WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL

South Devon Steiner School
Your purposeful journey into life.

Parents’ Guide
Welcome

One of the Class 11 Main Lessons is the exploration of Parzifal, the medieval poem written by Wolfram von Eschenbach. Students follow Parzifal’s journey of self-discovery, which comes about through his quest to be united with the Holy Grail. It’s a great story, full of knights, action and romance. It’s also a profound learning journey for all who engage with it. Central to the story is a quest, or perhaps better said, a question.

And this brings me to parenthood. All parents share a common quest, or question, of how to best support the healthy development of each of their children. Like Parzival, each of us (I too am a parent) will have to go on our journey of discovery, face challenges, find inner resources and hopefully support the emergence of healthy adults that are well equipped and keen to step into the world and make a positive difference.

Parzival could not have accomplished his journey alone. He needed the help, guidance and support of key people. In the same way, we should not expect parents to accomplish this journey alone. The Steiner/Waldorf curriculum and approach to education is uniquely able to help, guide and support each child on his or her journey to healthy adulthood.

The journey begins in the Kindergarten, where healthy work habits and routines are learned. It continues into the Lower School, from classes 1 – 8, with a class teacher, where the child consolidates work habits and learns how to be with others in a healthy way. It concludes in the Upper School, classes 9 – 12, where the emerging adult is supported in developing his or her interests, abilities and intellect, and is helped with his or her next step into the world. Upper School students will also complete the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education, an internationally accredited Level 3 qualification that allows entry into Universities, apprenticeships or work.

Parzival’s story ends well. Our commitment to each of our parents and students is that we will do our very best to support them on this most profound learning journey.

Jeff van Zyl
School Education Manager
How We Communicate

South Devon Steiner School recognises the importance of effective communication between pupils’ homes and the school. Ensuring positive lines of communication between home and school, is an essential element of the work of all schools. Effective communication enables pupils to receive continuity of education, care, support and management within home and school settings.

As such, the school has a Parent Information Policy which sets out all ways in which the school communicates with parents and carers. This policy can be viewed on the School Policies page of our website.

Ethos and Aims

According to the early 20th century Austrian educationalist Dr. Rudolf Steiner, the goal of Waldorf education is "to produce individuals who are able, in and of themselves, to impart meaning to their lives”.

We strive to be an example of Steiner Waldorf education that integrates regulatory compliance and best-practice Waldorf education, illustrating the benefits of this form of education for the development of able young people in service to humankind in small and big ways, according to their personal ability and vision.

Our mission is to make possible the experience of life as a purposeful journey on which everyone may discover their gifts and talents and their capacity to bring relevant and worthwhile contributions to the world. We do this on the basis of Rudolf Steiner’s humanitarian Waldorf curriculum.

For more information on our Ethos & Aims, and all other aspects of our school visit southdevonsteinerschool.org. All links contained in this document are live links to other websites, policies and documents online.

Parent Liaison

For Parent Liaison please contact Jeff van Zyl, initially by email to jeff.van.zyl@steiner-south-devon.org. Jeff is our School Education Manager.

Concerns and Complaints

If you feel your concern cannot be addressed in any other way, please contact our Concerns and Complaints Designated Person via our website or by emailing ccdp@steiner-south-devon.org. We have an established Concerns and Complaints policy to help all members of the school community to effectively address any concerns and complaints they might have.
School Site Access
During the school day, the school site is open for drop off and pick up between: 8am-9am, 12pm—1pm and 2.45pm-4pm. At all other times, the school site is closed and all visitors including parents, must enter the school via the Velwell Gate entrance to Reception. All visitors must sign in and out, and wear the appropriate visitors badge.
Parents are expected to support our Site Security Policy and Playground Rules for Front of School Policy which can be found on the School Policies page of our website.

School Times
Please ensure you check the drop off and pick up times for your child as these vary for each year group. You can find details in the Parents section of our website.

Procedures for Drop Off and Pick Up Times
Arrangements vary depending on the age of your child, for example parents of kindergarten children must accompany their child to the Kindergarten and personally hand over responsibility to the teacher, whereas it is perfectly acceptable for pupils in classes 6-12 to make their own way into the classroom each day, as long as teachers and parents are aware of the arrangements in place.
Please ensure you read the policies relevant to your child/children.

- Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- Drop-Off and Pick-up Policy for Classes 1-5
- Late Collection of Children Policy
- Missing Pupil Policy

Please ensure your child arrives and is collected on time each day.

Safeguarding
Safeguarding is our highest priority. No child should suffer harm of any form, either at home or at school.
Everyone who works or visits our school has the responsibility to make sure that all our children are safe.
If you are worried about the safety of any young person in our school, you must report this to one of the Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs) in school who will act in the best interests of the child. The office will assist you with finding and liaising with one of the DSPs immediately.

Our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on the School Policies page of our website, along with our other Safeguarding policies including but not limited to:
- Anti-Radicalisation Prevent and Staff Guidance Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Parental Contact Policy
- Pupils Leaving Before End of School Day Policy
- Site Security Policy

Whisper Button
If you do not feel able to talk to someone about a concern you have, you can use our confidential reporting facility on our website: the Whisper Button.

Parents and pupils can use the Whisper Button to report issues they are facing or concerns they have, and the reporter can choose to remain completely anonymous, or leave their email address for a reply.

Operation Encompass
Our school is affiliated with Operation Encompass; a unique Police and Education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people exposed to domestic abuse.
Operation Encompass is the reporting to schools before the start of the next school day, when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening.
The information is given in strict confidence to our Designated Safeguarding Lead to enable support to be given to the pupil, dependent on the needs and wishes of the child.

For more information on Safeguarding, please refer to the Safeguarding policies listed above, and also to the Safeguarding page on the school website, which provides up to date links and information on Safeguarding matters.
Travel to and from School

The school encourages families to walk, cycle, use public transport and car-share wherever possible. It is the parents’ responsibility to assess when their child is ready to walk or cycle to school unaccompanied, and to notify their child’s class teacher should they begin doing so. The school does not recommend that children travel to and from school alone before class 4, although younger children in Lower School may make their own way into the playground from the car park if it is necessary. Remember that children in classes 3 and below should be accompanied to the office if they are late.

Bicycles must be securely stored in the Bike Shelter in the staff (upper) carpark, and should not be left at school for prolonged periods. Cycling in the school grounds is only permitted outside of the formal school perimeter i.e. through the carparks to and from the cycle paths.

There is limited car parking at school and during pick up and drop off times, these can become congested and busy. For children’s safety, you must follow these rules:

- 5mph maximum speed limit throughout school grounds
- Be vigilant for children
- Securely park in a designated space before letting your child/ren alight.
- Reverse park only.
- Do not stop and let children alight in the middle of the carpark.

If you don’t need to accompany your child into school, you can use the Turning Circle Drop Point situated at the school entrance, as follows:

- Maximum 30 second stop—please do not park in the turning circle.
- Drop at furthest point available around the circle to keep car park entrance clear.
- Ensure children alight from the nearside of your vehicle to avoid accidents.

Lost Property

First, thoroughly check your child’s desk and cloakroom. The Lost Property locker is on the first floor of Hood Manor, opposite class 5. Named items generally make their way home, while unnamed clothes are liable to be sold on after a reasonable spell in lost property. If you need to check the Lost Property locker, please sign in at Reception.

Valuables

Pupils should not bring valuables or more money than they need to school, and any items brought into school remain the responsibility of the pupil. If your child needs to bring a valuable item into school, they may give it to the Receptionist or their teacher for safe-keeping.

Visit our website for more school policies and information
Appropriate School Wear

The school’s primary aim is to create a culture in which its pupils can most effectively learn.

The school places great importance on pupils’ personal choice and freedom of expression in relation to clothing, but this must never compromise the school’s primary aim. Similarly, school wear should not pose a health and safety risk to the child, other pupils or school staff.

The school has developed a clear School Wear Policy which gives guidance on its expectations in relation to school wear and appearance. It endeavours to help pupils make healthy choices about how they present themselves to the world.

School Equipment

It is so important that pupils come to school well prepared for the day ahead. When every pupil has the right equipment to hand, lessons can flow more easily. Please ensure that every item of school wear and equipment is clearly named, and that items kept in school for prolonged periods (such as wellies and slippers) still fit your child.

The School Wear Policy provides guidance on clothing/footwear.

Exercise books are provided by the school. Class 1 receives a set of crayons, and coloured pencils. Class teachers will inform parents about any items that are needed throughout the year, and much of this can be purchased from the school shop. Parents will also be asked to make sure their children have the items listed below:

Kindergarten: Please refer to the Hedgerow Kindergarten Handbook.

Class 1: Crayon case to fit 8 block and 8 stick Stockmar crayons, painting apron, pentatonic flute (can be purchased from Reception), beanbags.

Classes 2 & 3: As above plus pencil case, pencil sharpener, eraser and crayons/pencils as needed to top up. Lyra Ferby pencils and Stockmar crayons only please.

Class 4: As above, plus fountain pen and cartridges.

Class 5: As above, plus Geometry set including a pair of compasses.

Class 6: As above, plus school atlas, usually available to purchase through the class teacher.

Classes 7-8: As above. Notice will be provided of any special additional requirements.

Classes 9-12: Pupils are expected to provide their own writing paper for lessons. Upper School pupils will be provided with an equipment list prior to commencing Class 9.

Media at School

The school aims to encourage children’s imagination, live performance and personal creativity so that they may develop as confident individuals, able to take initiative and find their purpose in life.

The school has developed a number of policies and guidance documents in relation to media use. These can be viewed on the school policies page of our website and include:

- E-safety Guidance
- E-safety Advice for Kindergarten Parents
- ICT AUP (Acceptable Use Policy including BYOD)
- Mobile Camera, Phone and ICT Devices Policy
- Social Media and E-Safety Policy
- Cyber Bullying Policy
- Screen Based Media Guidance document

Our school states that mobile phone use is not permitted on school grounds. Both adults and children, should use them only in the carpark area. They are to be kept out of sight and switched off during the school day.

Teachers reserve the right to confiscate electronic devices if they are being used inappropriately.
Finance and Fees

Our school is committed to providing financial clarity and openness at all times. As long as the school is able to be financially strong and stable, it wishes to remain as financially inclusive a community as possible. It is our hope that members of the school community will work with the school to find alternative sources of income to boost the fee income. Extra donations are very welcome and can be gift-aided. Our school is funded almost entirely through the fees paid by parents. It is therefore essential that families keep on top of their agreed payment schedules, and communicate immediately with the finance manager, when something changes which might impact on school finances and your ability to pay your fees in the usual way. Please refer to our Finance and Fees Policy for more information.

Parental Contributions

In addition to fee payments, parents are asked to make practical contributions to the school to keep school fees as low as possible, to enable parents to play an active part in supporting their child/ren at school, and to provide opportunities for parents to socially integrate into the school community. Key areas in which parents are expected to contribute are:

- Classroom Cleaning
- Community Work Days
- Fundraising

Please take a look at the Parent Volunteer page on our website for more information on how to get involved!

Parent and Teacher Association

There is currently no PTA at SDSS.

Having recently disbanded the PTA, a group of parents are now researching the possibility of creating a Parent Council and this group is meeting regularly. If you are interested in attending a meeting or becoming involved, please look out for notifications in the Friday Flier newsletter.

Visit our website for more school policies and information

Curriculum

Our school follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. The Upper School works with the NZCSE - Certificate of Steiner Education Level 1 to Level 3. For full details of the curriculum we offer, please view our curriculum policies online which include:

- Curriculum and Assessment Policy
- Outdoor Curriculum Policy
- Cycling Curriculum Policy
- PSHEE Curriculum Policy
- Guidance on School Traditions and Festivals

Educational Visits

Most classes have an end-of-year educational trip, ranging from a couple of nights camping in Class 2 to a cycling tour of Brittany in Class 9. Such trips have a pedagogical value and every pupil is expected to participate. Class trips are subsidised by the school’s parent led fundraising activities, but parents are asked to contribute towards the cost of each trip and details of such costs will be discussed in a parent evening well in advance.

School Calendar

Our school has an online calendar which is regularly updated.

Term Dates

Our school publishes its term dates at the start of the academic year, for the following academic year. These can be viewed on the Term Dates page of the website.

Absence During Term Time

Parents should aim to book holidays and appointments outside of term time wherever possible.

The school will allow holidays during term time if they have special importance or significance to the child, or if for personal family reasons that can be described as compassionate to include weddings and funerals. Holidays taken which do not meet this criteria will be marked as ‘unauthorised’ in the school attendance register. This should not be a habitual occurrence, and parents must complete the Absence Request form, available on the Policies page on the school website or in paper format from Reception, 6 weeks in advance. For more information on absence during term time, please read our Attendance and Punctuality Policy.
Equality and Diversity
Our school is committed to ensuring that equality of opportunity is available to all members of the school community.
For our school this means not simply treating everybody the same but understanding and tackling the different barriers which could lead to unequal outcomes for different groups of pupils in school, whilst celebrating and valuing the achievements and strengths of all members of the school community.
We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community. Every member of the school community should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. Please refer to our Equality & Diversity policy for more information.

Special Educational Needs & Disability
Our school considers all children as having individual learning needs and styles and the school aims to meet these needs as best as possible taking into consideration the pupils' age, development and any other circumstances as well as the school's resources and ability to make adjustments.
Our school SEND policy ensures that the needs of all pupils enrolled in the school are met within allocated resources and exercising best endeavour and quality differentiation.

For more information, please read the following policies on our website:
- Special Educational Needs Policy (SEND)
- Able, Gifted and Talented Policy (AG&T)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Supporting Long Term Absence Policy

Leadership and Management
Our school has no Headteacher.

The school's leadership and management are listed below. For more details, please see the Key Members of Staff page on the school website.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
slt@steiner-south-devon.org

Our school is led by its leadership group, SLT, comprising:

Jeff van Zyl
School Education Manager
jeff.van.zyl@steiner-south-devon.org

Marcus Link
(Chair) School Business Manager
marcus.link@steiner-south-devon.org

Elizabeth Elsholtz
Chair of the College of Management
elizabeth.elsholtz@steiner-south-devon.org

Kaycee Fordham
Senior Leadership Assistant
kaycee.fordham@steiner-south-devon.org

College of Management (College)
college@steiner-south-devon.org

The title of the school's management group, the College of Management, arises out of our chosen integration of the present-day understanding of organisational accountability with the originally intended Steiner-Waldorf school ethos.

At present our College of Management has 14 members comprising 11 teachers and 3 administrators.

For more information, please see the Headteacher and Management page on our website.
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