

## ADMISSIONS AND ENROLMENT POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Admissions Policy has been formulated as a guide to the administrative processes of enrolment and admission to Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten. A clear process helps the teacher to receive the child into their class with knowledge and forethought so that the needs of the child can be met. Each child finds their way to the school through their own varied and interesting circumstances.
- 1.2 Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten sets class sizes and within these limits is open to:
- ❖ All children irrespective of religion, race or gender and
  - ❖ Children of varying abilities, based on the principle that every child is gifted in one or more ways, whether academic, practical, social, cultural or other

### 2. ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

- 2.1 After the initial parent enquiry, an information packet is forwarded to the prospective parent/guardian. This includes:
- ❖ A Parent Handbook; which includes information on the philosophy of the Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten and an overall picture of the school and curriculum and a summary of school rules and key educational policies;
  - ❖ Information on the Enrolment Application Fees and Bonds payable prior to enrolment;
  - ❖ Information on Current Fees for Early childhood and/or school programmes, including Music fees and estimates for camps and excursions from Class 3 upwards;
  - ❖ Enrolment Application Forms, Conditions of Admission.
- 2.2 If the parent/guardian wishes to continue with the process, administrative staff will organize a school tour and offer an informal meeting with the prospective class teacher or another staff member as delegated by the class teacher.
- 2.3 Discussion during the school tour will include:
- ❖ Explanation of the Entry Age Policy: Cut off date for Ring a Rosie and Kindergarten and Prep is December. (Refer to 2.3 below for details)
  - ❖ An explanation of the school entry process. (See point 8 below and the parent's summary sheet)
  - ❖ A brief overview of the history of the school,
  - ❖ The educational philosophy and the aims of Rudolf Steiner Education and those of this school.
  - ❖ Information about the school organisation and community and parent participation should also be given.

This overview should be given by either, Administration staff or teaching staff, according to the written information and policies of the school.

## 2.4 Entry Age Policy

Children are enrolled into a group according to the year of their birth.

Children will be enrolled in:

- ❖ Ring a Rosie, generally , when they turn 4 years old;
- ❖ Kindergarten the year they turn five years of age
- ❖ Prep program the year they turn six years old;
- ❖ To be eligible to enter into Class 1, a child must be going to turn seven by the end of the December of their Class 1 year.

Any variations to this must be discussed and approved by the College of Teachers after a thorough assessment of the situation. This assessment may be carried out by teachers to ascertain the child's readiness to enter Class 1. This would then be discussed with the parents.

2.5 If the parent/guardian proceeds with lodging an **Enrolment Application form** for their child/children the following things should occur:

1. The application data must be entered in full onto the computerized data base.
2. **PLEASE NOTE** : The **Application Date** is considered to be the *date that the application fee is received* to accompany the application form.

## 3. SCHOOL ENTRY PROCESS

School entry is considered to occur at Kindergarten level.

### 3.1 Commencing prior to Kindergarten

- 22 *Prep places* will be offered to pre-Kinder children. This will occur prior to the commencement of term 4 of the year proceeding the child's kindergarten year.
- Up to 8 places in Kindergarten can also be offered as clearly "Kinder Only" places, although parents are always invited to put these children on a Prep Waiting List.
- Prep places are offered to 2 categories of students:
  - i. Those entitled to an automatic place. (See 3.1.1 below)
  - ii. Those whose school place will be determined by an "**Enrolment Panel**" which will include
    - **Playgroup teacher**
    - **Kinder teacher**
    - **Prep teacher**
    - **One Class teacher**

**This panel has the ability but not the requirement, to invite a family to an interview in cases where an entry decision is not clear.**

#### 3.1.1 Automatic Entry Group

Criteria for inclusion to the Automatic Entry group:

- ❖ Children or grandchildren of current staff members  
(\* Note: Refer to point 3.1.3 i)
- ❖ Children of previous students.

- ❖ The siblings of a child who has been enrolled in our school for longer than 2 years.

### 3.1.2 Enrolment Interviews

Where required enrolment interviews for the students/families not in the Automatic Entry group may be conducted by the enrolment panel. The interviews will be conducted in term 3. The interview will follow a set of questions which reflect the following guidelines. It should be noted by the panel that the purpose of the interview is to try to ascertain an *overall picture of the child*, their family and the class group that they would be entering. Final decisions on places should reflect this consideration of the whole picture.

Criteria to consider:

- ❖ The degree of parental support for the child's education and behavior.
- ❖ The degree of support for and commitment to Steiner education.
- ❖ Siblings.
- ❖ Attendance at another Steiner school.
- ❖ Fee payment record of the family.
- ❖ The chronological position according to the Application date on the waiting list. Note: This point should only really be considered when all other factors are equal.
- ❖ If necessary an Early Childhood teacher may make a home visit prior to the interview.

### 3.1.3 Notes

- Because the enrolment of children and grandchildren of current staff is considered to be automatic Early Childhood and Class teachers should be aware of the possibility of having to accept an "over-enrolment" in their class to accommodate such an enrolment. In this case staff should be aware of the school's commitment to support any over-enrolled class through the offer to provide, if required, a class room assistant.
- The school procedures for accepting a child into an already established group will now apply to Kindergarten as well. (See points 3.2 below)

## 3.2 Entry into an established group

There are to be 22 places in Prep and 25 students per class in Classes 1 to 8, unless a variation is approved by the College of Teachers. There are up to 30 places in Kindergarten.

The following steps outline the process of entry into an established group.

### **3.2.1 The Child Attends the School for Observational Days**

For children entering the school to fill an existing vacancy, the child will be invited to attend the class for a minimum of two observational days. These days will allow the teacher to assess the child's suitability to join the group and will allow the family to assess how the child will fit into the class. Following this visit an interview time will be made for the Class Teacher and the parent/guardian.

### **3.2.2. Parent Interview With The Bursar**

On one of the observational days an interview with the BURSAR will be arranged to confirm the financial responsibilities of the family when commencing at Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten.

Information should be given on FEES and LEVIES, Conveyance Allowance, Education Maintenance Allowance, and any other relevant financial information. A copy of the school's current Fee Retrieval policy and information on the community commitment expectations (eg. participation in Fundraising and Working Bees) should be given to the parents at this meeting.

Advice on the tax deductible funds in the school (Building and Library funds) should also be given, encouraging contributions to these funds.

This information may be conveyed to groups of Early Childhood enrolments at orientation sessions. For example at Orientation Sessions for Ring a Rosie, Kindergarten or Prep families.

### **3.2.3 CLASS TEACHER INTERVIEW WITH PARENTS/ GUARDIANS**

- i. Teachers should refer to the "Teacher Notes for Enrolment Interviews" (See attached) as a procedure to follow for these interviews.
- ii. The class teacher is to arrange this interview after the child has attended for their observation days, at a mutually agreeable time. Both parents, where possible, (even if separated) will be asked to attend the interview.
- iii. The parents/guardians will be requested to bring anything that will help give clear and full picture of the prospective student's relative skill level, ie. Work books, drawings and paintings, reading lists, project material and school reports.
- iv. Class teachers will share a picture of the class with parents and answer questions pertaining to the curriculum and school life. The parents will be invited to share their previous experience of their child's education and their hopes and expectations for their future education.
- v. Parents, guardians will also be invited to share information about their child/ren's developmental and health history.

A picture of the prospective student will be gradually built up during the interview. Relevant information will be noted and the suitability of the school's programme for the child's growth and development and the parent's expectations will be discussed.

- vi. The class teacher will, where relevant, request permission from the parents/guardians to contact the child's previous school/s in an attempt to further enhance the picture of the prospective student.

**NOTE:** Where a child is re-entering the school after a withdrawal, a formal interview process must also occur with the Class Teacher and one other member of College of Teachers, to establish parameters for the child and parents to re-enter the class community.

### **3.2.4. ACCEPTANCE PROCESS**

After all the above steps have been completed the prospective student may be offered a place in the school.

Then:

- The class teacher is to inform the Enrolment Officer that the offer is to be made to the family and should request that an appropriate letter be sent to the family with all relevant school forms for completion. (Medial Release, Family Information form). The letter should specify the starting date for the child/ren.
- The child should begin in the class on an agreed commencement date and entered on the Class Roll and recorded as school enrolment on the data base.
- As the school works in cooperation with parents and in the best interests of the child/ren, parents and class teachers will meet at the next term's parent teacher interviews to discuss the progress of the child.
- Children re-entering the school after a period of withdrawal should also have their re-commencement acknowledged in writing by the administration office, on confirmation by the Class Teacher.

## **4. EXCLUSION OF A CHILD**

The College of Teachers reserves the right to decline to offer enrolment to a child based on DOCUMENTED educational grounds. Such exclusion should not infringe the rights of a child, or discriminate against a child for any reason. Communication with the parents on reasons for non-acceptance of an enrolment application must be in writing.

Should a family fail to pay fees and not communicate with the Bursar of the school regarding a fee agreements or fee assistance, for a period of two or more terms, the child's enrolment can be cancelled. Refer to the Fee Payment policy for details of exclusion on financial grounds.

## **5. WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT:**

### **5.1 Existing Class Groups (ie Kinder to Class 8)**

1. If the number of applicants for any **class** exceeds the number of places available the applicant is entered on a waiting list.  
There are to be 22 places in Prep and 25 students per class in Classes 1 to 8, unless a variation is approved by the College of Teachers. There are up to 30 places in Kindergarten.
2. The College of Teachers will take the following factors into consideration when offering a vacancy in an existing group from the waiting list:
  - The degree of parental support for the child's education and behavior.
  - The degree of support for and commitment to Steiner education.
  - Siblings.
  - Attendance at another Steiner school.
  - Fee paying record of the family.
  - The chronological position on the waiting list. Note: This point should only really be considered when all other factors are equal.
  - Other special circumstances.
3. All these factors need to be considered in assessing each individual applicant/family on the waiting list for a vacancy. The teacher is able to select a child from the waiting list who is most suitable for the class. Confirmation of contentious decisions should be referred to the College of Teachers.
4. If a place is offered then the steps outlined in point 3.2 above will be followed to fill it.
5. No applicant is to be told their position on the Waiting List, because it may change over time.
6. The selected child / family is notified of the offer of a place in the class in writing by the Enrolment Officer.

### **5.2 Early Childhood Places for Playgroup, Ring a Rosie**

There are usually 10 families per group in Playgroup, 15 children per group in Ring a Rosie. If the number of applicants for any group exceeds the number of places available the applicant is entered on a waiting list.

It is expected that if a vacancy exists in either Playgroup or Ring-a-Rosie the teacher will determine the suitability of an enrolment after an interview and where possible a home visit.

## **6. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

### **Refer to the Policy on Special Needs Children for details**

6.1 The school will work within the parameters of the Disability Discrimination Act, in dealing with applicants from children with Special needs.

6.2 If during the class teacher / parent interview it becomes apparent that the child will require additional educational support, further discussions will be held on the appropriate educational programme for the child, including what reasonable adjustments can be made by the school.

6.3 The parent must be informed, by the Class Teacher and Business Manager in the Interview, of the limited funding allocation available to children with special needs in the Independent School system. (Currently this is between \$1,000 - \$3,000 through AISV applications, due in September each year). Medical reports are required as part of this application process to AISV.

6.4 Parents must be given a realistic picture of the school's current resources available for any special needs programme which may be offered by the school to children with disabilities. It must remain the choice of the parent to proceed or not with the enrolment application based on this information.

6.5 Further assessments of the educational needs of the child may be made in order to determine what adjustments to school programmes or facilities are necessary.

## 7. NEW PARENT ORIENTATION

7.1 At the beginning of the school year Parent Welcoming and Orientation Sessions will be held for parents. This will consist of an informal morning tea on the first day of the school year for Class 1 parents and other new parents.

7.2 For parents joining the school later in the year, a mentoring/buddy system with another parent will be established to assist the parents' orientation into the school community. Class carers should be involved in this process.

7.3 **Parent Information Sessions** will be held early in the first term to give a feeling for the history of the school and an overview of the organisational life of the school. The school structure and decision making processes will be explained and an overview of key school policies, in particular the Communications policy. Representatives of various groups of the school are invited to share the activities carried out, such as Study Group, Craft Group etc...

7.4 The school expects that parents attend these Parent Information Sessions as a way to positively commence their involvement with the school and should communicate this clearly in invitations and promotions of the sessions.

*"We love our children; our teaching is inspired by knowledge of man and love of children. And, another love is being built around us, the love of parents for the true essence of the school. Only within such a community can we work towards a future of mankind able to prosper and withstand."* **Rudolf Steiner**

Date endorsed by College of Teachers: **AUGUST 2004**

Date to be Reviewed: **Term 1 2006**

## Castlemaine Steiner School and Kindergarten

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

### Teacher Notes for the Enrolment Interviews

*The purpose of the interview is to ensure that the incoming family has been briefed about certain essential aspects of Steiner education and this school. It is also to allow you to gain certain vital background information about the child entering your class.*

*Please note that the "prompts" indicated under certain questions need to be asked if the parent/guardian has not covered them in their initial response. Please tick off all questions as they are either asked or addressed.*

*Please note that this procedure has been designed to engender a certain sense of formality.*

*Children applying to enter classes 6,7 or 8 should be interviewed separately. This does not have to be at the same time as the parent/guardian.*

*Notes or Observation of a child on an initial visit and associated checklist are also provided.*

#### Enrolment Interviews (Allow 1 hour)

**(Note: Parent/s have been given a document package incl, the most important policies, e.g. School structure, School rules**

communication  
clothing and food  
discipline  
strategic plan  
assessment and reporting  
camps and excursions

*when the child comes for the initial 1 or 2-day visit with the explanation that these will be discussed in the interview with the teacher.)*

1. Have you read the policy documents? Do you have any questions?

Yes

No

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Read to parents:

You'll have noticed on the Admission Procedure form that we expect all new parents to attend an Information Session where the school structure and communication procedures referred to in these policy documents will be discussed in greater detail. We have this expectation as an enrolment requirement because Steiner schools are organized and administered differently to any other institution and feedback we've received over the years from parents tells us that this can lead to confusion until is clearly explained.

2. Have you any questions about what you've read in the "Essential Information" booklet?

3. Do you have any:

Previous reports?

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Examples of work?

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4. Can you please give me a picture of your impression of your child. I'm going to ask you a series of questions: (This doesn't mean you have to ask these questions but can be points to stimulate discussion.

1. How was the birth?

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2. What were they like in their early years?

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3. Are they happy and contented?

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4. What is their relationship with siblings/parents?

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5. How do they relate to other children?

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6. Do they play well with their own age peer group or do they relate better to adults or younger children?

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7. What are their hobbies/interests?

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8. What is their relationship to food?

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9. Do they play a sport?

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10. How much TV and/or video and/or computer time do they have per day?

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11. What do you see to be your child's strength?

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12. What do you see to be your child's weaknesses?

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13. If the child is transferring from another school:  
How have they coped with the academic side of their previous school experience if the child is transferring from another school?

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14. How have they coped with the social side of their previous school experience?

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15. What are your main reason for leaving your previous school? (To be asked if not already addressed.)

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Were there any social issues?

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16. Were there any academic issues?

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It is the policy of the school to (check with AISV)

15. How did you find out about this school and Steiner education?

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Does religion and/or spirituality play any part in your family life?

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16. Are you comfortable with the fact that a Steiner education is based upon a spiritual understanding of the human being and the world? We celebrate seasonal festivals, many of which coincide with established Christian festivals, and although we do not provide any religious education, the celebration of the seasons in this way is an essential aspect of life at the school.

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17. Do you realise that in each year level, stories from the mythologies from different ancient cultures are told. This includes the fairy tales in Class One and the Hebrew mythologies from the Old Testament in Class 3. Do you have any issues with this?

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18. We'd like to ask some questions relating to medical and legal issues.  
Does your child have:  
Any medical conditions that it would be advisable for us to know about?  
*Prompts: eye condition, hearing condition, dietary needs, medications, allergies, anxiousness or nervousness?*

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19. Are there any custody orders or arrangements? If there are written court orders, we need copies of such and the teacher needs to be briefed on them.

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***Enrolment Interview Questions for Children Applying for Entry into Classes 6, 7, and 8.***

1. What are your hobbies or interests?

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How do you like to spend your spare time?

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2. What would you say are your strengths?

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3. What would you say are your weaknesses?

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4. Have you any responsibilities at home?

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5. Have you ever been given homework?

How much? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you manage to organize your time yourself to do all these things?

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6. How much help do you need?

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7. How do you get on with other people your own age?

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8. How did you get on with teachers at your old school?

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9. What do you think makes a good teacher?

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10. Do you want to come to this school?  
(Prompt: Why do you want to leave your old school?)

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11. What is your favourite thing at school?  
(Prompt: How do you like maths, reading, writing, sport?)

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12. Have you ever been bullied?  
If so, when? how? Was it resolved?

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13. How did you find your time here?  
(Prompt: What did you like most/least?)

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## TEACHER NOTES FOR OBSERVATION OF A CHILD ON AN INITIAL VISIT

*The purpose of this visit is to allow you to observe:*

1. the child's social skills
2. their academic ability
3. their fine and gross motor ability
4. any suggestions of "organic disturbance" in the physical body. for example, clumsiness, coordination/balance difficulties, speech and/or hearing problem.

*The following activities can be freely used to assist you in assessing the above.*

1. Observe: eye contact (direct, defiant, clear, cloudy, etc.)  
speech,  
gait - walking and running  
eating habits  
ability to be focused/distracted  
posture,  
fidgeting  
nervous idiosyncrasies  
handshake (strong, clammy, hot, cold)
2. *Try to ensure that you make a chance to:*  
sample handwriting  
sample drawing  
clap/move a rhythm (eg skipping, clapping, dancing)  
sing  
balance  
perform some fine motor coordination tasks (eg cutting, sewing, knitting)  
sample form drawing, particularly a symmetry form.  
listening skills (particularly a story)

### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Tick

eye contact \_\_\_\_\_

speech \_\_\_\_\_

gait \_\_\_\_\_

posture \_\_\_\_\_

handshake \_\_\_\_\_

eating habits \_\_\_\_\_

focus/distraction \_\_\_\_\_

*Other comments/observations:*

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- handwriting
- drawing
- rhythmic movement
- singing
- fine motor
- balance
- form drawing
- listening skills

*Other comments, including social skills:*

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*Date submitted to College:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Approval:* \_\_\_\_\_

***Please now forward this to the office.***

*Parent assigned as personal contact:* \_\_\_\_\_