



The St Michael Steiner School

Information Pack

2016-17

Term Dates 2016-17

MICHAELMAS TERM 2016

5 September (Monday) – INSET DAY (no school)
6 September (Tuesday) – INSET DAY (no school)
7 September (Wednesday) – First Day of Term
20 October (Thursday) – School Ends for Half-Term
21 October (Friday) – INSET DAY (no school)
31 October (Monday) – Back to School
16 December (Friday) – End of Term

SPRING TERM 2017

9 January (Monday) – INSET DAY (no school)
10 January (Tuesday) – First Day of Term
9 February (Thursday) – School Ends for Half-Term
10 February (Friday) – INSET DAY (no school)
20 February (Monday) – Back to School
31 March (Friday) – End of Term

SUMMER TERM 2017

24 April (Monday) – INSET DAY (no school)
25 April (Tuesday) – First Day of Term
1 May (Monday) – May Day Bank Holiday (no school)
25 May (Thursday) – School Ends for Half-Term
26 May (Friday) – INSET DAY (no school)
5 June (Monday) – Back to School
7 July (Friday) – End of School Year

Open Days 2016-17

AUTUMN TERM

SATURDAY 8TH OCTOBER, 2016 — 11_{AM}-2_{PM}

THURSDAY 10TH NOVEMBER, 2016 — 11_{AM}-1_{PM}

SATURDAY 19TH NOVEMBER, 2016 — 11_{AM}-2_{PM}

SPRING TERM

SATURDAY 28TH JANUARY, 2017 — 11_{AM}-2_{PM}

THURSDAY 2ND MARCH, 2017 — 11_{AM}-1_{PM}

SATURDAY 18TH MARCH, 2017 — 11_{AM}-2_{PM}

SUMMER TERM

SATURDAY 6TH MAY, 2017 — 11_{AM}-2_{PM}

THURSDAY 18TH MAY, 2017 — 11_{AM}-1_{PM}

SATURDAY 24TH JUNE, 2017 — 11_{AM}-2_{PM}

Throughout the year there may be weekday Open Days and High School Open Evenings. Please check our website for updated details of Open Days.

www.stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk/information/opendays.php

SCHOOL HOURS

KINDERGARTENS

8:30am - 12:30pm Monday to Friday

(See Early Years Handbook for details of Forest School, Parent & Child Groups and afternoon activities.)

CLASSES 1, 2, 3 and 4

8:30am - 3:00pm Monday to Thursday

8:30am - 12:30pm Friday

CLASSES 5, 6, and 7

8:30am - 3:00pm Monday to Friday

HIGH SCHOOL

8:30am - 3:45pm Monday to Friday

We do not have Class 8 or Class 10 this year.

Frequently-asked questions about Steiner Waldorf Education

Why do some of the children have half days?

In the Kindergarten, the children are very active and many are still used to having a nap in the afternoon, so we find that they are tired at the end of the morning. They also need time to adjust to the group, the rhythm of the day and the social interaction. The school understands that many parents need to work and so offers afternoon care for the Kindergarten children. In Class 1, good working habits need to be established in the class early on, the work is more directed, they need to learn to concentrate and there is still a great deal of physical activity. Depending on what the teachers feel is best, there is usually at least one half day (Friday) in Classes 1 – 3. Details of current school hours are on our website.

How can I tell how my child is doing?

At the end of each year, beginning in Class 1, the Class Teacher will provide a written report about each child. These reports are primarily for parents, but they can be shared with older children. At the end of Class 2 many Class Teachers screen the whole class for reading, writing and numeracy, but the close and continuous relationship between the Class Teacher and the children makes it possible for the children's progress to be monitored very closely and any difficulties can be spotted early. Regular communication with parents through individual meetings at teachers' surgeries and parents' meetings helps to keep parents informed and provides an opportunity for parents to voice any concerns they have about their children's education.

Why are parents asked not to let their children watch TV when they are young?

Television, as well as videos, film, DVDs, recorded music, computers and electronic games have a very powerful effect on children. It can take several days for the effects of a single video to wear off. If children are watching every day, the effects never wear off at all; many children now speak a lot of the time in 'cartoon' voices, make 'sound effects' to accompany their jerky movements and compulsively repeat lines from videos they have seen over and over again. This is now seen as 'normal' childish behaviour, but it comes from these media, not from the children themselves.

In Steiner Waldorf schools, the teaching relies very much on the child taking in the content of a lesson, going home and sleeping and then coming back the next day to recall and work with it. During the night, the lesson will have been digested, together with the mental pictures made by the child himself, and he is able to relate to and understand it better than he could the previous day. If children are watching, listening to or playing with any electronic devices, the strong images and noises overwhelm the subtle pictures they have formed within themselves with their own imagination and shut them out, so that, when you say 'princess', or 'ogre' the child will only be able to picture a Disney princess or Shrek; the opportunity to use his own imagination is denied him. Young children need real human beings to imitate in order to develop in a healthy way, and if they are exposed to these distorted pictures, sounds and actions on a daily basis they will imitate them instead while their senses gradually become numbed to finer, real human qualities.

"The child in the first 7 years is wholly sense-organ, and reacts to all the impressions aroused in him by the people around him. Therefore the essential thing is not to imagine that the child can be taught what is good or bad, that he can be taught this or that, but to know that everything that is done in his presence is transformed in his childish organism into spirit, soul and body."

Rudolf Steiner

What is Eurythmy?

Eurythmy is an artistic form of movement which relates both to speech and to music; different movements correspond to different sounds or notes so that the sound becomes visible. Eurythmy lessons are given throughout the school. Eurythmy is also used in curative education and can help with many learning and behavioural problems.

What kind of games lessons do the children have?

At first, the children play games which help them to develop social skills, to master their own bodies and which help them to grow in a balanced way rather than encourage them to test and measure themselves against each other. Although competition is not actively discouraged, it is something that comes naturally to the children and does not need to be encouraged in a formal way through sports. The children do not play competitive team sports until they are about 12, when they are old enough to co-operate, to appreciate the games for their own sake - rather than just to win - and to cope with losing. From Class 3 they also do something called 'Bothmer Gymnastics', which has been developed in Steiner Waldorf schools and is taught by instructors who undergo four years' training in movement and physiology. In Class 5 the children train in classical athletics - long distance running, sprinting, javelin, discus, high and long jump and also classical wrestling - and, at the end of the year, take part in a national 'Greek Olympics' at Michael Hall school in Sussex. Activities such as swimming, skating, climbing and cycling can also be arranged to suit individual classes.

Do the children use computers?

Most children are using computers and smart phones at home from an early age now. IT is introduced in Steiner Waldorf schools after the age of 14. Children in younger classes may be asked to do some research for homework or a project, but usually not before Class 5. We have not found that starting IT later disadvantages the children in terms of acquiring the necessary skills - or in any way - on the contrary, there is a great deal of concern over the harm done by introducing young children to screen media. Generally, while we acknowledge that the children are growing up in the city in the 21st century and see this technology being used all around them all the time, we find that children who are not exposed to these things when they are young, are able to focus, learn, think and work much better than those who are. These are essential life skills that previous generations were able to develop without the intrusion of electronic technology, so we advise parents that it is in their children's best interests to keep them away from it as much as possible until they are old enough to engage with it consciously. A more detailed picture can be found in the 'Screens and Teens' article on the Articles and Publications page on our website at www.stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk/information/articles.html

Are there any exams in Steiner Waldorf Schools?

There are no state exams (SATS) in the Lower or Middle school (Classes 1 - 8) in privately funded Steiner Waldorf schools, however, individual schools and teachers do test the children as and when they feel it is appropriate. Spelling tests, times tables, mental arithmetic and other maths tests are used regularly to challenge the children and to keep track of their progress.

Everyone in the Waldorf movement is aware of the demands of university entrance as well as the need to provide vocational courses for students who don't want to go into higher education, but who will, by 2015, have to stay at school or in training until they are 18. At the same time, teachers working in Upper Schools have experienced that the inclusion of GCSE and A Level courses in the Upper School timetable inevitably compromises the Waldorf curriculum to an unacceptable extent.

The St Michael High School offers assessment and certification through the Steiner School Certificate (SSC). This is a programme of secondary school qualifications, owned and quality-managed by the Federation of Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Schools in New Zealand Inc, who accredit schools to deliver the programme, and award the Steiner School Certificates at Levels 1, 2 and 3. A detailed, rigorous and credible external moderation system to provide and ensure consistency and robustness to this qualification has been established and approved; it describes the requirements and processes of standardising, controlling, managing and assuring the quality of assessment against NQF levels, as well as assessment procedures, coherence and consistency between the schools.

Internationally, the SSC Level 3 certificate is recognised for university entrance in all countries that have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention, i.e. all EU member states (except Greece and Monaco) plus UNESCO members including Australia, New Zealand and Israel. USA and Canada have also signed but have not yet ratified the treaty.

The SSC at Level 3 with University Entrance Levels in Maths and English has been deemed equivalent to A Level by NARIC UK. In 2015/2016, Class 12 students from The St Michael Steiner School applied to universities in the UK through UCAS in the usual way, with their predicted grades in SSC Level 3, and were offered places at the universities of their choice on that basis.

The reason we chose to offer the SSC in preference to GCSEs and A-Levels because it does not prescribe a programme of study. GCSEs and A-Levels assess a specific syllabus, which is set by the examination board, but the SSC assesses skills and understanding, which can be demonstrated through any content. This means that we are free to teach what we think is best for our students, and to change and adapt our curriculum as needed.

What if a child and his/her Class Teacher don't get on?

This very rarely happens, simply because the core of a Class Teacher's work is to understand and work with each child's needs and temperament, so that it is absolutely essential that a relationship of mutual trust and respect is established. If this was not felt to be happening, the teachers would work together with the Class Teacher and with the child's parents to determine the best course of action.

Who is in charge if there is no Head Teacher?

Each school is independent and self governing but the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship advises all schools in the UK and Ireland. Steiner Waldorf schools are also inspected by SIS (Schools Inspection Service) and are required to meet statutory requirements before being fully registered with the DfE. Different schools are organised in different ways. At The St Michael Steiner School, the teachers, carry collective responsibility for the school, working as a 'College'. The work of running the school is delegated to individuals - the Bursar, the Administrator, individual College members - and smaller groups as needed.

How are Steiner Waldorf schools funded?

At present, there are 3 publicly funded Steiner Waldorf 'Academies' in the UK. At the moment, there is funding available from the government for 3&4 year olds in most Kindergartens. All other Steiner Waldorf schools are charities funded entirely from parental and voluntary contributions and, because they do not wish to be exclusive, believing that it is healthy for children from all backgrounds to learn to live together, school fees are generally lower than in other private schools

and bursaries are offered wherever possible. This usually means that the budget is tight and fundraising is a necessary part of school life.

Who do I go to with questions or concerns?

If you have any questions or concerns about your child, you should go first to his/her Class Teacher, but you may also approach any other teacher. *Please do not try to speak to Class Teachers before school in the morning, but make an appointment.* If you then feel that your problem has not been dealt with adequately, you should write to the College of Teachers and, if necessary, an agreed third party may be called in to mediate. For questions about other matters, you can also contact any College member or ask the Administrator for advice on who to speak to.

Application procedure

- If you would like to visit the school or speak to a member of staff please phone to make an appointment.
- If you would like to apply for a place in the school for your child(ren), please complete and return the Application form with any supporting documentation and admin fee. All documents supplied will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- When your application has been received, we will contact you within one week to arrange an interview for your child with the relevant teacher(s), which will take about an hour, and also a financial interview with the bursar.
- The interviews will be discussed at the next teachers' meeting and you will be advised of the outcome within one week of the interview.
- Once your child has been offered a place into the school, subject to the terms and conditions of probation (see below), you will receive an Acceptance Pack with your letter of acceptance. This will include term dates, school hours and other practical information.
- Any offer of a place is initially subject to a probationary term, during which your child may leave (or be asked to leave) without notice and your deposit will be returned.
- £1000 deposit is required upon acceptance of a place. The Deposit will be held until payment for your child(ren)'s last term in the school has been received. Arrangements can be made to pay the deposit over the child's first term in the school, since this is, anyway, probationary.
- We have added your details to our mailing list so you can receive our newsletter and information about the school and related issues. If you do not wish to receive this information please let us know.

What happens at the interview?

Kindergarten children are not interviewed separately but should accompany their parents. Please see the Early Years Handbook on our website for more information.

Classes 1 - 12: when you bring your child for an interview at The St Michael Steiner School he/she will spend up to an hour with the prospective Class Teacher and another teacher.

They will have a conversation about the child's likes and dislikes, interests and activities.

There will be some movement, for example skipping, jumping, clapping rhythms, throwing and catching.

Depending on the age of the child, he/she may also be asked to read and write something, to do few sums and to draw some forms and a picture.

Everything is carried out in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere so that the child can behave as

normally as possible and does not feel he/she is being tested.

All of this is done so that the teachers can see whether the child is well co-ordinated and in which areas his/her strengths and weaknesses lie – all children have both.

There is no question of a child ‘failing’ an interview; the only reasons we would turn a child away at this stage is if we did not feel that we could meet his/her needs in some way with the staff and facilities available.

Terms of Acceptance and Probation

All children are accepted into the school subject to interview, the agreement of financial terms and payment of the required deposit. The first term is probationary for the school and for parents; if it is not working out for any reason the child can leave or be asked to leave without giving notice. Thereafter, a term’s notice is required or a term’s fees in lieu of notice.

During the probationary term, parents should be in regular contact with the Class Teacher to find out if there are any problems and if the child is settling well. Half way through the term, the Class Teacher will discuss the child’s progress with the other teachers. If there is any question about the child continuing in the school, the parents will be informed and consulted at this stage. A decision will be made by the end of the child’s ninth week in the school and parents will be informed in writing. The decision may be any of the following:

The child is accepted.

The child is not accepted.

The child is accepted with conditions – e.g. extra lessons, seeing the doctor, curative eurythmy.

The child is given a further term’s probation. (Probation can be extended up to three times after which a final decision must be made.)

If a child is not accepted, the parents will be given the opportunity to discuss the reasons for the decision and an agreement should be reached about when and how to tell the child.

Financial Information

Application/registration fee per child £50

Deposit payable on acceptance of place
(held until final term payment received) £1,000.00

Tuition Fees For 2016-17	Per Annum
Kindergarten 5 mornings (part-time pro rata) :	£6700.00
Afternoon Care for Kindergarten :	£17/session/child
Parent & Child :	£6/session/family
Class 1 :	£8100.00
Class 2 :	£8300.00
Class 3 :	£8500.00
Class 4 :	£8800.00
Class 5 :	£9000.00
Class 6 :	£9100.00
Class 7 :	£9150.00
Class 8 :	£9200.00
Class 9 :	£9300.00
Class 10 :	£9400.00
Class 11 :	£11000.00
Class 12 :	£11300.00

Payment

- Tuition charges can be paid in full at the beginning of the year or for each term at the beginning of the relevant term or by 10 monthly installments (September – June).
- If paying by 10 monthly installments we require payment by standing order mandate.
- Withdrawal of a child requires one full term's notice or the payment of a full term's fees.

Possible extra costs

- School trips
- Child-specific items such as eurythmy shoes, readers, recorders
- Additional tuition eg. languages, maths, music, learning support as needed
- We also ask each family to make a donation to the Bursary Fund if possible

Discounts available

- Sibling discounts available upon request and given according to need.
- Bursaries are available on application. Closing date for bursary applications for 2015/16 will be announced later in the year. Bursaries may be available after this date if all available funds have not been allocated.

Recommended Reading List

Books on Steiner Waldorf Education

Waldorf Education, C. Clouder and Martyn Rawson; Floris Books

Education Towards Freedom, F. Carlgren; Lanthorn Press

School as a Journey, Torin Finser; Hawthorn Press

Early Childhood

You are your Child's First Teacher, Rahima Baldwin; Celestial Arts, California

Work and Play in Early Childhood, F. Jaffke; Floris Books

The Incarnating Child, J. Salter; Hawthorn Press

A Guide to Child Health, M. Glocker and W. Goebel; Floris Books

The Genius of Play, Sally Jenkinson; Hawthorn Press

Well, I Wonder: Childhood in the Modern World. Sally Schweizer, Sophia Books

Practical Activities and Festivals

All Year Round, A. Druitt, C. Fynes-Clinton, M. Rowling; Hawthorn Press

The Children's Year, C. Fynes-Clinton, M. Rowling, S. Cooper; Hawthorn Press

Lifestyle and Child Development

Phases of Child Development, B. Lievegoed; Floris Books

Who's Bringing them Up?, M. Large; Hawthorn Press

Fool's Gold, E. Miller; Alliance for Childhood

Ready to Learn, M. Rawson, M. Rose; Hawthorn Press

Free your Child's True Potential, M. Rawson; Hodder & Stoughton

Books by Rudolf Steiner

Anthroposophy in Everyday Life; Rudolf Steiner Press

Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy; Anthroposophic Press

The Spirit of the Waldorf School; Anthroposophic Press

Understanding the Human Being; Rudolf Steiner Press

Books available from Rudolf Steiner Bookshop and library, 35 Park Road, London NW1 6XT

Tel: 020 7723 4400. Most are also available from Amazon or any online bookseller.