

Information for families approaching the school

(revised March 2018)

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO THE SCHOOL?

Admission procedure for Kindergarten: see below for Classes 1-11

Admission stage 1

A) Complete and return the following documents (copies available from the office or website):

- *Application Form* (used later by teachers in the interview). If your child is already at another school (or nursery, play group, etc) we will also need a *report or a letter from their teacher and any supporting documents relevant to your child's educational needs*.
- *Financial Agreement Form* (this confirms that you have understood and agreed to support the school financially. It must be completed before an interview can take place).
- *OR Financial Assessment Form* (if you need to apply for financial assistance to come to the school). The request must be agreed with the Finance Office in writing **before** an interview can take place. Please refer to the school 'Contributions Policy' for more information about financial assistance.

Applications should be accompanied by your £50.00 administration fee per family, payable by cash, bank transfer or cheque to South Devon Steiner School. Please ensure you put your child's name on the reverse of your cheque.

B) Arrange to attend an Early Childhood Introduction talk at a Prospective Parents Afternoon. This is mandatory for families applying for a place in Kindergarten, or for Class 1 in September. This must have been attended before the interview can take place. Booking is necessary.

Early Childhood Introduction:

This forms part of the *Prospective Parents Afternoons* that are held twice termly on a Friday. The talk, discussion and Q&A sessions of the afternoon are not open to children of any age. Families needing to bring children should therefore bring a person who will accompany their child outside the talk, discussion and Q&A sessions.

Admission stage 2

A) Once your Application Form has been received it will be dated and held confidentially. An interview will be arranged subject to the availability of places. You are welcome to contact the Admissions Office to track the progress of your application.

B) After the interview the school will contact you and write to you to say whether or not a place can be offered. For information on replying to an offer of a place, please see below: *What to do when you are offered a place*

Checklist for Kindergarten interview. Have you...

- Completed the Financial Agreement (or cleared a Financial Assessment Form)?
- Returned the Application Form?
- Forwarded a report or teacher's letter from your child's current school (where applicable)?
- Included supporting documents relevant to your child's educational needs (where applicable)?
- Attended the Early Childhood introduction at a Prospective Parents Afternoon?
- Paid your Administration Fee?

Admission procedure for Classes 1 to 11:

Admission stage 1

A) Complete and return the following paperwork (forms available from the office or website):

- *Application Form* (used later by teachers in the interview).
- *A recent School Report* from the pupil's current school and any other paperwork relevant to the pupil's educational needs.
- *Financial Agreement Form* (this confirms that you have understood and agreed to support the school financially. It must be completed before a trial visit and interview can take place).
- *OR Financial Assessment Form* (if you need to apply for financial assistance to come to the school). The request must be agreed with the Finance Office in writing **before** an interview can take place. Please refer to the school 'Contributions Policy' for more information about financial assistance.

Applications should be accompanied by your £50.00 administration fee, payable by cash or cheque to South Devon Steiner School. Please ensure you put your child's name on the reverse of your cheque.

Admission stage 2

Following this, a trial period may be offered, during which your child attends the appropriate class for five days. **Trial periods are chargeable at a rate of £150.00 per week**, to be paid in full before the date of commencement. Extensions to the trial period beyond one week will be chargeable, only if the parent requests the extension, not the teacher. This amount is deductible from the first term's school fees for successful applicants (where the school offers a place to the student), but is non-refundable in the case of an unsuccessful application (where the school is not able to offer a place to the applicant student). It is important to note that trial period fees are not refundable if the applicant student is offered a place and the family decide not to take it up, for any reason. A formal interview will be arranged during the trial period. After that, the school will contact you to confirm whether or not a place can be offered.

The Trial Period Fee of £150.00 per applicant student must be paid before commencement of the trial period.

Checklist for Classes 1 -11 interview. Have you...

- Completed the Financial Agreement (or cleared a Financial Assessment Form)?
- Returned the Interview Form?
- Forwarded a report or teacher's letter from your child's current school (where applicable)?
- Included supporting documents relevant to your child's educational needs (where applicable)?
- Attended a Prospective Parents Afternoon?
- Paid your Administration Fee?
- Paid your Trial Period Fee?

What to do when you are offered a place for either Kindergarten or Classes 1-10

If you are offered a place you must react fairly quickly. If you wish to accept the offer, please pay your deposit within two weeks, or before your child is due to start school, whichever is sooner. The deposit is £600 for a first child and £300 for a second or subsequent child. If no deposit is received, the offer of a place may be withdrawn.

The offer of a place will be held for six weeks from the date of offer, provided the deposit has been paid. (This period may be extended by agreement to the next termly or half-termly break.)

If you are unable to take up the place within this period you can either:

- a) withdraw the application, or
- b) start making the agreed financial contribution as if your child were in the school to hold the place.

This rule is designed to allow families relocating to our area the opportunity to secure a place when their date of moving is uncertain. The main thing is to stay in touch with the admissions office throughout.

WHAT ABOUT FULL CLASSES?

The school is flexible about class sizes, but tries to maintain an average in Classes 1 to 8 of about twenty-four children. It is usual for one or two vacancies to arise in each class during the year. The classrooms vary in size, so as a class progresses through the school the physical constraint on class size also varies. The Kindergarten takes a maximum of eighteen children per class, with varying numbers across the year-group according to age.

Sometimes a class is full to capacity. In this case you may still be considered for an interview (or classroom visit for 1-11), but would have to wait for a vacancy before being offered a place.

Sometimes a child will be accepted into a technically full class (24) if the class teacher feels that they will fit in well with the balance and dynamic of the class. It is important to remember that usually the class and teacher have been together since the age of six and the group has formed a distinctive character. The teacher will need to be sure that any additions to the class will enhance this, and that needs can be met in the context of the class.

For these reasons the school tries to avoid making definitive statements about full classes. Experience shows that families committed to the education offered by the school will normally find a place in due course. The Admissions Office can give information on availability and waiting-groups. Please note, like most schools, we do offer a priority to siblings of children already enrolled in the school. Please read the school's Admissions Policy for full details, which is published on the website.

WHAT IS THE PROVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS?

Each class is able to accept some children with specific learning difficulties. Extra help for these children is available from the Educational Support Department.

Children with special educational needs will be assessed with regard to (i) their own needs, (ii) the resources available via the Educational Support Department to meet those needs and (iii) the make-up and balance of needs already in the class they are approaching. This assessment will take place before a place in the class can be offered.

Children with a statement of special educational needs / EHCP (Education & Health Care Plan) can occasionally be accepted, depending on what is required to support the statement.

Children with SEND will go through the admissions process, stages 1 and 2 as outlined above.

For further details please read the school's Admissions Policy, available on the website.

WHAT HOURS WILL MY CHILD ATTEND SCHOOL?

Children can start in Kindergarten when age three, depending on readiness as ascertained by the teachers.

Children stay in Kindergarten up to age six (rising 7). Kindergarten is offered for between three and five mornings a week depending on which year-group they belong to and the readiness of the child.

Children normally progress to class I for the school year in which they will be seven. However, if your child's birthday falls between June and September they may already be seven when they go into class 1. The normal cusp between year-groups is 31 May/1 June, however decisions are considered in the light of the individual child.

The school day in classes one to eleven starts at 8.15. Morning sessions end at 12.25 and all day sessions end at 2.55pm, or 3.45pm for classes 9, 10 and 11 (and twice a week for 7 & 8). Attendance is as shown in the table on the next page, and exact times can vary from year to year so please check.

Age (rising)	Class	Attendance(full day = 8.20am-2.55pm unless specified) (morning = 8.20am-12.30pm)
7	Class 1	5 mornings per week for first term then from second term: 1 full day (Tue) and 4 half days per week
8	Class 2	2 full days (Tue, Thu) and 3 half days per week
9	Class 3	3 full days (Mon, Tue, Thu) and 2 half days per week
10	Class 4	4 full days (Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri) and 1 half day per week
11	Class 5	5 full days
12	Class 6	5 full days
13	Class 7	5 full days, but on Tue & Wed ending later at 3.45 pm
14	Class 8	5 full days, but on Mon & Tue ending later at 3.45pm
15&16	Class 9&10	5 full days, all ending at 3.45 pm

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

The financial contribution you are asked to make is a contribution to the school as a whole. It is not intended to reflect the “cost” or hours of your child’s education. That is why the amount requested does not rise greatly as children progress through the school, even though the education in the older classes is considerably more expensive to provide. The table below gives the scale for 2018-19. More detail of age ranges is given in the Financial Agreement form.

Requested school fees per term	KINDERGARTEN				CLASSES	
	KG0	KG1	KG2	KG3	1 to 7	8 to 12
	Born 01/06/15 – 31/05/16	Born 01/06/14 – 31/05/15	Born 01/06/13– 31/05/14	Born 01/06/12 – 31/05/13		
1st Child	£1,500		£1,780		£1,990	£2,440
Siblings	£1,310		£1,530		£1,695	£2,060

Deposits

A deposit is payable when a child starts in the school. This will be returned when the child leaves provided all amounts outstanding have been paid. The deposit is £600 for a first child and £300 for second and subsequent children.

Financial Assistance

As long as the school is able to be financially strong and stable, it will adhere to its ideal to be socially inclusive and welcome applications from families having a wide range of financial circumstances. As such, the school offers families with a low income, the opportunity to apply for a Community Assisted Place; a place offered at a reduced fee level, made possible by the full fee paying community.

If you wish to apply for a Community Assisted Place, a Financial Assessment Form must first be completed. Requests to pay reduced contributions or to defer payments can only be considered when a Financial Assessment Form has been completed. Please bear in mind that these arrangements are only intended for families whose circumstances leave no possibility of paying the requested contribution. Families are asked to explore all financial support possibilities before approaching the school for assistance.

Additional costs

These include outings and class trips, special items to be bought (e.g. recorders, calculators and certain text books) and Class 10 exams. There will be advanced warning and discussion of these.

WHAT CONTRIBUTIONS OTHER THAN MONEY ARE REQUESTED?

The school also requests a non-financial contribution in the form of practical help from families. The following is our current statement about this.

Our school was founded by parents and we rely upon the active involvement of parents to keep it going. There are several ways in which parents contribute in a voluntary way. We call this the “non-financial contribution” which, together with the money people pay, allows the school to continue. As a way of sustaining and nourishing the school community it has many advantages:

- It provides a route for parents to get involved in the community, and to meet other parents as they work together
- It gives parents a sense of “ownership” of the school, while saving money on outside contractors
- Children see their parents as part of the school
- Tasks are done with love and care, which contributes to the school's special atmosphere
- Although there are meetings, much of the contribution is physical, healthy work.

Ways in which parents contribute include:

- Cleaning their child's Classroom - on a rota basis
- School Workdays - repairing the fabric of the buildings, improving the grounds - great fun, with a free lunch thrown in
- Major fundraising and cultural events, such as the Advent and Summer fairs, for which you would be asked to help on a stall and make produce
- Joining the PTA to help support the school. This group works on a variety of areas to support the school including cultural events, fundraising, building development, community support, etc.
- Assisting the education by helping out in specific areas such as reading, handwork, languages, cooking, music, special needs, class trips and plays.

Although a voluntary contribution is - by definition - voluntary, in the interest of fairness the school has tried to set a guideline of expectation and it is important that parents approaching the school are aware of this. There are three elements to this, as follows:

One workday (or two halves) per term - about 5 hours in total

Helping with the big events (fundraising) - about 5 hours a term

Classroom cleaning - usually once per term, on a rota basis.

In practice, and with the exception of the classroom cleaning rota, which is dependent upon the participation of everybody, parents are not restricted by the guidelines but are encouraged to choose the way of contributing that suits them best. Every family is different in terms of what they can offer, and the school values every contribution, whether it be cake-making, business consultancy, gardening or even an additional financial contribution.

Families joining the school are asked to make conscious decisions about how they wish to contribute, and communicate this to the school. A Parent Volunteer pack is available for download from the website for further information about volunteering at our school.