



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 Ballarat 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 his/her way to the school through varied and individual circumstances.
- 1.2 Ballarat Steiner School currently sets class sizes at 22 students and Kindergarten at 16 students (per session.) Within these limits it is open to all children of varying abilities with the belief that each child is gifted in one or more ways; for example, academic, practical, social, cultural or other and irrespective of religion, race or gender.

2. ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

- 2.1 After the initial parent enquiry, an information pack is forwarded to the prospective parent/guardian. This includes:
- * A brochure, which includes information on the philosophy of the Ballarat Steiner School and Kindergarten and an overall picture of the school and curriculum
 - * Key educational policies
 - * Information on the Enrolment Application Fees payable prior to enrolment
 - * Information on Current Fees for School and Early Childhood and/or school programmes, including Music and Eurythmy 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 invite the parents to an upcoming Open Day or offer an informal school tour and introduction to the prospective class teacher or another staff member as delegated by the class teacher. In the Kindergarten, this may alternatively take place on the telephone for early enrolments.

2.3 Discussion during the school tour will include:

- * Explanation of the Entry Age Policy. (Refer to 2.4 for details)
- * Explanation of the School Entry Process. (Refer to point 3)
- * 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.

This overview should be given by either administrative 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 the year they turn 4 years old
- * Kindergarten the year they turn 5 years of age
- * Prep program the year they turn 6 years old
- * To be eligible to enter into Class 1, a child must be going to turn 7 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, especially in regard to children born later in the year who may not be ready for 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 computerised data base and Kinder Application forwarded to Kinder Teacher.
2. **PLEASE NOTE:** The **Application Date** is considered to be the date that the application fee is received to accompany the application form.

3. KINDERGARTEN AND SCHOOL ENTRY PROCESS

3.1 Commencing prior to Kindergarten (to be initiated when numbers can be accommodated).

- * 22 Prep places will be offered to pre-kinder children. This will occur prior to the commencement of term 4 of the year preceding 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 two categories of students:
 1. Those entitled to an automatic place (See 3.1.1 below)
 2. Those whose school place will be determined by an **Enrolment Panel** which may include:
 - * Playgroup leader
 - * Kinder teacher
 - * Prep teacher
 - * Class teacher/s

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 3.1.3 i)
- * Children of previous students
- * The siblings of a child who is enrolled in our school

3.1.2 Enrolment Interview

When 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 behaviour
- * The degree of support for and commitment to Steiner education
- * Siblings
- * Attendance at another Steiner school
- * Fee payment record of the family

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- * 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

- i. 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 classroom assistant.
- ii. The school procedures for accepting a child into an already established group applies to Kindergarten as well. (See points 3.2 below)

3.2 Entry into an established group

There are to be 22 places in each class from Prep to Class 6 unless a variation is approved by the College of Teachers. 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 Business Manager

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

Information should be given on FEES, Conveyance Allowance Education Maintenance Allowance and 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 at this meeting.

Advice on the tax deductible fund in the school (Building Fund) should also be given, encouraging contributions to this fund. This information may be conveyed to groups of Early Childhood enrolments at information sessions. For example, at information 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 observational 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 a 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 his/her 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 program for the child's growth and development and the parent's expectations will be discussed.

- vi. The class teacher will contact the child's previous school/s in an attempt to further enhance the picture of the prospective student.
- vii. For children with special needs we ask that all information be given in the parent interview.

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 the College of Teachers, to establish parameters for the child and parents to re-enter the class community.

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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. The letter should specify the starting date for the child/ren.
- * the child should begin in the class on an agreed commencement date and be entered on the Class Roll and recorded as an enrolment on the data base.
- * as the school works in cooperation with parents and in the best interests of the children, parents and class teachers will meet at the next 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.

Refer to the Fee Payment Policy for exclusion on financial grounds.

5. WAITING LIST MANAGEMENT

5.1 Existing Class Groups (ie Kindergarten to Class 6)

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 in Classes 1 to 6, unless a variation is approved by the College of Teachers. There are up to 16 places per session 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 behaviour

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- * 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.

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 by the Management Team in Term 3.

5.2 Early Childhood Places for Playgroup, Ring a Rosie

There are usually 10 families per group in Playgroup and 16 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.

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 with 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 Bursar 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 ISV applications due in September each year). Medical reports are required as part of this application process to ISV.

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. A welcoming twilight picnic is also held in the first 2 weeks of the school year.

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, kindergarten and playgroup community 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 with 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 2009**

Date to be Reviewed: **August 2011**