



# PARENT HANDBOOK

## 2024

**School Campus:**

378A St Leonards Road  
St Leonards TAS 7250

# Welcome

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Tamar Valley Steiner School. It is so lovely to have you, your child and your family at our School.

This handbook aims to help you prepare for school year in 2024.

**Kindergarten** is an ideal transition year from home-life to school, with children only attending 2 and a half days a week. We have created a relaxed, safe and nurturing home-like environment for children at the School. We also provide guidance on how to build a healthy connection between the Kindergarten and the home for children during this time. We run two 'classes' of Kinder, one running Mon-Wed, and one running Wed-Fri.

**Prep school** students will attend the School 5 days per week.

Our **Primary school** students will attend our campus at 378A St Leonards Rd, which is tailored towards the interests and developmental needs of older children. The site offers ample space for play, physical activity and gardening. The classrooms are set up to accommodate the enriched curriculum including main lesson and other subjects.

This handbook contains detailed information about what you can expect for your child in their 2024 class and the ways in which you, as parents in partnership with the teacher, can support your child's school journey.

Parents are invited to share their questions and concerns at scheduled Parent Evenings; in workshops and seminars; and in regular conversations with our teachers.

It is our hope that we will grow and learn together in the School community and continue to meet the individual needs of each child, preparing them for a lifelong love of learning.

Thank you for reading the Parent Handbook. Please keep it as a useful reference in the months to come.

Warm regards,

Carolyn Scott-Burgess

Principal

**Tamar Valley Steiner School**

**Northern Tasmania Steiner Association Inc**

## Contents

<b>General School Information .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Term dates 2024.....	5
Attendance.....	6
<b>Communication .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Guidelines: What to wear and bring .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Clothing .....	8
Food.....	8
Lunch .....	8
<b>Guidelines: Health and Wellbeing .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Health .....	10
Medication.....	10
Immunisation and Medicare.....	11
Discipline.....	11
Media and the Young Child .....	11
<b>Parent-Teacher Collaboration .....</b>	<b>12</b>
The Work of the Teacher .....	12
Role of the Kinder/Prep Teacher.....	12
Role of the Primary Class Teacher .....	12
Role of all Teachers.....	12
Parent Evenings .....	13
Parent –Teacher Interviews .....	13
Parent and Visitor Participation .....	13
<b>School Library.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>School Celebrations and Festivals.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Festivals and the Seasons.....	16
Birthday Celebrations .....	16
School Supervision Hours.....	17
A Verse for the Night Before a Birthday .....	17
Blessings for Mealtimes.....	17
<b>Learning .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Rhythm in Learning.....	18
Primary Class Curriculum .....	18
Values.....	18
Class Structure .....	18
LOTE.....	19

Music Program .....	19
Strings Program .....	19
Form Drawing/Geometry.....	19
Eurythmy .....	19
<b>The Kindergarten/Prep Program.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Starting Kindergarten .....	21
Morning Arrival and Afternoon Pick-Up .....	21
Rest Time.....	22
Shared Morning Tea .....	22
Flowers .....	22

## General School Information

### Term dates 2024

Please note that as an independent school, our term dates vary slightly from the public school system. The term dates for Tamar Valley Steiner School in 2024 are:

#### TERM 1

Student free days Monday, 5 February and Tuesday, 6 February  
Students return Wednesday, 7 February and finish on Friday, 12 April

*Holidays: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April incl.*

#### TERM 2

Student free day Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April  
Students return Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> April and finish on Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> June

*Holidays: Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July*

#### TERM 3

Student free day Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July  
Students return Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> July and finish on Friday, 27 September

*Holidays: Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October*

#### TERM 4

Students return Monday, 14 October  
Student Free Day Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November  
Public Holiday Monday 4 November  
Term finishes Thursday, 12 December

#### PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Friday, 26 January - Australia Day  
Monday, 11 March - Eight Hour Day  
Friday, 29 March – Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April inclusive - Easter  
Thursday, 25 April - Anzac Day  
Monday, 10 June - Kings Birthday  
Thursday, 10 October – Royal Launceston Show  
Tuesday, 4 November - Recreation Day

## Attendance

### Age Guidelines for Enrolment into Kindergarten and Preparatory Legal Requirements

All children who are permanent Australian residents and at least five years of age as at 1 January in any year must be enrolled in a school, or be provided with home education, until the end of the year in which they turn 16, unless exempted or excused in accordance with the Act (*Education Act 1994 Section 4*).

In Tasmania, most children start school in **Kindergarten** when they are 4 years of age, on or by 1 January.

#### **Kindergarten:**

Students attend 2.5 days (15 hours) each week:

Monday, Tuesday (8.45am to 2.45pm) (8.45am to 2.45pm)

**and** Wednesday (8.45am to 12.00pm, Bush School day) to be collected from Bush School

#### **OR**

Wednesday (8.45am to 12.00pm, Bush School day) to be collected from Bush School

Thursday, Friday (8.45am to 2.45pm) (8.45am to 2.45pm)

**Prep:** The minimum age of enrolment directly into **Prep** is 5 years on or by 1 January in the year of admission. Prep students attend school from Monday to Friday (8.45am to 2.45pm).

**Primary:** Primary students attend school from Monday to Friday (8.50am to 3:00pm) at 378A St Leonards Rd.

**Bush School:** Wednesday is our 'Bush School' day for all classes. Alternative drop-off/pick-up arrangements may apply. Further information on Bush School will be provided separately.

**Absences:** If your child will be absent from school on any day, written notification is required by 9.15am. Notification must include the reason for absence and can be advised by sending an SMS to 0438 917 848 or an email to [admin@tamarvalleysteiner.tas.edu.au](mailto:admin@tamarvalleysteiner.tas.edu.au). If you have not informed the school, the Office will contact you to request formal notification.

**Late Arrivals:** If your child is late for school, please sign the attendance register at the School Office before taking your child to their class. If you know you are going to be late, please advise the school in advance and sign the attendance register when you arrive. If your child is consistently late, you will be contacted as this will impact on your child's learning and interrupts the teaching of the whole class.

If you are unable to collect your child for any reason, we require written authority from you to enable your child to be collected by another adult. Changes to normal arrangements require notification to the school in writing, either via SMS or email.

Please advise the supervising teacher when collecting your child from school, so that they can acknowledge you are leaving with them.

## Communication

Communication between the school and families is centralised at the school. All information that goes out or is returned should occur via the School Office. This ensures administration staff are aware of all information being sent to the families and can answer parent enquiries or questions effectively.

We ask that your communication with staff and relating to the school is respectful. If something regarding the school or your child's experience concerns you, please talk to your class teacher or the School Office so we can address this. We want your family's journey with us to be a happy one, so if you have a concern, we would like to help. Please refer to your obligations within the Parent Code of Conduct regarding appropriate channels of communication.

### Audiri

Audiri is the school's main form of communication with our families and requires parents to download the Audiri app. Class information alerts will come to you via the app and email. We have found the app very useful, especially when distributing information urgently when required. If for any reason the app is not working an email will be sent to the family's preferred email address.

## Guidelines: What to wear and bring

Please ensure your child has the following items when they arrive at school:

- Plain-coloured, comfortable, and weather appropriate clothing.
- A plain sun hat with a wide brim.
- A healthy lunch packed in reusable packaging.
- A stainless-steel drink bottle filled with water.
- Rain boots and coat to be left at school.
- Additional waterproof clothing, thermal layers, and sturdy covered shoes with grip for Bush School.
- Soft-soled slippers for inside play.
- A set of spare clothes in a labelled bag to be kept at school (Kinder/Prep only).
- Sleeping mat for rest time (Kinder/Prep only). Children can use a sheepskin which can then be used in their primary years on their chair. Plain coloured doonas/quilts/sleeping bags are other options.

### Please note:

1. Children are not required to have a school bag in Kinder.
2. Clothing, hats, lunch containers and packaging should be free of advertising or commercial characters.
3. When a child wants to bring something to show the class, please ensure it is something from nature rather than the child's toys.
4. If your child brings a special treasure home that belongs to the school, please return it. It is enough to say to your child, "This belongs to the school, let's take it back tomorrow".

## Clothing

The school is a place of active work and play with a lot of outdoor time. To allow your child to experience nature in an enjoyable, open way, the right clothing is needed. Natural fibres like cotton or wool are durable and comfortable for children to wear, as they are breathable.

**Please note:** play clothes are not clothes that the child is concerned may get wet or dirty.

During play, children are often so involved that they are not aware of the temperature; therefore, as adults we need to dress children appropriately for the weather. In the warm spring and summer weather children need to wear loose, comfortable clothing. Cooler autumn and winter months may require several layers of clothing.

A sturdy pair of outdoor shoes is required for our natural play environment. During indoor play the children and staff wear slippers or soft-soled shoes. A change of footwear guides children on behaviour. For example, outside shoes are for running, climbing and noisy play; slippers are for walking and quiet play.

Students wear a hat in summer as well as during times when the UV index is greater than 3 in winter weather. Please find a hat that your child likes and will be happy to wear. It may be easier to leave a hat at school. Once rain sets in, please also leave rubber boots and a raincoat with hood, or rain hat, at school.

We ask that you refrain from sending your child to school with clothes showing advertising, particularly Kinder/Prep children, and that children are not dressed in black or fluorescent clothes. A general guide is to think of the rainbow colours.

## Food

Preparing food and eating together enhances social skills and fine motor skills. It also enables children to develop appreciation for a diversity of grains, fruits and vegetables, tastes, textures and cooking methods.

In keeping with a wholesome environment, we make sure that we use quality organic foods and free-range eggs where possible. Each child's special needs are considered so if your child has allergies, please ensure this is detailed on their medical form provided to the Office. You may also wish to discuss this with your child's class teacher.

## Lunch

Your child will need to bring a packed lunch from home each day. The school community is aware of the importance of healthy, nutritious food for young children, and we are trying to ensure that the food eaten in the school is as natural and healthy as possible. Please do not send party-type food such as crisps, chocolate, lollies or chewing gum to school. Recommended foods include sandwiches, pasta or rice, nori rolls, crisp bread, mixed salad, carrot or celery sticks, cheese, yoghurt, and fresh or dried fruit.



Please do not send pre-packaged foods or food in a lunch box with commercial characters on it. Reusable containers or paper or beeswax food wraps and bags are suitable alternatives to disposable plastic.

While we respect the choices you make and your sense of what is good for your child, we are trying to ensure that the food eaten in the school is as natural as possible, and does not lead to lunch box competitions.

Simplicity is the best approach.

**Children must not swap or share their food and are encouraged to wash their hands before and after eating.**

## **Guidelines: Health and Wellbeing**

### **Health**

The teachers take a special interest in your child's health and will make every effort to support you in keeping your child healthy. A well-rested child who is dressed warmly in winter, protected from the sun in summer, and who is fed a nutritious diet, is best prepared to withstand the onslaught of winter colds and other ailments.

Should your child become sick or have cold and flu symptoms, please keep them at home to recover and notify the School Office. School is not a soothing environment for a child who is unwell, and we do not want to endanger the health of other students. Please allow your child at least one full day of rest after an illness.

If a child comes to school and has symptoms (e.g. coughing or with a runny nose), you will be called to collect your child from school and take them home. Where the illness is highly contagious (i.e. chickenpox, whooping cough, or influenza) a doctor's certificate may be required by the school before your child can be re-admitted.

### **Medication**

If your child requires medication, please provide this at home when possible. If a child does require medication at school it must come in its original container with a pharmacy label showing the child's name, the dose, and the doctor's instructions. This is required for over-the-counter medications as well. Parents must also complete the relevant paperwork which can be obtained from the Office. Children are not to have medication in their lunch containers. It must be handed adult-to-adult. Vitamins and homeopathic remedies are treated as medicine and require the same labelling and paperwork to be completed.

In an emergency, we will use the information you have provided to contact you. In the case that no parent or guardian can be reached, your signed consent form will allow us to obtain the medical attention your child may need.

### **Head Lice**

Children found to have head lice must be collected from school promptly and have treatment to eliminate the infestation. Before the child returns to school, we require written confirmation from the parent or guardian that treatment has occurred. Thorough head checks and follow up treatment may be required by parents in the following weeks to prevent reinfestation.

## **Immunisation and Medicare**

We follow the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services and Tasmanian Education Department guidelines and ask that parents discuss immunisation with their health practitioner. **The school is required by law to keep records of your child's immunisation status and Medicare number.**

If there is an outbreak of a notifiable disease, children not immunised for this condition are required by Government Health Authorities to remain away from school for a standard number of days.

## **Discipline**

We strive to understand the nature and development of young children and create a schedule that allows for an appropriate balance of “breathing in” and “breathing out” activities. This includes long periods of indoor and outdoor play. This can eliminate some of the behaviour difficulties that can be found in school environments.

Teachers will model ways of resolving issues or conflicts among the children. When required, teachers may use ‘time-in’, where the child spends some time working with an adult, until the teacher feels that the child is ready to re-join his or her classmates.

Occasionally, children will be showing they are not ready to learn. In this instance, children may be offered alternate activities for short periods of time to reset. If children require multiple resets on the same day and it seems the child is just not ready to be at school that day, parents may be called to collect their child and encouraged to spend time with their child to reset at home.

The school shares expectations around expected behaviours with children in an age appropriate way and with consideration for their development according to the Steiner understanding of child development. If children's behaviours are not in line with what is expected, this may be deemed an incident that requires a report to be completed, and parents may be called to discuss the concerns.

If difficulties are persistent or there is an incident deemed ‘serious’, the school may request an interview with the parents. The adults can then assess the situation and work together to find ways to help the child express him or herself in more socially appropriate ways. Parents can also be of assistance by informing the teacher of changes at home that may result in unusual behaviour.

Good communication amongst adults is most helpful for the children during these formative years.

## **Media and the Young Child**

We encourage parents to minimise their child's use of technology for entertainment or learning in early childhood, especially in the mornings before school.

The presence of television and media can have a strong influence on the behaviour and play of young children. Studies have linked time using technology with negative effects such as lack of attention in class, distraction, and impacts on imagination. It is the imagination that provides the foundation for learning and growth. The use of electronic media before bedtime may also disturb sleep.

We encourage you to explore alternatives to media entertainment such as cooking, gardening, carpentry, playing an instrument or bike riding. Time spent outdoors is encouraged.

## **Parent-Teacher Collaboration**

### **The Work of the Teacher**

We support children's development in a holistic way, including academically, intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically. In the first seven years it is important to help the child develop physically and in a healthy way, and to protect and stimulate the senses.

The early childhood teacher strives to create an environment in which the young child feels secure, loved, and recognised as a spiritual being.

Children in the primary school are developing their imaginative faculties and the teacher strives to engage children's emotional capacities to instil a life-long love of learning.

### **Role of the Kinder/Prep Teacher**

A young child feels secure when they are surrounded by beauty and goodness and can experience the certainty of a rhythmic life. Daily, weekly, and yearly rhythms help instil a sense of well-being. The practical activities, social interactions and transition times set boundaries and help to bring harmony between the children. Young children feel loved when warmth permeates the atmosphere and joy is the mood in which work is done.

### **Role of the Primary Class Teacher**

Teachers engage children creatively and imaginatively using storytelling to bring subjects alive. In following the curriculum, the teacher carefully considers each child to determine how to spark the interest and engagement in the whole class. Knowledge is brought to the children in a way that is inherently interesting; rather than referring to textbooks or workbooks the teachers use their imagination to give life to information so that it becomes a more tangible experience.

### **Role of all Teachers**

Children feel recognised when their teacher seeks to understand their individuality. The teacher seeks this through meditation as well as through observation and child study. The teacher's inner work focuses in part on being worthy of imitation by the child, in thought, word and deed.

The teacher recognises the social elements of their work in the school as a whole and that in this social realm, the parents are equal partners. Parent-teacher communications should be clear, honest and supportive in the sense that the teacher listens and hears parents' concerns and views. The relationship between the teachers, the teaching assistants, and other co-workers is guided by their respect for the destiny which brought them together.

To fulfil their role the teacher will undertake professional development, which encompasses on-going reading and study of relevant literature on child development and early childhood education from various perspectives, including Steiner education and mainstream publications. Teachers may attend a teacher training intensive prior to the start of the school year as well as regional meetings of Steiner educators and other professional development opportunities throughout the year.

## **Parent Evenings**

Each term your child's teacher will schedule a class meeting. This is your opportunity to hear about what is happening in the class and to learn more about child development and Steiner education. Please make every effort to attend the Parent Evenings and advise the teacher if you cannot attend a scheduled meeting. At least one parent or guardian is expected to attend the Parent Evening each term.

## **Parent –Teacher Interviews**

Parent-Teacher interviews are scheduled at least once a year and provide an opportunity for sharing impressions, concerns and goals for the child by both parent and teacher. They can deepen our understanding of your child as well as strengthen our work together. These are usually scheduled mid-year but may also happen at other times.

Please do not hesitate to arrange a meeting outside of the scheduled Parent-Teacher Interviews if you wish to discuss your child with their teacher. Communication from you about significant circumstances or changes in your child's life is particularly important.

## **Parent and Visitor Participation**

We request that you make prior arrangements with your child's teacher if you would like to join the class as a volunteer, a worker, an observer, or to settle an anxious child.

Rather than becoming involved in the children's play, staff engage in purposeful work nearby while staying fully aware of what the children are doing, allowing them to create their own play. With a calm demeanour, the staff create the mood and rhythm of the class as they joyfully and busily participate in schoolwork and craft activities. You will be encouraged to do the same.

## **Working with Vulnerable People Registration**

Our School adheres to the Child Education Services (non-government) requirement that registration is obtained for all school-based employees, volunteers, and others, such as contractors and external providers, who work or operate in non-government schools.

Registration must be provided to the School Office prior to your involvement in any school-related activity and a copy will be kept on file. Please visit [http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working\\_with\\_children/application](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working_with_children/application) to complete an application.

## School Library

Our library is a space for the children to explore books and experience the joy of reading. Bright colours, creative spaces for crafts and games, fun seating and a growing collection of culturally diverse picture books, story books, and non-fiction titles will allow children to read, learn and create in a space designed just for them.

We are literally building our library book by book and would love you to help! If you wish to donate books, resources, time, or money for the library during the year, please get in touch. The more assistance we receive, the sooner our Library will be operational.

### "Birthday Book"

To engage the children in their new library and nurture their sense of belonging we encourage them to help the library grow by contributing a "Birthday Book". On their birthday, your child can donate a copy of a favourite book or other approved library resource (such as a jigsaw puzzle) for everyone to enjoy in the library. This can be presented by your child to their class teacher as part of their birthday celebration and the book will be stamped as a "Birthday Book" so everyone who enjoys it will know the spirit in which it was given.

The donation can be a new or pre-loved book or resource, just so long as it is in good condition for others to read or use, without marks or ripped pages. The class teacher can provide you with suggestions if you'd like some guidance on a suitable book.

We moderate all donated books in our library to ensure they are appropriate for children and adhere to school guidelines.

### Steiner Education

You may be interested in reading about Steiner Education, anthroposophy, and child development from the Steiner perspective. The following titles have been helpful to parents with young children, should you be interested in researching the topic.

Title	Author
You are your Child's First Teacher	Rahima Baldwin
The Incarnating Child	Joan Salter
A Guide to Child Health	Michaela Gloeckler
Natural Childhood	Lyn Oldfield and others
Work and Play in Early Childhood	Freya Jafke
Children at Play	Heidi Britz-Crecelius
The Waldorf Parenting Handbook	Lois Cusick

Festivals, Families and Food	Cary & Large
Phases of Childhood	Bernard Lievegood
The Education of the Child	Rudolf Steiner
Mothering with Soul	Joan Salter
Beyond the Rainbow Bridge	B. Patterson & P. Bradley
Storytelling with Children	Nancy Mellon
Ready to Learn	Martyn Rawson & Michael Rose
The Challenge of the Will	Margaret Meyerkort
Raising a Family	J. Eilum & D. Eilum
The Genius of Natural Childhood	Sally Goddard Blythe
Endangered Minds	Jane Healy
Free To Learn	Lyne Oldfield
Why Children Don't Listen	Monika Kiel- Hinrichsen

## School Celebrations and Festivals

One of the most enjoyable aspects of a Steiner education is our strong sense of community and the warmth and belonging that flows when we gather. The more that each family (and their extended family and friends) participates in gatherings and demonstrates to the children how adults cooperate, the greater the value to all.

Like many activities in a Steiner education, these events serve the dual purpose of completing practical tasks while also supporting the higher goal of creating a community. A key dates calendar will be provided in Term 1 and additional information will be provided to you closer to each event.

For all upcoming events, also check our school website: <http://www.tamarvalleysteiner.com.au/>.

Community events include:

- **Working Bees:** we hold working bees when there is a need for community support for specific projects or just generally to garden, tidy, make minor repairs, clean, or renovate to keep the school beautiful for our students.
- **Seasonal Celebrations:** these include an Autumn Harvest Festival, Lantern Walk, Winter Spiral Solstice event, Spring Bush Dance and Summer Festival. Extended family and friends are invited to join us in these wonderful events.
- **Guest Speakers:** from time to time we will be fortunate enough to host speakers who can share their valuable knowledge of Steiner education to those seeking greater understanding of Steiner philosophy. Guest speakers may also offer parent information sessions that serve to support the learning and developmental needs of the children.

- **Fundraising Events:** we value the generosity of the school community and ask that you support our fundraising activities, for the school's ongoing program of works, to complement the school's playground offerings and to assist in developing and growing our Library. These events are an enjoyable time to come together and your attendance, participation or contribution is always appreciated.
- **Information/Open Days:** these are held for new or potential families, and current families may be invited to support these in practical ways such as by bringing a plate or by sharing their interest in, and experience of, Steiner education.

## **Festivals and the Seasons**

Celebrations, festivals, and rhythms of time are an overarching theme in the Steiner curriculum. We observe and celebrate the rhythms of the year through the changing seasons.

The classrooms have a nature table to display seasonal craft and findings from walks or outings. These help the children observe seasonal differences.

Our seasonal festivals are times when families and friends are invited to share in a simple ceremony with their children, joining in songs, stories, picnics, dances or games. Children love preparing for the festival by decorating the classroom and garden, baking special treats, and learning festival songs and verses. A lovely sense of community is felt during the festivals and they are a fulfilling experience for young and old.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

Your child's presence at our school is a blessing and we are grateful for the opportunity to express our appreciation on their birthday.

A birthday story is told which describes a picture of the human birth experience and also relates to the particular child's birth story. This is followed by songs and special gifts given by the teacher and the class. The birthday ceremony is also an opportunity for your child to present a "Birthday Book" for the school library, in honour of their birthday.

We invite the parents to share the birthday occasion at school by coming along and participating in the celebration and providing a cake for the class to share. You will be provided with more information about this celebration by your class teacher.



## School Supervision Hours

### Before School

Please ensure your child is dropped off no earlier than 8:30am. This is when our supervision staff will be on duty, and ready to welcome your child to their school day. Students are required to start class at 8:45am.

### After School

Students are dismissed from class at 3pm every day. After school supervision is provided until 3:30pm. Please ensure your child is collected by this time. If, due to work or traffic, you will be delayed for pickup, please contact the school so we can arrange for supervision in the office.

## ongs and Verses for Use at Home and School

### A Verse for the Night Before a Birthday

When I have said my evening prayer  
And my clothes are folded on the chair  
My parent switches off the light  
I'll still be ... years old tonight.  
But from the break of day  
Before the children rise and play  
Before the darkness turns to gold  
Tomorrow I'll be ... years old.  
... Kisses when I wake  
... Candles on my cake!

### Blessings for Mealtimes

Earth who gave to us this food  
Sun that makes it ripe and good  
Dearest earth  
Dearest sun, thanks we give to you each one.

Blessings on the blossom  
Blessings on the fruit  
Blessings on the leaf and stem  
Blessings on the roots.

## Learning

### Rhythm in Learning

The school day is structured in an organic way, establishing a healthy balance between concentration and relaxation, mental and practical work, movement and rest, and listening and participating. Each lesson engages the child's thinking, feeling and willing.

In a school day, the rhythm moves from the **Head** (thinking, Main Lesson), to the **Heart** (feeling, practice lessons, subjects that engage emotions and expression), to the **Hands** (willing or doing, subjects that engage children in practical projects).

### Primary Class Curriculum

The Main Lesson is taught in the first two hours of each day. The topic of a Main Lesson is chosen to suit the children's developmental stage and is studied for a block of time lasting from three to six or more weeks. The Main Lesson period allows the teacher to develop a wide range of integrated activities around a central theme such as fairy stories, fables, farming and food, Norse myths, or ancient cultures. It allows for a variety of learning strategies including movement, speech, music and practical activities as well as formal academic work such as literacy and numeracy.

After the Main Lesson, the day continues with shorter practice lessons from a wide range of subjects such as Indonesian, music, craft and Eurythmy. The daily rhythm balances the academic, the artistic, and the practical.

### Values

Human values are the central element of the Steiner curriculum. The study of diverse cultures combined with an interest in the different ethnic and religious backgrounds of students, provides the children with an opportunity to learn, understand, respect and celebrate each other's differences.

### Class Structure

In 2024, we have a mixture of single stream and combined classes. Each class will have their own class teacher for Main Lessons and some practical lessons, while specialist teachers may cover certain subjects such as music, craft, LOTE and gardening. Occasionally, especially during the afternoon practical sessions, classes may combine. Extra assistance will be provided in the classrooms to ensure that teachers and students have the support they need.

NB. LOTE is an abbreviation for Languages Other Than English. Indonesian is the language taught at our school.

### Handcraft

A great emphasis is placed on students creating and learning with their hands, with students working on projects that can take time and persistence to complete. Although

some crafts have their own formal lessons, craft activities are also integrated throughout the curriculum, with an emphasis on using natural materials like wood, plant fibre, leaves, bark, clay, and water.

Handwork lessons promote dexterity and skill, provide children with a sense of accomplishment, and the focus required to complete a piece of work translates across into their other schoolwork.

## **LOTE**

We run an Indonesian program for classes 1 – 6, with each student receiving 2 lessons per week.

## **Music Program**

Music is interwoven into the daily flow of each class through song, rhyme, musical games and recorder playing. The recorders are tuned for harmonious group work and children enjoy the experience of playing music together.

## **Strings Program**

Our Strings program is run for students in Class 3 to Class 6. Students begin with learning violin in Class 3, with the option of violin from Class 4 to Class 6. The Strings program consists of a Class lesson and an ensemble lesson each week. Violins are available for hire through the school.

## **Form Drawing/Geometry**

Form drawing is the art and science of experimenting and learning about different forms and shapes through drawing. The children develop an understanding of different shapes to gain a sense of proportion, direction, and the ability to reduce 3-dimensional reality to 2-dimensional.

Geometry is the progression of form drawing, which occurs from Class 3/4 onwards. Geometry teaches and reveals the lawfulness of beauty in the natural world. Geometry is a language of relationships and proportions and it helps children appreciate complexity.

## **Eurythmy**

Eurythmy is movement to speech and music, inaugurated by Rudolf Steiner. We are fortunate to offer specialist Eurythmy teacher Micaela Moore to facilitate a Eurythmy program for our students.

The class teacher is present during these sessions.

## The Kindergarten/Prep Program

Our early childhood program provides a nurturing environment based on the foundation principles of Waldorf Steiner and allows children to develop in a healthy way.

The three principles which underlie the combined Steiner Kindergarten and Prep program are:

### *Imitation*

### *Rhythm*

### *Repetition*

It is these principles that engage the forces of Thinking, Feeling and Willing and we promote them in a healthy and harmonious way through informal learning strategies.

Young children learn through **imitation**. Imitation expresses itself in the child's participation in an activity modelled by an adult, such as cooking, polishing with beeswax, hanging out the washing, gardening, painting and drawing, singing and movement, stitching and making. The act of imitation, by drawing the child freely towards another human being, contributes to the development of individuality and prepares the six-year-old child to accept the authority of the teacher on entering Class 1.

Healthy **rhythm** in the young child's life provides security, order and predictability, leading to self-management and strengthening the life forces used in growing a healthy body. Rhythm in this context can be described as a 'breathing in' and 'breathing out', or, still and active. The daily program is carefully designed to reflect this. There is a weekly rhythm where we have a modelling day, a painting day and so on, and seasonal rhythms that are celebrated each term. A synchronicity with the great natural rhythms lies at the heart of the Waldorf way.

**Repetition** also provides security to the young child. Learning occurs when the same activities and routines are consistently repeated. The same story is told each day for three weeks; the same songs and verses are used to transition to new activities through the day; toys go back in the same place; the circle work is repeated through the season. The teacher will create a daily rhythm tailored to the specific needs of the group during Term 1.

*"We should direct the impulse of will, not by telling once,  
but by leading the children to do, not just today,  
but tomorrow, and the day after that."*

*(Rudolf Steiner)*

## Starting Kindergarten

The first weeks of Kindergarten can be an anxious time for both parent and child. We try to make this transition away from home as gentle and positive as possible. We offer a few suggestions:

- Children like order and rhythm so try to establish your school routine as quickly as possible.
- Give yourself plenty of time in the morning so your child does not feel rushed and unsettled.
- Say goodbye in a cheerful and positive way, rather than clinging to your child or prolonging departure.

## Morning Arrival and Afternoon Pick-Up

In Kinder and Prep we are laying the foundations for all later learning and we consider punctuality to be important. Children should **arrive between 8.30am and no later than 8.45am** so they do not miss the first part of the program.

Normally, this is not a time when the teacher is available to answer questions from parents. If you need to inform the teacher of something concerning your child please do so briefly. Pick up time is a better time for short discussions. If your question or concern requires focused conversation, it is best to email or make a meeting time.

When you **pick up your child from 2:45pm - 3.00pm** please be prompt as children can become distressed when they have to wait for parents. Please ensure your child puts away their slippers and takes home their lunch belongings, and any wet or dirty clothing that belongs to them.

## Spare Clothes

As younger children sometimes have accidents at school we ask that each Kinder/Prep child brings a change of clothes in a labelled bag, which is left at school. If the spare set of clothes is required, the bag can be used to take home the soiled clothes and should be returned the following day with clean clothes. This is a great help to the teacher and encourages the children to form good habits caring for their things.

## **Rest Time**

**Rest Time** is scheduled each day after lunch for approximately 30 minutes. Rest time allows the child to spend time by themselves. The room turns into a quiet and calm space; the curtains are drawn and everyone in the room prepares their bedding.

Parents are asked to provide something soft from home for the child to rest on, such as a sheepskin mat. This can be used on their chair in their ongoing primary years. Pillows are not required although we recommend the child bring a plain, pastel-coloured sheet to have over their sheepskin which can then be washed each week.

## **Shared Morning Tea**

Please send 1-2 pieces of fruit with your child each morning to contribute to the fruit basket for morning tea. Together, the children will prepare the fruit each day, including washing, peeling and cutting the fruit and placing it in bowls.

## **Flowers**

We encourage each family to bring in seasonal flowers during the term. A small posy for the meal table or a larger one for the nature table is appreciated. Children enjoy helping the teacher arrange the flowers they have brought in. This is a lovely way to involve your child in the creation of our beautiful class environment.

## Parent Statement of Agreement

I/We understand that the school requires a commitment from parents of students to. I/we agree to undertake the commitments below (indicated by ticking and signing):

*Please tick boxes*

- Notify the school of any early intervention, medical or psychological assessment, treatment, therapy or support that your child may need. Where the need is known, notification must be made prior to commencement of your child at school.
- Respect the need for punctuality at the commencement and dismissal times of the school day, along with the attendance guidelines.
- Attend, participate and support school community events such as working bees, fundraisers, information sessions and school festivals, whenever possible.
- Complete the annual school survey to provide us with important feedback for on-going improvement of the school.
- Attend at Parent Evenings (held once a term).
- Provide a healthy and balanced diet for the child, in support of the school's food and nutrition program.
- Minimise your child's use of television, DVDs and movies, mobile phones, tablets, iPads and computers, particularly before school.
- Provide suitable clothing as outlined in the dress code, including special requirements for Bush School.

I/We have read the Tamar Valley Steiner School 2023 Parent Handbook and agree to abide and be bound by the policies and procedures, codes in the relevant year of enrolment.

Name of student/s: \_\_\_\_\_ Class/es: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian 1

[Print name] \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/ Guardian 2

[Print name] \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_