



The Meadow School for Steiner Education Ltd.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The admissions policy is formulated to ensure that enquirers and prospective parents are provided with sufficient information about the school to enable them to make a realistic judgement about the suitability of The Meadow School for their child's education.

This Policy aims to ensure that parents find their experience and introduction to the school warm and welcoming, that our response is sufficiently prompt to enable parents to make their arrangements in good time, and importantly, that parents are clear about the expectations, responsibilities, and level of cooperation required of them by this school.

Steiner Waldorf schools are founded on respect and care for the development & individuality of human beings in the context of their cultural & natural environment. The educational approach seeks to be hospitable to the ethnicity, family background or other traditions of the children & to provide them with insight & understanding for the diversity of human beings as a whole.

The Meadow School is committed to making every effort to ensure that Steiner Waldorf education is available to all who choose it regardless of religious or cultural beliefs, ability, or social or financial background.

In Steiner Waldorf education there is an intrinsic respect for and celebration of difference and diversity. The cultivation of these qualities is a natural seamless aspect of the educational experience and learning environment.

The Policy and the accompanying Admissions Procedure, are also designed to ensure that:

- The school operates a fair and open system of admissions;
- The school is confident about its ability to provide an adequate education for the child.

This Admissions Policy is intended to be fully in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy.

This Policy will be reviewed when any revised guidelines are issued by the Department for Education, changes in legislation, in the light of further information or experience, and will in any case be reviewed annually.

This policy is to be kept in the Policy and Procedures folder in the school office, and Class/Kindergarten teachers must be familiar with the procedure. It is available on request to existing and prospective parents and guardians, and this is stated in the Parents Handbook.

AIMS:

It is our aim to:

1. Provide a step-by-step procedure for managing the admissions process;
2. Keep clear and adequate records for each new admission;
3. Ensure that prospective parents understand what the school can provide for children with extra needs;
4. Ensure that the staff who undertake administration and conduct meetings for admissions work with a clear structure and format;
5. Ensure that the admission process realistically evaluates the social and educational needs of the prospective pupil, and the resources which the School will have (or will be able to acquire when the pupil is enrolled) in order to meet those needs.

APPLICATIONS

All applications must be considered on their merits. The school is bound by the requirement on all schools and parents to deliver an effective education. It is also bound within the terms of the laws relating to disability and discrimination. In each instance the admissions team (and when necessary, in consultation with other Teachers and the Board of Trustees and/or external advisors) would need to decide what is possible in terms of:

- Entry to the Kindergarten or Class as it exists, or the Class that may be formed by children coming from Kindergarten;
- The facilities the School can provide, e.g. in terms of access and equipment, and so on;
- The training and experience of all the staff involved in teaching at the school
- The resources to meet the children's needs.

Please note that unless exceptional circumstances apply, the school will not accept applications for children where their planned time at the school will be less than three rolling terms. This is because the potential disruption caused by a new arrival and then a departure are likely to outweigh the benefit of attendance for such a short period for all concerned. Any exceptions to this policy will be decided at the Collegiate's discretion and only where the school has reason to believe disruption can be easily held to minimum.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL PHYSICAL AND OR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Every effort will be made to cater for children with physical or special educational needs. There will not be discrimination when considering an admission request for a disabled child. Assessment of the ability to cater for disabled children will include liaising with parents and professionals in assessing a child's needs and how a disabled child can be supported so that the child is able to participate as fully as possible in all activities.

Planning will include giving consideration of how new and existing facilities can be improved to better cater for children, with particular physical needs.

In keeping with the principles of Steiner-Waldorf education The Meadow School considers all children as having individual needs and aims to meet those needs as best as possible taking into consideration the child's age, developmental stage, and other circumstances.

Children with Special Educational Needs, like any other child, will be considered for admission on an individual basis. This will involve full discussion of a child's needs with the parents/guardians, and where appropriate other involved professionals, including consideration of practical and resource constraints. It should be noted that it is extremely difficult for the school to access external financial support for children of compulsory school age with Special Educational Needs and that the school operates under tight financial constraints, which may limit the resources we can provide.



ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Steiner Waldorf education aims to be a comprehensive education. Any child's right to apply for this education should not be affected by race, gender, faith, disability or social background.

The Meadow School receives children from birth up to and including the academic year in which the child reaches 11 years. In some cases, depending on the class in which the child is placed, it may be possible for a child to remain at the school until they are 12. The different ages are catered for as follows: Early Years comprises the Parent and Child Group from birth to age 3; Rosebud Kindergarten is available from age 3 to 4; for age 4 up to and including the academic year in which the child reaches 6 years there is the Garden Kindergarten and after this age the child moves out of Early Years and into the Lower School. The individual needs of the child are considered and so in certain situations these age groups are flexible.

As stated in the above the school is open to accepting children with particular needs. If however, after a trial, staff feel a particular child's needs are not being met, then this would be communicated to and discussed with the parents by the relevant teacher, in consultation with colleagues, including the SENCO as appropriate. Each such case will be considered individually and carefully evaluated with regard to the child and the group as a whole.

OUR AIMS AND VALUES

We wish to be welcoming to our new and prospective families, encouraging you to become part of our active community, and that you will feel able to express your thoughts and share your questions.

We hope you will find our Admissions process helpful, clear and efficient, and in line with our Equal Opportunities Policy. We hope that you have been able to inform yourself about Steiner Waldorf education, attended an Open Morning and visited our website www.meadowsteiner.somerset.sch.uk. In addition, there are many resources for information from books or via the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship website (www.steinerwaldorf.org).

We intend to follow a simple process, which keeps you informed at each stage of the application procedure. Please note that due to current legislation the application procedure is different at certain stages of admission for ages four and five due to the receipt of the Early Years Entitlement. These differences will be included below. The process is as follows:

THE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Enquiries

After making initial contact with the School parents will be provided with information about the School and invited to our next Open Morning. Alternatively, an Open Morning may be the first point of contact and information can be obtained on the day. If an Open Morning is not scheduled then parents can make arrangements to visit the school through the Administrator. The Administrator will normally deal with initial enquiries. On request an Information pack is sent out and will include the Information Booklet, an Application Form, the Fee structure and any other relevant information.

2. Application

Parents submit an Application Form to the Administrator with payment of a £50.00 registration fee for children of 5 years old and over. *(This fee is non-refundable.)* Please enclose a copy of your child's birth certificate and copies of any relevant School reports (**required** if he or she has attended a different School/setting previously) or medical reports (if these would help the School to meet your child's needs, according to the information you give us in the application form).

We aim to acknowledge receipt of your application within five working days. The Administrator will notify you that this has been received and when the application will be processed. If you have not yet attended an Open Morning, you will be invited to do so. If any information or documents are missing from your application (for example, a photocopy of your child's birth certificate or any School or relevant medical reports), we will contact you to request them. Should there be no vacant places in the appropriate Early Years place or Lower School class for your child, the date on your application form will also serve as the date he or she is entered onto the Lower School or Early Years waiting pool.

3. Oversubscription

Where a place in your chosen Class / Early Years is not available at the time of application, you will be invited by the Administrator to be entered into our waiting pool. Similarly, if your child is too young to start Rosebud Kindergarten (age three), or Garden Kindergarten (age four), or if there are no available places in any of the Kindergartens appropriate for your child's age, or in the age-appropriate Lower School Class, you will be offered a place in our waiting pool. In this instance, the date on the application form will constitute the date on which your entry onto the waiting list commences. The Administrator will keep you informed at regular intervals about the waiting pool situation and check with you whether you still wish to remain in it.

3a. For children from birth up to and including age three and also from the term following the fifth birthday and onwards the following criteria for selection in the event of oversubscription applies:

Please note this is not in order of preference (but in case of exceptional demand for places, the Collegiate reserves the right to put these criteria in order of preference in order to allocate places)

- Children already of school age. i.e. those that would be due to start school at the beginning of the next academic year
- Children with siblings already attending either Lower School or Early Years
- Length of time on the waiting list
- Children of Staff members
- Children whose parents intend them to stay at the school long term

- Children coming from another Steiner School
- Local children i.e. 5 mile radius from door to door (this can also be worded as the school's designated area)
- Children who have siblings who can be accommodated in other classes
- Existing pupil within the school
- The needs of the class as it exists

Please note that progression through the school is not guaranteed and a new application needs to be made at each transition stage i.e.. Parent and Child Group to Rosebud Kindergarten; Rosebud Kindergarten to Garden Kindergarten; Garden Kindergarten to Lower School.

Please also note that places in Class 1 are not guaranteed so parents are advised to ensure that a place is held for their child at their local state school. This is in case of any unforeseen eventuality which may determine that their child is unable to proceed in the Meadow School.

The waiting pool is kept up-to-date on a termly basis and the responsibility for this lies with the Administrator.

3b. For children from age four up to the end of the term in which the child turns five, the following applies:

In the waiting pool, priority for admission is given as follows (in order of preference):

- Children who are in public care (Looked after children)
- Children living in the school's designated area with a sibling who will be attending the setting at the time of admission
- Other children living in the area
- Children living outside the area, but with a sibling who will be attending the school at the time of admission
- Other children living outside the school's designated area

(A child who has a statement of Special Educational Needs where the nursery or Foundation Stage Unit is named on the statement will have precedence for a nursery or Foundation Stage Unit place.)

Please note that progression through the school is not guaranteed and a new application needs to be made at each transition stage i.e.. Parent and Child Group to Rosebud Kindergarten; Rosebud Kindergarten to Garden Kindergarten; Garden Kindergarten to Lower School.

Please also note that places in Class 1 are not guaranteed so parents are advised to ensure that a place is held for their child at their local state school. This is in case of any unforeseen eventuality which may determine that their child is unable to proceed in the Meadow School.

The waiting pool is kept up-to-date on a termly basis and the responsibility for this lies with the Administrator.

4. Next Steps - Funding and Needs to be considered

The Meadow School is committed to providing equal opportunities for all children, and will do its best to meet the individual needs of all applicants, where this is reasonably possible. Should your child need special assistance in the Kindertartens or in the Lower School, you will have a meeting with the teacher and SEN (Special Educational Needs) Co-ordinator to establish what help is needed to meet his/her

needs, and what can be provided. Please note that it may be possible for the School to access funding to assist children up to the age of compulsory schooling (five years) but thereafter this may not be possible. In such cases while we will liaise with external agencies and try to provide appropriate support and resources for all children with additional needs applying to our Lower School or Early Years, we may not be able to do so beyond this age where access to funding cannot be sourced.

Irrespective of your child's individual needs on their admission to the Lower School or Early Years, if the School feels that his or her needs have changed over time and that your child requires more support than they have hitherto received, you will be invited to meet with the teacher and the Special Needs Co-ordinator to discuss how the School can try to meet those needs. As stated above, it may not be possible for the School to do so if this would require access to additional funding which may be unavailable if your child has reached the compulsory school age. If this is the case, however, and parents/guardians are able to provide this funding themselves, the place would be considered if this funding would enable the school to fully meet the child's needs.

If children attending Early Years are receiving additional support through Local Authority funding, their continuing needs will be re-evaluated before they reach compulsory school age (which is the start of the term following the child's fifth birthday). Continued attendance in our Kindergarten from compulsory school age (and the cessation of any SEN funding) will depend on their needs at that time and the availability of resources in order to ensure a programme to meet their individual needs. After the age of five, parental contribution towards expenses for these resources may be necessary if they are to continue at The Meadow School.

If the parents/guardians of a child requiring additional support in the Early Years wish him/her to make the transition through to the Lower School at the age of six, the child's requirements and the School's capacity to meet them will also be re-evaluated during this application and admission process. This will also be the case for children applying directly to the Lower School, regardless of whether they attended the Kindergarten. In some circumstances, where appropriate funding and/or support is not accessible (beyond the age of five), the School may reach the conclusion that it is not possible to provide the specific support or resources that your child needs, but this will be a last recourse and all possible steps will be taken to try to avoid this outcome. **At no point will your child be discriminated against because of his or her individual needs. Our decision on whether to admit your child will be based solely on our capacity to meet those needs, and not on the existence of these needs.**

5. Receipt of Application

Receipt of your application will be acknowledged by the Admissions Officer within 5 working days.

5a. For children from birth up to and including age three and also from the term following the fifth birthday and onwards the following applies:

If it is clear that a child's needs are such that the school would be unable to meet them, the parents will be informed by the Admissions Officer, based on feedback from the relevant teacher, in liaison with the Collegiate and others, including the SENCO, as appropriate, as soon as this is clear, and at the latest on receipt of the application form. If there is any doubt, or if the parents wish to apply anyway and discuss the situation further, the application would proceed to interview/be placed in the waiting pool as appropriate.

In Early Years interviews are held in the Autumn and Easter/Summer terms or as places arise, taking into consideration the above mentioned criteria. The Admissions Officer will be responsible for liaising a suitable date and time for the interview. This

is followed up with a familiarisation picnic before the start of the year. Again the Admissions Officer will contact you with details of the picnic. In Lower School the interview is a few weeks prior to the date the child would be due to start. The interview is arranged with two members of staff, including the child's prospective teacher, and staff will together decide if a particular child is developmentally and educationally well placed in the school. At this meeting the staff will describe a typical day for the age group and explain about Steiner (Waldorf) pedagogy. The School staff will also request information from the parent(s) about the child's personal history and any previous childcare and/or educational experiences.

The expectations of the parents will also be discussed. It is important to us to protect the integrity of the work we do in our school and consequently staff will discuss with parents how our learning environment has a distinctly different character from other educational settings. Where a child attends part-time (e.g. in the Early Years) it would be expected that a child would not normally attend another setting for any of the days that a child does not attend our school. There are distinct pedagogical reasons for this, which staff can explain at the interview.

In Rosebud Kindergarten a child will attend 3 (or sometimes 2) mornings a week. In Garden Kindergarten the 4 year olds attend 4 mornings a week and the older children are expected to attend every day. Of course in either Kindergarten a younger child is welcome to attend more days if this is appropriate. The children benefit from the daily rhythm and repetition and the chance to foster friendships. It is also important for the older children to experience a full week of Kindergarten, as the activities offered each day are different.

In the Lower School, children are expected to attend all the sessions timetabled for their class. This commences at five mornings and one afternoon in Class I (aged 6/7), increasing to five full days by Class IV (age 9/10) and above.

The interview staff will inform the parent(s) at interview when they will hear about whether they have a place and a start date. Under normal circumstances this will be within one week of interview, but under exceptional circumstances may be longer. Prior to a place being offered, written or verbal reports from previous schools will be taken up.

Assuming the interview is satisfactory, the child will be offered a place, initially for a trial period. In the Early Years and Lower School, a trial period would always be at least a term and may be longer. Parents will be issued with a Parents' Handbook and all relevant paper work.

The Class/Early Years teacher may wish to arrange with parents a home visit before or after the child starts, as necessary.

The decision of whether to accept or to reject an application for admission is taken by school staff. The parents are informed of the decision. The Admissions Officer will write the letter in collaboration with the relevant teachers and SENCO where relevant. The possibilities are as follows:

- **Further Information Required**

This would, it is hoped, be a rare event. It could occur when there is a need for clarification of information given verbally at the interview, or when more details of a particular difficulty surrounding the child are required.

- **Acceptance**

The application is accepted, with the condition that the acceptance is provisional during at least the first term and may be extended to a full three terms if necessary. This allows for proper reviews to take place. Parents /guardians would be advised of the situation towards the end of the first term. If there is no cause for concern, then confirmation of acceptance would be made towards the end of

the child's first term. If a review meeting is deemed necessary as the trial period is being extended beyond the first term then this would be attended by the parents, the teacher and a colleague, ideally a teacher who also knows the child. During the trial period of the first term or longer, one month's notice may be given by the parents or by the school.

- **Acceptance with Conditions Applied**

Any special circumstances relating to curriculum provision for the child e.g. Learning Support provision or adaptation of the educational provision in order to accommodate the child's medical needs (e.g. only able to attend for limited periods each day) must be specified. The letter of acceptance must also include: any additional costs to the parents of meeting such conditions; the procedure for reviewing the pupil's progress (e.g. the goals to be met, the maintenance of independent work habits, etc.); the date for the review(s) (approximate, e.g. at the first half-term or the exact date).

- **Acceptance is in Doubt**

The appropriate teacher with the Administrator or a teaching colleague, to take minutes, will meet the parents to discuss the doubts about the school being able to meet the needs of the child. Following this meeting it may be decided to accept the child under certain specified conditions (as above, or some other way of meeting the child's needs).

- **Rejection**

The parents will be sent a standard letter by the Admissions Officer based on feedback from the relevant teachers, stating that we are unable to meet the educational needs of their child. If additional reasons need to be given, then clarity will be sought from the College of Teachers (or the person delegated by College to advise on such issues) on the terminology to be used.

Record Keeping

Following the decision-making and communication process the interview forms and all other relevant papers are filed in the School Office.

If both the teacher and the parent are in agreement the child may start at the school at the beginning of the next term or half term. As our numbers increase our new intake may be restricted to September.

5b. For children from age four up to the end of term in which the child turns five the following applies:

On receipt of your application, where a place is available, the Admissions Officer will send you a Letter of Acceptance offering a place for your child in the appropriate Kindergarten and enclosing all legal, medical and financial forms which will need to be completed and returned to the Admissions Officer. The Admissions Officer will give you a date by which they must be returned. You will also receive a Parents' Handbook, which contains a great deal of useful information about how the School is run.

If your child has not been accepted and/or admitted, you will receive a letter from the Admissions Officer, who will be informed by teachers and the SENCO where relevant, explaining why the application has not been successful. You will be sent this letter within five days of the decision being made. You will have the right to appeal this decision within 15 days from receipt of the Admissions Officer's letter. The appeal procedures will be included in that letter.

Enrolment and Admission

Once all forms have been received by the Admissions Officer and financial

arrangements have been made, your child is formally enrolled at the School and may begin. If your child's start date is not the beginning of the academic year, the Admissions Officer will coordinate a start date with you. Where the School feels that it would be appropriate for your child's needs, his or her initial transition into the School may be staggered (i.e. starting with a smaller number of days/hours) or otherwise adapted in consultation with parents, the teacher and, where appropriate, the Special Needs Co-ordinator.

The first half term is considered a trial period in order to ensure that the School is able to meet your child's needs. During this period, the Early Years teachers will review and share with you your child's progress and level of integration into the class. In some cases, an extended trial period may be requested by the teacher. Please note that acceptance into the Meadow School at any stage does not guarantee a place at the next stage. A new application form will need to be completed at each stage. Thus this admissions procedure is applied each step of the way.

Please be aware that voluntary withdrawal by a child's parents / guardians after formal acceptance has been confirmed and the contract is signed is subject to a half term's notice or a half term's fees in lieu of notice being payable. This is the case whether withdrawal should take place mid-term or at the end of a school year.

Meeting

In Garden Kindergarten, prior to the child's start date but after you have been formally offered a place, you will be invited to an informal post-acceptance meeting. This is followed up with a familiarisation picnic before the start of the year. The meeting is arranged with two members of staff, including the child's prospective teacher, and the SENCO, if this is deemed appropriate. This is done as and when a place becomes available, when your child reaches the appropriate age to start Garden Kindergarten, or an assessment of your child's needs and/or the School's ability to cater for them is required.

The teacher and SENCO, if this is relevant, will together decide if a particular child is developmentally and educationally well placed in the school. At this meeting the staff will describe a typical day for the age group and explain about Steiner (Waldorf) pedagogy. The School staff will also request information from the parent(s) about the child's personal history and any previous childcare and/or educational experiences.

The expectations of the parents will also be discussed. It is important to us to protect the integrity of the work we do in our school and consequently staff will discuss with parents how our learning environment has a distinctly different character from other educational settings. As the child attends part-time it would be expected that a child would not normally attend another setting for any of the days that a child does not attend our school. There are distinct pedagogical reasons for this, which staff can explain at the meeting.

In the Garden Kindergarten a four-year-old child should attend four times a week. The older children are expected to attend every day. Of course in the Kindergarten a younger child is welcome to attend every day if this is appropriate. The children benefit from the daily rhythm and repetition and the chance to foster friendships. It is also important for the children to experience a full week of Kindergarten, as the activities offered each day are different. The Garden Kindergarten teacher may wish to arrange with parents a home visit before or after the child starts, as necessary.

Record Keeping

Following the decision-making and communication process, the interview forms and all other relevant papers are filed in the School Office.

If both the teacher and the parent are in agreement the child may start at the school at the beginning of the next term or half term. As our numbers increase our new intake may be restricted to September.

Please note that places in Class 1 are not guaranteed so parents are advised to ensure that a place is held for your child at their local state school. This is in case of any unforeseen eventuality which may determine that your child is unable to proceed in the Meadow School.

OTHER COMMITMENTS

The most obvious commitment a parent/guardian makes to the school is in paying the fees. Please note that in Early Years there are two parts to the fees; the main fee plus a small amount which covers extra services that are provided by Steiner Schools. These extra services include the home visits by the teacher, a high level of parent-teacher consultations by phone and at face to face meetings, which are in addition to those offered annually; and hand-made gifts for birthdays and other occasions. The cost of highly nutritious and, where possible, organic food and the high quality natural materials for all crafts and play equipment and festival resources. Parents/guardians with children age three to five may claim the National Early Years Grant (Early Years Entitlement) and are therefore only expected to pay a small fee themselves which covers these extra services.

In addition to the financial contribution (i.e. the fees), we ask for a commitment to the whole school. All parents are expected to participate in the cleaning rota for the premises (usually once per term). Other commitments are:

- **Fundraising** - the school relies heavily on fundraising activities to support its running costs and this can take the form of co-ordinating events, making crafts, manning stalls and providing produce for sale, baking and/or providing ingredients for coffee mornings, various support for events and annual fairs.
- **Class Representatives** - Two parents per class who provide specific support to the teacher (for details see Parents' Handbook).
- **Birthday Cakes** - in Early Years the teacher/assistant will make the cake though there may be occasions when parents will be required to make them at home and in this instance a recipe and ingredients will be provided. In Lower School the parents bake one cake a year for a child in the class.

It is important for parents to be aware of this commitment before they send their children to the school.

In addition, the School warmly welcomes parents to contribute whatever other time and support they are able to offer. The School is always in need of people with a diverse range of skills, including those with building/carpentry skills, those who are artistic, parents with financial/administrative skills or an interest in fundraising activities and events.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Admissions Procedure, and we look forward to welcoming you and your family to The Meadow School.