Admission Agreement). When active support is present in parents, experience shows that the children benefit more fully from their education and matters of discipline are lessened.

In most cases disciplinary problems can be immediately solved by the teacher. Other sanctions are used for more serious matters.

Sanctions

If a child misbehaves he or she will be dealt with appropriately in accordance with the deed and the age of the child. This may be a task or a detention and in **serious or persistent cases (continual or gross disobedience), a suspension or exclusion.**

Where deliberate or malicious damage is involved the school will seek compensation or repair and parents will be liable for any costs involved.

Parental life style choices which are deemed to be incompatible with the cultural ethos of the school and antithetical to the aims of the education may result in parents being advised to look for another school for their children. This is a safe-guarding issue.

Parents are advised that the following may result in suspension or expulsion as instances of **gross misconduct or continual disobedience.**

- Aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Abusive behaviour and reactions.
- Overt and repeated swearing and bad language.
- Persistent teasing and bullying whether overt or not.
- Smoking and the possession and use of drugs or alcohol.
- Continued absence or lateness from school without permission or notification
- Persistent failure to fulfil work requirements.
- Persistent failure to co-operate with lessons and given instructions.
- The school has a Discipline and Promotion of Positive Behaviour Policy which outlines the processes followed when a formal discipline procedure is instituted. A copy is appended for your information.

Please note that you may be asked to collect your child from school in the above instances and you should therefore ensure that your contact details are current.

h. USE OF TELEPHONES – MESSAGES

1. Emergency calls

The office telephone may be used by parents to make emergency calls with the permission of a staff member. Pupils require written permission from their Class Teacher during school hours to use the school phone. Please give a donation towards the cost, especially if it is to a mobile phone, so that the office staff do not have to ask all the time. School phones may not be used by pupils to make social arrangements. **After school care and play arrangements must be made in advance with the child before school commences in the morning.**

2. Mobile phones

Mobile phones are allowed to be brought onto school premises only by Class 8 pupils and above and must be switched off and kept in the office at all times during the school day. They may only be used after 3.30 pm and their use must be supervised by a teacher. The same rule applies at all school based events and trips. Any infringement of this may result in confiscation.

3. Messages for pupils and staff

The office will take messages for pupils in **emergencies only** and use its best endeavours to ensure they are delivered. Parents should note that it is not always possible to deliver a message at the end of the day and that requests regarding changes to pick ups and after school arrangements will not be accepted except in emergency situations such as a car break down. The office advises parents to contact each other directly to re-arrange pick-ups or changes in routine.

Messages for staff will be taken and, unless the message is of an urgent nature, will be placed in the staff member's pigeon hole at various times during the day. Please note that it may be some time before the staff member checks their pigeonhole and receives the message.

Messages from the school to parents may be given to the older children for delivery or alternatively held until that parent is seen picking up or delivering their children. An alternative is to post the message. Messages for individuals may be displayed on the office black-board as well.

Parents expecting mail should check the 'Parents' Tray' in the office.

General notices of events will be placed in the newsletter and/or placed on the blackboard or notice board in the office. Class letters are sent home with the children. Please remember to check your child's bag regularly for messages. Class parents also send around messages by 'text tree' to remind parents about meetings, festivals etc.

i. GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

1. Parking and traffic movement on the site

a. General parking

Children on foot and moving traffic do not go well together and should be minimised. Parking is available in the car park and parking times should be minimised to allow space for others.

Only those with business in the school should park in the car park.

Please do not park in the lane or beyond the car park as this blocks access for emergency services. The school or the Lantern may have to call the police to have offending cars removed.

Overflow parking is permitted in the back court in the afternoon after school (3.30) and on special occasions as notified. **Please do not park in the back playground at lunchtime as this restricts the children's ability to exercise and play during their lunch break. The school cannot accept responsibility for cars left in the car park during break or lunchtime etc.**

Traffic movement is circular in a clockwise direction on the site and speed is limited to 5MPH.

We ask that all drivers take special care when manoeuvring on the site.

Please do not park in the disabled driver's bay. Please park only in the marked spaces and NOT near the office in the unmarked areas. This area is required at all times for emergency services and deliveries and is not for parking in.

Please do not park in the staff parking area behind the hall as this may delay teachers & staff getting to classes/office on time.

b. Kindergarten parking and access. Classes 1, 2 and 3

The entrance to the Kindergartens is through the access gate from the car park into the classes 1,2 and 3 playground and along the formed pathway. Please stay on the pathway as older children may be playing and not be aware that younger children are present. Entrance and pick-up for classes 1.2.3 is also through this gate and not from the courtyard. There is no access to the Kindergarten from the back courtyard and this gate will be locked while the kindergarten is in session.

2. Walking and cycling.

The school wishes to be environmentally responsible and to encourage all safe means of transport, in particular where it reduces the numbers of cars on the roads. Lift sharing is encouraged as also is the practice of parking some distance away from the school and walking. This really does help the children prepare for their day.

We wish to point out to parents that while we support walking and cycling to school, the slip road into the school is busy and can be dangerous and children should be supervised at all times. Please wear helmets if cycling. There is parking available in the grounds for bikes. Please ensure a lock is supplied for your bike.

The Castleman Trailway is an all weather track and is suitable for cycling and as an alternative access. The security gate will be opened during drop-off and pick-up times to allow access. It will be locked at all other times.

The school does not support children hitch-hiking to or from school nor travelling by themselves at any time.

j. SECURITY

The school is required by law for security and safety reasons to know who is on the site at any one time (and what they are doing), and, who has left the site.

Anyone entering or leaving the site for any reason once school has started for the day must inform the office, signing their name in and out of the office book on the counter. **This includes staff, parents, pupils and itinerant music teachers.**

Visitors are required to register and will be identified by a visitor badge.

The school lockup can occur any time after 4.00 pm. **Anyone entering any space or facility after this time assumes responsibility for securing that space or facility**

on exiting, whether or not it was locked when they entered. (This also applies to music teachers).

You may therefore need to arrange for a key from the office in order to do this. Please note that the lockup includes windows, fire egress doors and lobby doors.

k. SCHOOL TRIPS AND CAMPS

Most classes have trips, walks, camps and other outings during the year and as these are seen as an important and integral part of the Waldorf curriculum, **all pupils are accordingly required to attend**. Parents are advised of arrangements and any costs by their class teacher well in advance of the event. Any costs involved need to be pre-paid and should be paid in to the office. Always ask for a receipt.

Teachers follow the guidelines and policies, including risk assessments, for all trips and these can be seen in the school office on request. Parents will be asked to sign and return a consent form for all trips not covered by the annual consent for fixed outings, such as walks along the trail way.

Parents are asked to respond to requests from Class Teachers for parental assistance with trips to keep costs down and to ensure adequate adult supervision. Please be aware that school rules apply on all trips and that only approved parents may accompany class trips or outings. This is at the absolute discretion of the Class Teacher/Class Guardian.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks are required for parent helpers accompanying classes on overnight trips and these should be arranged early in the year as they can take some time to complete.

I. HOMEWORK

Homework is introduced progressively from Class 4 and parents are asked to give this their active support. Ideas for ways in which support can be given can be discussed and agreed at Class Parent Evenings. Some classes for instance use homework diaries.

Ideally the child should have a quiet space where homework can be done at the same time each day so that it becomes part of the day's rhythm.

Homework becomes increasingly important as the children move up the school and deadlines may also be used for the completion of projects.

Children who have not completed their homework without good reason may be expected to do so during the break(s) on the following day, or may be required to stay after school as a detention. Where this happens, 24 hours notice will be given.

m. PUPILS AND MONEY

Generally children below Class 8 should not have money at school unless they have been asked to by their teacher or the office.

Class 8 and Upper School pupils may have the privilege of being able to make purchases from the Lantern Shop at their teacher's discretion.

Where children do need money for after school reasons it should be handed to the office in the morning and collected after school.

The school offers hot lunches such as baked potatoes or pasta and parents are encouraged to pay termly in advance.

n. DOGS

Many children are frightened of dogs and some are allergic to them. Dogs are therefore not allowed on site at any time. **(Including the school car park.)**

Our insurance company has advised us that any claim made against the school (regarding an injury inflicted by a dog) will be directed to the dog owner.

SECTION THREE

HOW THE SCHOOL IS ORGANISED AND RUN

Ringwood Waldorf School reflects in its organisational structure the Threefold Social Order out of which the founding impulse for the Waldorf School movement arose. Parents can learn more about this by referring to the recommended reading list or by attending periodical talks that are offered on this subject.

The form of organisational structure can, in simple terms, be viewed as a flat republican management model.

Education is seen as a cultural deed within the Threefold Social Order and the organisational structure is arranged to serve this and, for this reason, is seen as an integral part of the education itself.

a. **The Governing Body of Trustees**

The Governing Body of Trustees is responsible for governing the legal aspects of Ringwood Waldorf School in accordance with the laws governing educational institutions in the United Kingdom and the requirements of the Charities Commission.

These are constrained by the ethos of being a Waldorf School which the governing body is bound to uphold as a matter of principle.

The Trustees meet at least once a term. The Trustees vet all school policy, processes, guidelines and procedures for legal compliance and hears regular reports from various bodies in the school. The Trustees approve the Annual Plan for the school and ratify all staff appointments. The Trustees have a supportive role in approving the strategic direction of the school. The Trustees are bound by the ethos and social indications given by Rudolf Steiner appropriate to a Waldorf School and the arbiter of this is vested with the College of Teachers. The Trustees are therefore bound to consult with the College of Teachers before making any significant decisions.

b. **THE COLLEGE OF TEACHERS (The College)** **The Managing Body and Spiritual Leader**

As in all Waldorf Schools, and in accordance with the indications of Rudolf Steiner, there is no Head teacher. Those teachers who wish, and are able to take responsibility for the educational, spiritual and social principles of the whole school and its destiny are jointly responsible for the school and together form the College of Teachers. Teachers join the College by application or by invitation after being with the school for at least one year. The Administrator and Bursar are also full members of the College. Part-time teachers are also involved.

The College is responsible for the management and administration of the school on a day to day basis and is the body that accepts responsibility for the spiritual destiny of the school. The College meets weekly or more often if needed. All important decisions involving the school are agreed by the College.

One member is nominated by the College as the Chair for the current year and this is a position of service rather than of status and this role is one of a number of tasks

allocated to College members. More than one person may be nominated in any one year. The position normally rotates after Christmas each year.

The College mandates a number of individuals and groups to carry out the various day to day tasks. Key areas (portfolios) include:

- Staffing and time-tabling
- Professional Development
- Curriculum Development
- Administration including finance, Health and Safety and property matters
- Enrolment and admissions
- Public and Community Relations
- Learning Support
- Student welfare
- Safeguarding
- Upper School Development
- Policies Review
- Mandate Review
- Representation at the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship

SOME STANDING COLLEGE GROUPS

The Administration Group

This mandated group meets once a week to deal with urgent and routine administrative matters. This group monitors expenditure, Health and Safety and property matters. This group also administers the Financial Contribution System. (see Financial Matters). The Administration Group also forms the Admissions Group and oversees the admissions process. The group reports to the College.

The Staffing Group

This is a mandated College Group responsible for staffing matters. This includes staff appraisal, mentoring and advising, professional development, staff advertising, interviewing, appointments and employment contracts.

The PR Group

This is a mandated College Group responsible for promoting the school, monitoring levels of satisfaction and ensuring that there are good communication channels. There is a strong link with the School Community Group. This group is also responsible for Adult Education and arranges talks, courses (One Day Conference) and so on. This Handbook is part of the work of this group. Parents are also welcome to join this group.

The Learning Support Group

This group oversees the SEN policy (Special Educational Needs) and the Therapies Policy. The group is headed by the School SENCO and meets regularly. The group also supports research into curriculum development in order to develop the curriculum and pedagogy in the school. Whole class and individual screenings and assessments are arranged by this group. The group also supervises the learning support assistants.

The School Inspection Service (SIS) Group

This group has the responsibility to ensure that the school is prepared for SIS (Ofsted equivalent) inspections. This includes completing the school's self assessment documents, ensuring that lesson plans and pupil records are up to date and that the school has policies that cover all the statutory areas and that everyone is aware of these. This task also includes facilitating the inspections when they occur

c. THE COLLEGIATE MEETING

This group comprises all teaching staff at Ringwood Waldorf School, some associated members including the School Medical Advisor, and some ancillary staff. The Teachers Meeting meets weekly as a faculty for educational work including Professional Development, Child Studies, Curriculum Review, Planning and Policy Consideration, as well as discussing and coordinating whole school activities such as festivals and assemblies.

The Kindergarten, Lower School and Upper School groups all meet separately in addition to, or as part of, the weekly Teachers Meeting.

d. THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY GROUP

The social and cultural activities of the parent community are coordinated by the School Community Group. The School Community Group works in the social and cultural realms and also has a number of other groups that support various tasks in the school. These include Publicity, Meeting Support/Refreshments, Fundraising Support, Talks and Education Support. Please talk with a member of the Community Group if you would like to be involved with any of these activities. A member of College is nominated to liaise with and support the School Community Group.

There are many individuals and groups within the school community who support and nourish the school and everyone working within it. You will find information on the activities of these groups in the weekly newsletter and your participation is welcomed. Some of their tasks include:

- The Annual Christmas Bazaar
- The Annual Summer Fair
- Fundraising initiatives
- Gardening
- Maintenance
- Parents Library
- Class Parents Group
- Craft Groups
- Occasional Preparation for Event Group

All parents are expected to help with the Christmas Bazaar and the Summer Fair. Here is the list of allocated class tasks for both events. Ideally parents should set the day aside but helpers are also needed for advance preparation, setting up and clearing up afterwards so you will all be able to help in some way. Please be prepared to offer your support to these fundraising events. Your class parents will be able to offer more information and instruction during Parents' Evenings.

Kindergartens

Involved with children's events such as King Winter and the gnome garden

Class 1

Restaurant

Class 2	Organisation, publicity, invitations, traders, entertainment, risk assessment, First Aid, Health and Safety
Class 3	Crafts
Class 4	Café and Cake Stall
Class 5	Presents for parents, preparing, signing and decorating of outdoor spaces
Class 6	Children's activities
Class 7	Off-site signs and parking
Class 8	Waffles, Chestnuts and punch. Ice cream
Upper School	Raffle

Events vary from year to year and new initiatives are welcomed.

When there is an event, and your class is responsible for, say, the cakes, in our school we really hope that you will make the cake and not bring in something bought unless you absolutely have to. If you cannot make something perhaps you could offer to buy ingredients for someone else, or juice or paper napkins – there is always some way you can help.

It is a blessing for all if these tasks can be taken up with enthusiasm and goodwill. These are contagious qualities (as are grumbling and complaining!). We hope you choose to be part of a positive, responsible parent body, which, together with the teachers, creates a warm, enthusiastic and empowering environment for your children. Your willing participation and support of the school helps support the children in their own personal development.

Other groups you can join simply for yourself:

- Doll making/Craft Group (seasonal)
- Sewing Group
- Study Group
- Eurythmy for Parents
- Heartsong – Singing Group

Look out for details of these groups in the newsletter or enquire in the office.

Ways in which you can support your child(ren), many of which are organised or supported by the Community Group include:

- Attending certain evening meetings:
 1. The New Parent's Coffee Morning/Evening meeting
 2. Class Parents Evening – 3 or 4 times a year – as per Admission Agreement
 3. Whole School Community Meetings which are held once a term
 4. Educational and other talks
- Buying a book and reading about the education – recommending it to others or taking a book out of the Parents' Library
- Borrowing the DVD "What is a Steiner School?" from the office
- Being prepared to give up the occasional Saturday to attend:
 1. Educational Open Days

2. Busy Bee days to help with needed maintenance (1 to 6 hours each term)
3. Fundraising by helping at the Christmas Bazaar, The Easter Fair and the Summer Fair etc

e. THE WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY MEETING

Whole School Community Meetings are held at least once each term and offer the whole school community an opportunity to be informed on issues and matters of interest within the school. These meetings are hosted by the School Community Group. Agenda items may include:

- Community – ways to develop and enhance the sense of community.
- Communication – a focus for different parts of the school to share information.
- Consultation – to provide opportunities for consultation and involvement in various aspects of policy and decision making where this is appropriate.
- Groups – to hear reports and offer support for the various groups within the school.
- To receive financial information.
- To hear Anthroposophical and wider educational topics.

The meetings are announced in the newsletter and attending parents often comment on how their understanding and connection to the school has been strengthened by attending these meetings.

f. CLASS PARENTS

A Class Parent supports the Class Teacher with the practical and social running of the class. This may include helping organise camps and trips, cleaning and snack rotas and telephone trees as well as festival and social events. The Class Parent may act as a liaison between parents of a class and the teacher in general issues relating to the class as well as the school as a whole. Matters concerning the class are often best discussed initially with a Class Parent, who can then take the matter up with the Class Teacher or help to find a solution.

The Class Parents meet as a body periodically and the group nominates a chair to co-ordinate the meetings and the agenda. The College appoints one of its members to act as a liaison person for the Class Parents.

g. THE GARDENING AND LANDSCAPING

Caring for and improving the natural environment around the school is an important contribution to the wellbeing of the whole community. It also sets a good example for the children and provides them with a natural beauty that will have an enduring presence for them. There are many opportunities for parents to contribute in this area. This can be on a one-off basis or on-going by joining the group itself. Watch out for requests in the newsletter.

It is always much appreciated when a parent notices a task needs doing and they just come in and do it – new plants in the flower pots, sweeping up the leaves, a quick burst of weeding.

SECTION FOUR: FINANCIAL AND OTHER MATTERS ABOUT MONEY 'Money is will made manifest'.

Ringwood Waldorf School, as an independent school, is reliant on parents for its financial and material needs and the financial organisation of the school reflects this fact. The school endeavours to ensure that the education is available to all those parents who wish it for their children while at the same time recognising that the school needs to be financially viable and responsible. The Finance Policy (see policy section) is based on an agreed set of community principles that incorporate the ethic appropriate to the school and its community.

Financial Contributions are used to educate all the children in the community and are not applied on an individual basis. All financial contributions are received as a gift to the whole community.

a. **Minimum Funding Contribution**

The Minimum Funding Contribution, which covers all salaries, property and administrative costs, is the main component of the Finance Policy and consists of two elements. Firstly the Indicative Average, which is the average per child the school needs to achieve in order to operate. The second element is the Minimum Funding Contribution which is the amount asked for and which allows for the Indicative Average to be achieved, the community ethos to be realised, a lower level of contributions to be needed for siblings and for the community goals to be realised.

The figures are based on the Community Development Goals for the school and parents are reminded that the Indicative Average referred to is a **mean average per child over the main school population**. There is the opportunity, and expectation in the spirit of the policy, for those who can contribute more to do so in order that the social aims of the school can be maintained and further extended. **The Community Support Fund (which is based on the 'overs' of the Indicative Average)** aims to support others so that the requested average is achieved and maintained overall.

Contributions to the Community Support Fund will qualify for **Gift Aid** if you are a UK taxpayer making it more possible for the school to realise the pedagogical goals. Please see the school Bursar for details.

b. **Annual Financial Processes**

All financial agreements with the school are for one year and are subject to annual review and renewal. Around Easter each year parents will be asked to complete and return a Minimum Funding Contribution Promise Form for the following academic school year.

Those that promise less than the minimum may be asked to attend a financial meeting with the school trustees.

Parents who contribute by standing order are reminded that any changes should be notified to their bank before September each year.

c. **Change of circumstances**

Parents are asked to keep the school informed of any changed circumstances by contacting the Bursar. In particular if parents unexpectedly find difficulty in keeping their promises, they should contact the Bursar as soon as possible, in order to reach

an amicable solution. If non-payments accrue with no adequate explanation, a family may be asked to leave the school because of non-cooperation with the community Finance Policy.

d. Withdrawals

In the event of a child being withdrawn, the parent(s) should first inform the Class Teacher. They should then give a **term's notice in writing** addressed to the College of Teachers. If a child is withdrawn before the end of the notice period the full financial contribution to the end of the notice period is expected.

Note: For the purposes of this a 'term's notice' is deemed to be a full academic term (Equivalent to four months if paying by standing order).

Parents who are making contributions under a twelve month standing order are reminded that when a child leaves the school at the end of the Summer Term, the July and August monthly contributions need to be paid in order to complete the year's contribution promise.

Parents withdrawing children, or whose children complete their education at the school, may be invited to complete an exit interview in order that the school can monitor satisfaction levels. Parents may also request an exit interview.

e. Materials (consumables)

The school acknowledges the importance of using quality materials and will supply these to the pupils for individual use. To cover the cost of these materials, a per term Fixed Materials Charge is levied. The graduated scale of these charges is:

Kindergartens	£50 per term
Class 1	£50 per term
Class 2	£50 per term
Class 3	£55 per term
Class 4	£60 per term
Class 5	£65 per term
Class 6	£70 per term
Class 7	£75 per term
Class 8	£80 per term
Class 9	£85 per term
Class 10	£85 per term
Class 11	£85 per term
Class 12	£85 per term

The Materials Charge covers the initial issue of most learning resources needed to meet the curriculum content. Replacements that constitute re-issue will be on a cash only basis (for example lost items). **Invoices are not issued for Materials and parents are asked to ensure they make this payment termly.** A cheque made out to Ringwood Waldorf School may be sent in the post, alternatively please bring your cheque to the office so that you can be given a receipt. Reminders will be sent only if the materials are not paid. Parents may add this charge to their standing orders with

their Minimum Funding Contributions if they so wish, but need to advise the Bursar if they have done this.

The Materials Charge covers:

- *Main lesson books for all classes*
- *Coloured pencils (classes 1-4) but not sets.*
- *Handwork materials*
- *Modelling materials*
- *Play materials*
- *Language materials*
- *Pentatonic flutes **
- *Eurythmy shoes and equipment*
- *Festival materials*
- *Dictionaries **
- *Reference and reading books*
- *Kindergarten food for baking*
- *Drama materials*
- *Art materials*
- *Exercise and note books*
- *Block and stick crayons*
- *Writing materials except pens*
- *Woodwork materials*
- *Science materials*
- *Craft Materials*
- *Paper*
- *Diatonic flutes **
- *Some visiting performers/ cultural events*
- *Sports and Gym equipment*
- *Atlases **
- *Some local outings/walks*
- *Kindergarten snack*
- *School Magazine*
- *Newsletter*

Note: Items marked (*) are for class use where the item remains the property of the school. Some classes may decide they wish for pupils to own their own items in which case these will be separately purchased by the parent(s).

The items not covered by the Materials Charge include:

- *Class annual trips and camps*
- *Postage for mailed newsletters*
- *Extra curricular charges*
- *Carelessly used items*
- *Calculators*
- *Descant recorders*
- *Fountain Pens*
- *Some transport costs*
- *Intentionally damaged items*
- *Food (except for Kindergarten)*
- *Personal coloured pencil sets*
- *Geometry/compass sets*

f. Non Financial Gifts.

The school was founded, and continues to rely, on parental goodwill. The on-going and continued ability to be able to offer a quality Waldorf Education is largely dependent on this good will. This also allows parents to be involved and contribute to many aspects of school and community life and this expectation is part of the social culture of the school. The welfare of the children depends on the working together of school and home, parent and teacher.

Non Financial Contributions, in the form of gifts of time and skills, also allow the school to 'redeem' parts of the budget and better apply financial resources to student learning and educational outcomes.

If you have some spare time and would like to support the school in a practical way by 'volunteering' please speak with the Administrator, the Bursar or the Community Group.

Areas parents may 'volunteer' to assist in include:

- Cleaning: Daily, weekly and termly cleaning.
- Classroom assisting
- Fundraising
- Website
- Fairs and bazaars
- Busy Bee Days
- Newsletter collation
- IT maintenance
- Costume Cupboard
- Class trips, camps, outings and transport.
- Graphic design
- Festivals and open days
- Handwork assisting
- Maintenance
- Office assisting
- Gardening
- Learning Support Assisting
- Magazine production and distribution

Please note that it is expected that all parents will assist in the cleaning of the classrooms. This not only helps to redeem the budget it also sets a good example to the pupils in caring for their environment.

Sturts Farm Vegetables

One of the many environmental areas that Rudolf Steiner took an interest in was horticulture. This led to a movement known today as Biodynamic Agriculture which uses the Demeter certified organic label. Sturts Farm produces biodynamically grown organic vegetables and there is a weekly market stall at the Lantern Centre on a Wednesday where this produce is sold.

For many years a group of school parents ran a shop over at Sturts Farm and in the spirit of the "Threefold Social Order" the profits were donated to the school Community Support Fund, thus supporting those families unable to manage the full contribution. There may be a new impulse at some time in the future, but in the meantime any support we can give to Sturts Farm by buying their organic biodynamic vegetables will help them in all the support they give us in other ways.

g. Fundraising

The proceeds of fundraising are applied to capital costs and improvements in the school and/or meeting the servicing costs of capital loans. We welcome involvement from everyone and whilst some might not prefer to get involved with the organisation of events, they may wish to contribute to the success of fundraising initiatives by joining or assisting with particular projects. It is expected that all parents will find some way of helping in the annual major events such as the Christmas Bazaar and the Summer Fair. Parents are also encouraged to take their own initiative and to organise jumble sales, coffee mornings and so on.

Community fundraising is coordinated by the Community Group.

SECTION FIVE: THE SOCIAL LIFE FESTIVALS

Celebrating the Festivals

It is the custom in Waldorf Schools, and is an integral part of Waldorf life - to celebrate! The new morning is celebrated daily; Mondays and Fridays are celebrated; the beginning of a new term - and the end; birthdays, seasons and festivals, and much more - all are celebrated.

To celebrate is to awaken awareness to the specialness of a particular moment, to bring light and joy into the lives of the children - a very, very vital part of the teachers' task. When we celebrate something ostensibly mundane like the morning, we bring joy to the start of the day, and can remember that every day is a new beginning, a clean slate - and some children more than others need to experience this! Birthdays should be more than fun: they celebrate the life of each uniquely special child.

Wonder, awe and reverence are moods we bring to the celebration of the festivals. These are moods every child needs to experience, particularly our modern children, who live in a world where there is so little of any of them. We do well to note that they form the basis of respect.

Talk of festivals brings up the subject of religion, which can arouse quite strong feelings. Although Steiner embedded his education in Christianity, and we celebrate the Christian festivals, we are also free to celebrate other festivals such as Diwali, the Indian Festival of Light. Steiner believed that his philosophy 'Anthroposophy' could embrace all beliefs. Many experience this to be true. The following notes, mostly extracts from earlier school magazines, give some indication as to how the teachers work with the festivals. However, the best way to find out is to participate - and most festive events are open to parents. Dates and times will be found in the weekly Newsletter.

Michaelmas - 29th September

Mikael is an ancient Hebrew name meaning He who is like God. It was the name given to one of the four great Archangels. The other three were called Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel. We can picture Michael as a Sun-being, a being of Light, dispelling all dark or negative forces with the radiance of his gaze. He stands as a protector and a powerfully active force for good. There is the ancient myth of Michael casting Lucifer and his followers out of heaven, and later repelling the dragon that they sent to create chaos, with the brightness of his sword. We can also think of Michael as the guardian of cosmic intelligence, the 'lux aeterna', which is the miraculous wisdom that pervades the natural world. His sword of light represents enlightened thinking that can cut through webs of deceit to the underlying truth. Michael has been a guiding spirit to many peoples through the ages, and known by many different names: Indra in Ancient India, Marduk in Babylonia and Apollo in Ancient Greece, to name a few. He is certainly also the figure behind the English Patron Saint, Saint George. And, judging by the number of sacred places named after St. Michael, it seems that he was an important figure for the early dwellers of this island.

Steiner, along with many other seers, has recognised Michael as being the guiding spirit of our present age, who, as the servant of the Christ-Light, will stand behind all good-hearted people who have the courage to try to move towards a more enlightened society. In fact,

Steiner called the schools that he initiated Michael Schools because he saw them as promoting 'enlivened thinking', and so would become seeds for a more harmonious age. Each Archangel is also seen to have dominion over one of our seasons on earth, and the Autumn is St. Michael's time. During the summer life seems easy, and we make wonderful plans of all that we would like to achieve. But when the Autumn comes, everything becomes harder. We need much more strength and courage to carry through the tasks that we know we have to do. We need the iron of Michael's sword to give us strength, and his light to guide us through the darkening days. He can bring strength to our will, as well as light to our thinking.

Michaelmas is usually celebrated with Class 3 performing the St. George play; children bring in gifts and flowers for the Harvest Table. There may be a fund-raising event organised by the pupils, courage games for the younger children which are usually devised and run by the older pupils and there is a Dragon game for Classes 4 and above.

This article was written by Nicholas Prater, Class 3 Teacher, for the Michaelmas 2000 edition of our school magazine.

Martinmas – 11th November

From France comes the legend of St. Martin, who as a young man passed under an archway in the city of Amiens and discovered a poor beggar huddled there.

The man was nearly naked, shivering with cold, and had received no alms to assist him. On seeing him, the young Martin took his own cape from his shoulders, tore the garment in half and covered the poor man to warm him.

The following night Martin had a dream in which he saw Christ wearing this same piece of his cape. The experience confirmed in him his devotion to all mankind regardless of their station in life, as expressed so beautifully in the Gaelic Rune of Hospitality.

I saw a stranger yesterday.

I put food in the eating place -

Drink in the drinking place -

And in the blessed name of the Triune,

He blessed myself and my house,

My cattle and my dear ones,

And the lark said in her song:

'Often, often, often goes the Christ in the stranger's guise.'

Martin went on to become patron saint of beggars, drunkards and outcasts. He was known for his gentleness, his unassuming nature and his ability to bring warmth and light to those who were previously in darkness.

On the evening of Martinmas he is remembered in many European households with a festival of lanterns, carrying light throughout the darkened home or neighbourhood, singing songs, and sharing a simple cake, perhaps decorated with the symbol of the sun.

(From Festivals, Family & Food)

In the school this is a festival for the younger children, who go on an early evening Lantern Walk.

Advent - celebrated over the four Sundays leading up to Christmas

Human beings of all cultures throughout time have created festivals whereby they can

celebrate their sense of the wonder at the world, and the significance of life. In the modern world, characterised too often by aimlessness, alienation, violence and despair, we must work hard to nourish and enrich our own inner life.

Above all we must provide for our children the means whereby they can experience the significance and meaning of their own lives. If we, as teachers and parents, can grasp the essential soul qualities that each of the festivals can bring to us and our children, and can enter whole-heartedly into them, we can enrich our lives immeasurably. The celebration of Advent leading to Christmas is a perfect time to begin.

'Advent is a time of preparation; for children in particular it is the time of joyful anticipation which seeks its fulfilment at Christmas,' writes Brigitte Barz in her treasure of a little book 'Festivals with Children'*.

In Advent (latin: ad-venire, going towards) we are journeying towards Christmas. There is preparation, movement, change and growth - a state of becoming. The archetype for this is the figure of Mary. Enveloped in her blue cloak, which protects the warm red of her being within, she sets out on her journey towards the crib, and the Christ-child. The mood is one of peace and calm, but also of joy and anticipation. If we can create something of this mood throughout Advent, and it is quite a challenge to do so when all around is noise, glaring lights and temptations, then the fulfilment of Christmas can be a real experience, nourishing, joyful and satisfying. Too often the children are fully satisfied, overexcited and exhausted long before Christmas Day.

To create this mood, there are so many things a family can do which are meaningful, creative and absorbing: make a wreath out of sweet-smelling sprays of fir on which, during the first week, one candle is lit every day while the family gathers round for a story and singing. During the second week two candles are lit... so that by the fourth week all the candles are lit after which the tree is lit for the first time. Build an Advent table which represents our world. Little figures of Mary and Joseph appear and walk every day closer to the crib. At first they are surrounded only by stars; then more elements appear - first crystals to represent the mineral kingdom; then plants which grow from it; now animals appear, then man in the form of the shepherds. There are angels around - but no baby until Christmas Day! Every day, when the children get up, something new has appeared, and every day the principal characters have drawn closer to the stable. Even if a young child has made a lamb out of a ball of unspun wool s/he will be thrilled to discover that it has moved in the night. Making and wrapping presents are fulfilling, absorbing and highly satisfying activities on which children will work for hours, and which teach them to love giving and doing things for others. Creative ideas for activities, and stories to fill the imagination, can be found in the following highly recommended books (as well as in many others) - which are all in print and usually in stock in the Lantern Centre.

From the Advent edition of our school magazine 2002

- Festivals with Children, full of ideas for how to celebrate within the family. Floris Books,
- The Christmas Craft Book by Thomas Berger, full of craft ideas for people of all ages
Floris Books
- The Christmas Story Book, with over 50 stories, with ages suggested. Floris Books

St Nicholas - 6th December

St Nicholas comes to visit the younger classes. Parents are sadly too old and grown-up to be invited to this delightful but intimate gathering. A favourite with the children.

This is the story as it might be told to the young children.

Once upon a time there lived far away in the East a pious man, the Bishop Nicholas. One day he heard that far in the West was a big town. In this town all the people had to suffer hunger, the children also. Then Bishop Nicholas called his servants who loved him and said to them, 'Bring me the fruits of your gardens and the fruits of your fields that we can still the hunger of the children in that town'. The servants brought baskets full of apples and nuts, and on top lay honey cakes which the women had baked. And the men brought sacks of wheat. Bishop Nicholas had all these things taken onto a ship. It was a beautiful ship, quite white and the sails of the ship were as blue as the sky and as blue as the mantle of the Bishop Nicholas. The wind blew in the sails and sped the ship along. And when the wind grew tired the servants took to the oars and rowed the ship westward. They had to sail for a long time: for seven days and seven nights.

When they arrived in front of the big town it was evening, the roads were empty, but in the houses there burnt lights. Bishop Nicholas knocked at a window. The mother in the house thought a late wanderer had come and she asked her child to open the door. Nobody was outside. The child ran to the window. There was nobody outside the window either. But instead, there stood a basket filled with apples and nuts, red and yellow, and a honey cake lay on top. By the basket stood a sack, which was bursting with golden wheat grains. All the people ate the gifts and once again became healthy and happy.

Today St. Nicholas is in the heavens. Every year on his birthday he starts on his journey down to the earth. He asks for his white horse and journeys from star to star. There he meets Mother Mary, who gathers silver and golden threads for the shift of the Christ Child. Mother Mary says to him: St. Nicholas, please go again to the children and bring them your gifts: Tell them; 'Christmas is nigh and soon the Christ Child will come'. The earth is wide and great. There, where St. Nicholas cannot go himself, he asks a good and pious person to go to the children and take them apples and nuts and tell the children of the coming of the Christ Child.

The Christmas Festival as a Gateway to the Year

Christmas - what varied feelings, thoughts and memories we all associate with the very mention of the word. Intellectually we all know that Christmas is the most universally celebrated Christian festival. It is the remembrance of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet no amount of plastic babes in plastic mangers can truly speak of the impact of the event. In order to understand Christmas we need to place this festival in the context of a whole year. We would, for example, have no cause to remember the birth of Jesus if it were not for the fact that he suffered death on Golgotha and resurrected on the first Easter Sunday.

So let's ignore the calendar year, and note that with the beginning of the Advent time, (the four weeks preceding Christmas Day) a new mood arises out of the darkness and bleakness of November. It is an anticipatory mood; we await the birth of the Christ Child anew each year. The earth is cold and dark; earthly forces have retired to the depths of the planet and are busy within; the earth is wide awake, awaiting the Christmas event. Human souls can awake now too. We do not expect an actual physical birth as happened long ago in Bethlehem, but we can at Christmas experience an inner birth of the light which Christ did bring to our planet. In summer, the earthly activity is all bound up with growth and expansion. The plant and insect worlds give us the clearest picture of this. Human beings too, experience in summer the flights of fancy that our thought-life can take; the lack of concentration; the joy at being out and about. In winter, however, our relationship to nature

is quite different. We want to be inside physically, and our thoughts too, turn inward. As we learn to listen to the seasonal happenings of our earth, so we can learn to listen to the subtle changes occurring in our own hearts as the year goes by. Now in winter with thoughts turned inward, we are best able to understand the meaning of Christ's birth.

As I mentioned earlier, we cannot truly appreciate Christmas unless we see it in context with the other major festivals. The Christmas link with Easter is the most obvious. Easter comes in the spring time, when the forces which retired to the depths of the earth in winter, now begin to rise again. This is particularly evident in the plant kingdom, as the world becomes green again after the barrenness of winter. But also in the animal kingdom we see the hibernating animals awakening, birds making their nests, lambs cavorting on the greens. The images are endless and they all point in one direction: rising upwards out of the depths; life stirs again outwardly after a period of inner activity. Into this experience of nature the Easter festival is immersed. Christ dies. The birth event in Bethlehem now is balanced with the earthly death of the Christ - and this Man-God is placed into our earth. The tragedy and suffering of Christ must come about in order that he may rise again on Easter Sunday, thereby fulfilling the promise of his birth. At Christmas our souls take on the character of the Bethlehem innkeepers: we can say, no, there is no room for that experience here in my heart. Or we can say, yes, there is a place here for the birth to take place. And the simple stable becomes an image for the individual human being humbly making room for the Christmas birth-experience in his own heart. If this can be done, quietly, inwardly, then the seed is already planted for our later experience of the Easter event.

From an article by Dennis Demanett in the Christmas 1979 edition of our school magazine

SECTION SIX: HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS.

Ringwood Waldorf 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. This includes the principles of equality of access to educational opportunities for all. The general medical care of children is held to be primarily the responsibility of parents.

a. Health and Safety Policy

The school has a Health and Safety Policy and a Health and Safety Officer. This policy meets the statutory requirements with regards to Health and Safety and sets out the areas that require guidelines and procedures to be followed. Reports on Health and Safety are tabled regularly in Teachers and College of Teachers meetings. The policy and the guidelines are subject to regular review. 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 through the office.

b. Health services

There are no routine health services in the school, such as dental, hearing or vision tests although if there appears to be a learning problem caused by one of these factors it will be brought to the attention of the parent(s).

The school does not arrange for children to be vaccinated for childhood illnesses; however it does maintain a file of information on this subject for the use of parents.

Periodical talks may also be offered on this topic.

c. Safeguarding Children

The school has an appointed DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) person and two deputies for the main school and the Kindergarten. Their task is to ensure that Safeguarding Children procedures are met in accordance with the statutory regulations (The Children Act 1988) and the guidelines set by Social Services. The procedures are set out in the school policy on safeguarding children. The policy is available to download from the school website or you can ask for a copy from the School Office. All staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children are subject to Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) searches.

In all safeguarding matters the child's interests are considered paramount and the school will adhere to the statutory guidelines which may require referral to Social Services.

d. Promotion of Positive Behaviour (Bullying)

Many parents have concerns about bullying. The school shares these concerns and would like to work with parents in an open way to mitigate bullying. **The**

school is committed to ensuring a safe physical and emotional learning environment for all children and bullying is not acceptable in any form.

By its nature bullying is often done secretly and the dynamics involved can be complex and progressive over a period of time. The College of Teachers have studied bullying with a view to better understanding these dynamics and have a number of strategies to deal with any incidences that occur. Parents should also be aware that often children's behaviour can be different at school to what it is at home and are often surprised when they hear their children have been involved in unkind behaviour. In addition it is not uncommon for children to report 'their version' of incidents to parents in order to avoid criticism or punishment and to enlist parents support. Please keep an open mind on this matter.

All staff have a consciousness about bullying and work to ensure that there is adequate supervision at all times throughout the school day. In addition, play spaces are arranged so that younger children have separate spaces. There is an anti-bullying policy of following up all incidents promptly whenever they are noticed or reported and normally, the teacher will be able to resolve the matter on the spot. For the older classes there is a periodical discussion period during which pupils or teachers can bring any concerns.

Persistent and repeated occurrences may involve the teacher following the formal School Discipline Policy.

Parents with concerns, or who become aware of incidents of bullying, are asked in the first instance to inform the child's Class Teacher immediately.

e. Headlice ('nits')

Headlice are mentioned here separately because they are a perennial problem in all schools. Please check your child's scalp and hair roots once a week after shampooing and conditioning (Lice may be hard to detect, especially in blond and fair hair). Vigorously brushing the hair daily is recommended as is thoroughly combing with a very fine-toothed comb at least once a week.

Teachers have an awareness of head lice and they will advise parents that head lice have been found.

Treatment should begin immediately and continue until the hair is free of the lice. The office or your class parent may be able to offer suggestions as to the latest methods (alternative and conventional).

f. Ticks

Ticks are small, blood-sucking arthropods related to spiders, mites and scorpions. There are many different species of tick living in Britain, each preferring to feed on the blood of different animal hosts. If given the opportunity, some of them will feed on human blood too.

Ticks can carry and pass on some diseases such as Lyme disease.

Unfortunately ticks are found in the New Forest area and, to be safe, one should assume that any bite is potentially infectious. If a member of staff discovers that a child has unfortunately picked up a tick on their skin, they will inform the child's parents to seek medical advice in order to remove the tick.

g. Smoking, drugs and alcohol

Smoking is not permitted by staff or visitors on the school premises during school hours except in areas designated by the College of Teachers and identified as such. Smoking or the possession of tobacco products by pupils on the school premises is not permitted at any time and any breach will be considered as a discipline matter.

This policy extends to parent supervisors and staff on class trips where smoking and alcohol is not permitted while in the company of pupils.

Drugs are not allowed unless prescribed. Alcohol on the school site is forbidden which means that it cannot be brought in, stored, or used on the school site, except when a specific exemption has been approved by the College of Teachers. This will only be given for special events and then subject to conditions.

h. School doctor

In situations where curative or therapeutic lessons may be recommended, parents will be consulted by either their Class Teacher or the school SENCO and asked to contribute to any associated costs, depending on the nature of the recommendation. (e.g. where the recommendation is beyond the scope of the services available to the school).

i. First Aid

Most staff members have undertaken first aid courses and the school has an appointed First Aid Officer.

First Aid supplies are available in every classroom and kits are taken on all trips. No internal remedies will be administered as these are regarded as medication.

The school is not able to administer general medication, including analgesics, and if children fall ill during the day, the parent will be contacted and the child kept comfortable until they can be collected.

j. Medication

The school is unable to administer any form of medication, which includes any internal remedies, without specific parental consent, i.e. anything taken orally.

Parents who have children with chronic medical conditions requiring prescription medicines are advised to complete a 'Parental Consent for the Administering of Medication' form and the school will give consideration to accepting responsibility for supervising the administering of the medication.

Parents who have children with acute medical conditions requiring prescription medicines are also advised to complete a 'Parental Consent for the Administering of Medication' form and the school will give consideration to accepting responsibility to administering the medication.

k. Illness

When children are ill, whether with an infectious disease or otherwise, please keep them at home until the condition has passed and notify the school office.

Children should not return to school if they are unwell and should have a period of at least 36 hours before returning if they have had a high temperature, diarrhoea or been vomiting.

You are asked to notify the school of particular childhood illnesses such as Mumps, Measles (German and English), Chicken Pox etc. The office will notify the teachers and put an announcement in the newsletter.

When the child returns to school a note should be given to the office (main school children) or the Kindergarten teacher.

The school reserves the right to exclude pupils with notifiable infectious diseases in consultation with the Health Services (TB, Meningitis etc.).

Please note that some infectious diseases are notifiable and where this is so the advice of the health authorities will be followed.

Parents must also phone the school office each day in case of absence - please also refer to section 1 d 3.

I. Particular Health Risks

If a child has a chronic health condition such as asthma or other forms of allergy, diabetes, epilepsy, etc., parents should notify the school on admission of the child.

The condition should be discussed with the Class Teacher and if deemed appropriate an emergency supply of any medication kept at school. (There are guidelines for this.) All teachers will be made aware of the child's condition and measures required.

The school will not administer any medication under this heading except in emergencies and when no other option is available. Prior written consent is required in all instances and parents should ensure they have done this and informed the school of any changes. The school will endeavour to contact parent(s) before any emergency medication is administered.

Where training is required (for example to avoid injury during epileptic seizures) the school should be notified so that the necessary training can be obtained.

m. Physical access.

The school is committed to ensuring access to facilities for staff and pupils in accordance with its Disability Policy and Access Plan (copy available on request). Please contact the Administrator if you have any questions or concerns about this.

n. Waste Management and Environmental Care

Children are taught to care for the environment as part of their lessons. All food leftovers should go into bins with paper waste being kept separate to this. Plastic waste should be taken home where practicable. Uneaten food should also be taken home if possible.

SECTION SEVEN.

COMMUNICATION.

WHERE DO I GET INFORMATION?

Ringwood Waldorf School is committed to ensuring that the learning needs of each child are met and that their educational potential is fulfilled and supported. To be successful in this task requires the active and ongoing support of the family working with the school in positive and constructive ways. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised. Accordingly the school places considerable emphasis on achieving a positive working relationship with each family and asks in return that parents respond to this by ensuring that the appropriate communication channels are used and school policies and procedures are followed.

a. **The School Community**

Working as a community enables the strengths and resources of each to be utilised and available for the benefit of everyone.

The Social Ethic verse which is said before many meetings reads:

**“The healthy social life is found
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection, and
When in the community
The virtue of each one is living”**

There are many groups and individuals within the school community who support and nourish the school and everyone associated with it. You will often find information in the newsletter offering opportunities to get involved and to contribute to community initiatives.

b. **The Newsletter**

This is published weekly during term time and sent out by e-mail on Wednesday. The newsletter contains information on day-to-day events and important notices. Please ensure you receive a copy. There will be some printed copies available in the hall foyer or from the office.

Written copy is accepted for inclusion up to 12.00 noon on the Monday prior to publication. If of a private nature we ask for a contribution of £1. Any advertisement must include the full name and telephone number of the advertiser. This service is for parents at the school only. The right to edit or refuse copy is reserved and publication does not imply endorsement by the school.

The newsletter may be subscribed to by email by sending an email to the school and inserting the word ‘subscribe’ in the subject line.

c. **The Parents’ Handbook**

You are now reading this publication. It is reviewed and updated periodically and is available by request from the School Office. It contains much useful information and is a source book that answers many common questions.

d. **Home visits**

The teachers in the lower classes aim to visit each family at least once during their time in the lower school. In addition Kindergarten Teachers also arrange for

home visits from time to time. Home Visits are informal and are aimed at supporting the relationship between the family and the school which is so important to the child's education. There is no set agenda and any concerns or questions that a parent may have can be raised but not in the presence of children please.

Often a family will choose to invite their Class or Kindergarten Teacher for a meal and then have a discussion after the child has gone to bed. Please discuss preferences with your child's teacher.

e. School Magazine

The school aims to publish a regular school magazine each year. This is distributed free to every family. Additional copies are normally available at a nominal charge in the office if you would like extra copies for extended family members.

The magazine covers the festivals, special events that have occurred, as well as in depth articles on aspects of the education that will help in your understanding of Waldorf pedagogy.

Advertising space is available. Please contact the office.

f. Adult Education Courses and Study Groups

The school, in recognising the importance of supporting and deepening parents' understanding of the pedagogy and principles of child development, uses its best endeavours to arrange suitable courses, seminars and talks on topical matters of interest to parents.

In addition, study groups may be formed on an ad hoc basis when sufficient interest is shown in a particular subject.

Notice of such events will be given in the school newsletter and parents are encouraged to avail themselves of such opportunities because they empower parents to work with their children in ways that enhance the educational experience of the children.

g. Craft Groups

Many parents find their way into the fabric of the school through participating in craft groups. No experience is normally required, however parents with skills are certainly welcome as well. Groups normally focus on 'Steiner type' crafts such as making soft dolls, some of which may then be donated to the annual Christmas Bazaar.

The groups tend to be informal and quite social and can meet at any mutually convenient time. There may be a nominal charge to cover the cost of materials. For convenience some groups meet at school and the Keir Hall foyer may be used for this purpose. Groups should check on its availability.

h. Parents' Library

The school has a library for parents, which is currently situated in the general office. This library holds a range of books on the philosophy and curriculum of Waldorf/Steiner schools and related subjects such as health and illness, diet and cooking, playing and games, festivals, musical instruments and so on. All parents in the school are welcome to use this library. Full instructions for taking out books can be found on the library shelves and the issuing of books is a self-help system.

Please ensure that borrowed books are returned so they continue to be available to other parents. The library is looked after by the Community Group. A recommended reading list is appended to this handbook. Books can also be purchased at the Lantern Centre and in addition books are often available for purchase at many school events.

i. One Day Conference

The school sometimes hosts an annual One Day Conference or a series of Parent Workshops in which certain aspects of the education are explored in more detail for the benefit of interested adults. This is usually related to the study theme of the year. Please watch your newsletter for details. Places are limited and early registration is advised.

j. Notice Boards

There are several notice boards. One is the blackboard in the car-park outside the office and this is used to remind parents of imminent events. There is also a school notice board that contains school or Waldorf Education related information as well as another general notice board in the office that offers information on other courses, events and matters of possible interest to parents. A parents notice board is available in the office to advertise business and parent events.

There are also class notice boards in the foyers outside classrooms that contain information and rotas for that class. Please check these regularly.

There is general information available in the lobby of the office including brochures and leaflets. Please feel free to help yourself to these, unless they have Office Copy written on them.

Notices may not be placed around the school without permission from the Administrator and this will not be given for events not related to the school. Where possible please use 'blu-tack'. No sellotape on the windows please. Anyone placing a notice is responsible for its removal after the event, including removing any pins or marks.

k. Parent Evenings

Regular contact between parents and their child's teacher is vital to Waldorf Education. Parent evenings are held at least once a term for the parents of each class and, because of their importance, all parents are expected to attend these meetings as part of their commitment to the education.

The school considers your attendance at these meetings to be of the utmost importance to the educational process and for this reason attendance is a condition of admission.

Please ensure that you plan well in advance for these meetings so that you can attend. The known dates are published in the calendar (in the office), in class letters and in the school newsletter. If you are for any reason unable to attend your child's Class Parent Evening, please let the Class Teacher know not to expect you.

Parents will be able, at these meetings, to hear what their children have been learning and how this links to the developmental stage of their child. They will also be able to look at their children's work. Questions and issues relevant to the whole class can also be on the agenda.

Individual meetings may also be arranged to discuss your child and these can be initiated either by the parent or the teacher.

I. School Reports

Children from Class One upwards receive a written report at the end of each academic year. This report endeavours to give both parent and child a full picture of the child's academic and social development.

Teachers keep running records of pupils' progress and both formative and summative assessments are carried out periodically to ensure that pupils are making appropriate progress for their cohort. Some tests may be introduced from Class 5 or 6 during Main Lessons as a good and appropriate challenge for the children

Teachers at Ringwood Waldorf School are also uniquely aware of the needs of individual pupils because they stay with the pupils as they progress through the classes.

m. College Surgeries

There are times when you may have a concern or a question about the education or about how the school is run when you feel that you would like to speak to a teacher or college member to have your questions answered in more detail. This may not be a concern, it might just be a wish to learn a bit more to help you understand why we do things in certain ways. In such instances please ask for a college surgery. Ask the office staff or complete a college surgery request form also available in the school office in the information rack. It is useful to indicate what the question is so that we can consider who would be the best person to speak to you. A member of college will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time. In most cases there will be two members of college present at a meeting.

If you have a more specific concern, please use the concern form, also to be found in the front office. Complaints should follow the complaints procedure.

SECTION EIGHT: QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS: WHO DO I TALK TO AND WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Complaints Policy

This policy includes complaints relating to Early Years provision

Initial steps for raising a concern

We welcome and value feedback in order to learn and improve. This procedure is available to parents, prospective parents, members of staff, students aged 16 or over, or other people affected by the life of the School.

Informal stage

If you have a concern about any aspect of the School, you are warmly encouraged to speak to the person directly responsible for the subject of your concern. We have found that direct communication is often the most constructive way of resolving issues. This would normally be, for example:

for concerns about teaching or other educational aspects, your child's class teacher or guardian

for concerns about general administrative or financial aspects, the admin team

It is recognised however that there are circumstances in which a direct approach may not be possible or appropriate. In this case please contact the School's Designated Person for complaints (DP), who will facilitate a meeting with the member of staff involved. The Designated Person for complaints is the Administrator. Should the concern relate to the DP, then please contact the School's Chair of College. The DP carries responsibility on behalf of the school to ensure that correct procedure is followed throughout the process of any complaint.

Informal stage 2 (for concerns about teaching)

If you have a teaching-related concern and you have tried to resolve this by talking to the teacher concerned but you feel the response you received was inadequate, we encourage you to talk to the DP. The teacher, the school office or the Chair of College will then be happy to provide you with the DP's contact details.

Mediation

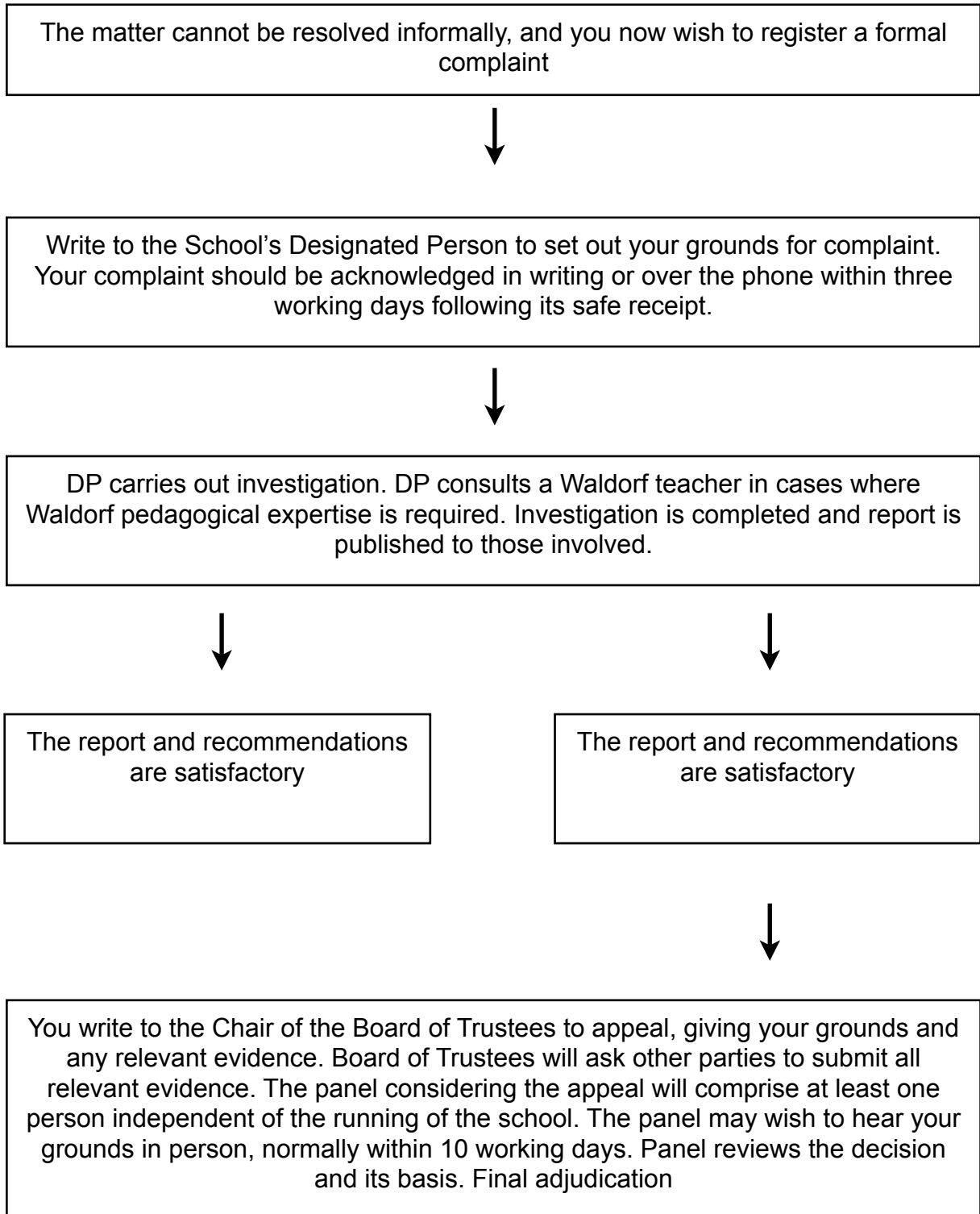
If the concern is complex, or cannot be resolved in this way, we may consider offering a mediated meeting.

Should your concern or complaint not be resolved via the informal route above, you may wish to raise a formal complaint. A formal complaint may be raised at any stage of the complaints procedure.

Ringwood Waldorf School | Company No. 08645246 | Charity No. 1158673 Member of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship

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Folly Farm Lane, Ashley, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 2NN Telephone 01425 472664 www.ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk mail@ringwoodwaldorfschool.org.uk



Complaints

It is our aim to deal with any issues informally. However, if the matter cannot be resolved informally, you should raise it as a formal complaint by putting it in writing. You should also raise a formal complaint immediately if the issue is one of grave seriousness.

The School will do its utmost to manage your complaint within the timescales laid out, however in the interests of accuracy and natural justice, the procedure may take longer. If this happens the DP will contact you to notify you of the extended timescale.

Complaints will be recorded for the purposes of inspection as required. With this exception, records of complaints will be kept confidentially.

Dignity of staff

Our staff have the right to work in an environment free from harassment, intimidation and victimisation. Whilst parents may feel angry or impassioned about the issues within their complaint, they are asked to raise issues constructively and work with the school to resolve issues where possible.

It is important to note that if you are deeply unhappy about any aspect of school life it may not always be possible to talk to a teacher face to face at short notice. In particular, serious concerns should not be raised with minutes to go before a teacher is about to begin a lesson, as this does not allow for proper consideration of the issues and it is likely to disrupt quality of teaching for the class. School staff may therefore suggest that an appointment is made to discuss issues at an alternative time.

Procedure

Please put your complaint in writing, addressed to the Designated Person. If you need any help setting out your complaint, the DP will assist you.

You should receive acknowledgement of a formal complaint within three working days. During holiday periods we may need to take longer to deal with complaints.

The DP will ensure that a full investigation is carried out into the circumstances of your complaint, and once satisfied that all relevant facts have been established, you will be informed in writing of the outcome. This process will normally take no more than ten working days (i.e. longer in holiday time).

Appeal hearing

If you do not agree with the report or recommendations of the DP, you can appeal by writing directly to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, via the school, clearly setting out your

grounds and enclosing relevant evidence. The Board of Trustees will then appoint the panel. Normally this panel will consist of three people, at least one of whom is independent of the running of the school. Once appointed, a member of the appeal panel will contact you without undue delay to confirm receipt of your complaint.

A date and time for an appeal hearing will be scheduled, normally within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal. Members of the panel will review the complaint confidentially, with objectivity, and without fear or favour. The panel will hear your concerns and may interview the staff members against whom the complaint has been made. The role of the panel is to consider: a) whether the School acted appropriately and reasonably, given the evidence available, b) whether the School acted in line

with its procedures, c) whether there is a need to change any of its procedures in the light of this complaint.

You have the right to be accompanied at an appeal panel by one other person, who may be a relative, friend or supportive acquaintance. Legal representation will not normally be agreed.

If you wish to supply any further information you should do so before the end of the appeal hearing. Any new information supplied at the time of the panel hearing may result in a delay of a final decision or the need to reconvene the meeting at a later date.

Following the hearing, the appeal panel will inform you and the subject of the complaint of the decision in writing, normally within ten working days.

The decision of the panel will be final. The School offers no further appeal to the decision of an appeal Panel.

Complaints records

The School keeps records of complaints including all relevant documentation. The complaints records will be kept confidential and secure. The School will release the number of complaints dealt with each year, as requested by regulation. This record will be made available to school inspectors when they conduct inspections in accordance with the law.

Non parental / student complaints

At the discretion of the Board of Trustees, this procedure will also be used in an adapted form, as appropriate, for concerns or complaints from neighbours or members of the general public affected by some aspect of the operation of the School.

Other agencies

OfSTED publishes a booklet online at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/> Footer/ How-to- complain which explains the process if you decide to take your complaint to the regulator.

For independent Schools, boarding-related complaints may be sent in writing to: Independent and Boarding Team, Department for Education, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington, DL3 8BG.

Parents may contact the Schools Inspection Service at any point if they wish:

4. The School Inspection Service
Pembroke House 15 Pembroke
Rd Clifton
Bristol
BS8
3BA enquiries@schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk
Designated Person: The Administrator
Chair of College: Elaine Holt
Chair of Board of Trustees: Veronica Smith
Reviewed and updated November 2015, EH

A FINAL WORD

Education can be likened to a journey full of wonder and adventure. This is so for both parents and children in that each is developing and learning. It is really a short journey as childhood is over in such a short time and yet is important to the whole life of the individual.

Waldorf Education seeks to work in partnership with the family to maximise the child's education and it therefore hoped that this handbook can make a contribution to that process.

Waldorf Education seeks to open, reveal and release within each child what it is to be human in order that each may become truly autonomous, self directed and purposeful human beings able to act in unique ways so as to contribute their gifts to the world. This is the meaning of 'Education Towards Freedom' which is the overall purpose of Waldorf Education. This is a priceless gift that will continue to reveal itself as each undertakes their individual journey through life. Journey well.

We would like to share with you the verse we say together as a faculty before each Teachers Meeting. Italics added.

"May there reign here, spirit strength in love
May there work here, spirit light in goodness
Born from certainty of heart
And from steadfastness of soul

So that we may bring to the young human beings
Bodily strength for work (*willing*)
Inwardness of soul (*feeling*)
and clarity of spirit. (*thinking*)

May this place be consecrated to such a task
May young hearts and minds find here
Servers of the light endowed with strength
Who will guard and cherish them."

Rudolf Steiner 1861 - 1925