



***The St Michael Steiner School***

# Parents' Handbook

2015 / 2016

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## **Information for BACS payments:**

Account name: THE ST MICHAEL STEINER SCHOOL LTD.

Account number: 65098413

Bank: THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK

Sort code: 08-92-99

*Please quote your child's name as a reference so that we can identify your payment.*

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## About the School

The St Michael Steiner School was founded in 2001 by teachers who have many years' experience of working in London. Our vision has always been to establish a Steiner school which is an integral part of the community and which really addresses the needs of the children who live in this city. The cosmopolitan nature of life in London brings the children into daily contact with people from many different backgrounds, so that the diversity of human culture is a living experience. By nurturing in the children a deep respect for all human beings and an enthusiastic and active interest in the world, we aim to help them orientate themselves towards whatever comes to meet them in life, while they are growing and when they are adults.

*"Those people who do not allow the current crisis of civilisation to pass by in a kind of soul sleep, but fully experience it, will see that it did not originate in institutions that simply missed their goals and that simply need improvement. Those people will look for the cause deep in human thinking, feeling and will. They will also acknowledge that the education of the coming generation is one of the ways leading to a revitalisation of our social life." Rudolf Steiner*

## The Early Years

In Steiner Waldorf schools, like many educational systems in Europe, formal learning does not begin until the children are in their seventh year. The time when they naturally become ready for school is usually marked by the change of teeth. Before that, all of their life forces are needed to develop a strong, healthy body; to draw on these forces for intellectual work during the first seven years would be to compromise that development

'The Early Years' in our school means provision for children in the first seven years. This includes Parent and Child Groups and Kindergarten. Parents can bring their children to Parent and Child Groups from birth; these are as much an opportunity for parents to meet and talk to each other as for their children to play. They can also provide an introduction to Steiner Waldorf Education as they are organised and run by trained teachers out of an anthroposophical understanding of the young child.

Between the ages of three and seven, the real work of children is their creative free play, through which their will forces are strengthened while, at the same time, they learn to become social beings and integrate into a group. The Kindergarten provides an environment for this play and one in which the children can learn about the world through healthy imitation, which is the natural impulse of children at this age. Toys are of natural materials and as unfinished as possible - simple dolls, plain wooden trucks, stones and sticks for building, as well as planks, tables, chairs and play stands for larger structures, pieces of cloth in beautiful colours for dressing up, wrapping dolls and making walls - so that the child can 'finish' them with his or her own imagination. There are also more structured activities during the morning such as painting, drawing, sewing, beeswax modelling, baking and simple woodwork as well as more formal, adult-led social ones like puppet shows, story telling, Eurythmy, circle games, singing and small meals prepared and eaten together.

A clear daily, weekly and seasonal rhythm brings a sense of belonging and security, allowing each child to develop at his or her own pace. Then, about half way through their seventh year, the children are usually ready to enter the Lower School.

*"In the beginning the child just plays, but he plays in earnest. There is only one difference between the play of the child and the work of the adult. It is that the adult adapts himself to the outer utility that the world demands; his work is determined from without. Play is determined from within, through the being of the child which wants to unfold. Up to now very little has been done to introduce the child in the right way to the complicated life of today. It is the task of the school gradually to lead him over from play into work. If we once find the answer to the question how can we metamorphose play into work, we shall have solved the fundamental problem of all early years education. Our basis ought to be the fact that the small child's most ardent wish is to imitate the work of grown up people, whether it is done with a spade or a knitting needle."*

*Rudolf Steiner*

## The Lower School

Teachers in Steiner Waldorf schools work out of Anthroposophy and, through their own continuing observation of the children, try to meet their changing needs in a creative and living way, bringing them challenges as well as encouragement and joy in their work. In order to be able to work in this way, a good relationship must grow between teacher and child and between teacher and parent; ideally the children have the same Class Teacher from class 1 to class 8 - age 7 to 14 - so that this three-way relationship can develop and each child's strengths and weaknesses are brought into balance as far as possible.

*"If you notice in the right way, with sensitivity, what wants to develop in people at six or seven years of age, and if you have not become a teacher but are a teacher, then an awareness for this most wonderful riddle awakens through the innermost living forces ... the developing person continuously offers himself to your soul's eye."*  
Rudolf Steiner

## The Main Lesson

The Class Teacher takes the 'Main Lesson', a two-hour lesson first thing every morning in which subjects such as writing and reading, maths, mythology and, later, geography, history and sciences are taught individually in three or four week blocks. In this way, each topic can be entered into deeply and thoroughly for that time and, through continuity, the children can form a strong connection with their work. The Main Lesson is carefully and rhythmically structured so that the children have to listen, work independently, participate and think at different times and also so that their artistic and imaginative nature is developed; Main Lessons often involve singing, music, recitation, movement, painting and stories as well as writing and drawing.

## Subject Lessons

Subject lessons in eurythmy, games, music, knitting, painting, modelling, form drawing, foreign languages and religion are taught from class 1 onwards, sometimes by the Class Teacher and sometimes by specialist teachers. The more intellectual subject lessons are in the morning after the Main Lesson wherever possible, with artistic and practical ones in the afternoon. Other subjects, such as crochet, sewing, woodwork, gardening and gym, are introduced later, each at an appropriate age to meet the developmental needs of the children.

*"It will always be a question of finding out what the development of the child demands at each age of life. For this we need real observation and knowledge of Man. The child up to the 9th or 10th year is really demanding that the whole world shall be made alive, because he does not yet see himself as separate from it. In the form of stories, descriptions and pictorial representations of all kinds, we give the child in an artistic form what he himself finds in his own soul."* Rudolf Steiner

## The High School

In Steiner Waldorf schools, when the children are in their fifteenth year, they go into the Upper, or High School. The Main Lesson blocks are now taught by specialist teachers. Classes 9 - 12 (or 13) no longer have a Class Teacher, but a Class Guardian who oversees their pastoral care and may teach some Main Lessons or subject lessons. In September 2012, The St Michael Steiner School opened Class 9 with the intention to add Classes 10 - 12 year by year. Our first Class 12 will graduate in 2016. The curriculum is based on study of the physical, soul and spiritual development of 14 to 18 year olds in the context of the needs of the world in which they live and their own individual needs, aspirations and interests.

A special emphasis on the particular resources that London has to offer, such as art, theatre, music, architecture, teaching hospitals, universities, the British Library, museums and easy transport to Europe and the rest of Britain, for example, will be a characteristic of the school. Our premises on the edge of Hanworth Park offer plenty of opportunity for the practical aspects of the curriculum, such as building and metalwork.

The programme includes a broad range of subjects with a balance between experiential learning (learning through doing) and intellectual learning. We recognise the need for practical work, arts and a scientific approach to be integrated across the curriculum. Through these, pupils will be able to develop independence, resourcefulness, responsibility, initiative and an active interest in their own education and in the world.

Alongside development of their own interests, there is a social need for young people to engage with the people and environment in which they live. The cultivation of interest in and a feeling of responsibility towards their fellow human beings will have far-reaching effects for themselves and the people around them throughout their lives. Projects of service to the community, either local or wider, are an essential part of the programme.

It is our intention, with other Steiner Upper Schools and with the SWSF (Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship) and ECSWE (European Council for Steiner Waldorf Education), to work towards securing entrance to university for our students without exams. This may be via the EPC (European Portfolio Certificate), by self-certification, by accreditation of our own curriculum through Edexcel, via the Crossfields Institute's programme, or a combination of these.

More information can be found on our website at <http://www.stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk>

## **Learning Support in the Lower, Middle and High School**

Our school is a mainstream Steiner Waldorf school, as distinct from Rudolf Steiner Special schools. We recognise that all children have individual needs and admit children with 'Special Educational Needs' wherever possible, given the make-up of the group that the particular child would enter, and the availability of additional classroom support if needed. Children with SEN are fully integrated into their classes and we watch their development carefully and try to give them all the support they need to develop and balance the abilities they have brought into the world.

It is important that parents of children with SEN understand that we will work with their children in a way that is significantly different from that used in other schools and that they are able to support us. We believe that the child is aware of the trust and confidence that parents have (or don't have) in their teachers. In regular meetings with parents, we listen to concerns and try to find the best ways to help the children. All discussions at these meetings are confidential and records are kept.

There are important aspects of Steiner Waldorf education which have a positive effect on all children but which are indispensable for children with SEN. In addition to the benefits of the Class Teacher system and Main Lesson blocks described earlier, teaching through stories, descriptive language and mental images involves the child's imagination and feeling life. The child becomes immersed in what he is learning, subjects are related to one another and are understood more deeply. This in turn means that he can remember what he has learned because the world he is learning about is not composed of many isolated bits of information that have to be remembered individually, but is experienced as a cohesive whole of which he is part.

We do not use text books in our teaching in the Lower and Middle School; all material is presented verbally. This means that children who cannot read are able to access their lessons and can join in with discussions and ask questions. Recitation of poetry and prose is a daily part of the curriculum. The children learn poems and speeches by heart. Clear enunciation and voice quality are stressed and we use tongue twisters and other vocal exercises. This helps with vocabulary, grammar but also with spelling as, if words are spoken clearly, it is easier to hear how they are constructed. Skills such as drawing, painting and craftwork are valued as highly as academic ones and are part of every subject. This gives every child an opportunity to shine and builds confidence and self-esteem.

Movement lessons in Eurythmy and Bothmer Gymnastics, both of which are also used as therapies, are a regular, weekly part of the school's curriculum. Eurythmy works in an artistic way with rhythm, co-ordination and balance and can help with many things including sequencing, tracking (eyes) and flat feet. Spatial Dynamics, a gymnastic form of movement, develops spatial awareness and strength and also includes social games.

In Steiner Waldorf schools we work with Child Study, a concentrated study of one child at a time, undertaken by all the teachers in the school for a period of between 2 and 4 weeks. During this time, the teachers observe the chosen child, meet together to discuss what they have noticed, consult parents, look at the child's work and study his/her background and early life. Every child in the school is studied in turn. This means that all the teachers know all the children well and are more able to notice when a child needs support.

Because these things are part of the normal curriculum in Steiner Waldorf schools, children are able to benefit from them without having any special treatment. It has been our experience that being taken out of the class for extra help reinforces a child's feeling that he is different and this can severely inhibit his willingness to be helped. For this reason, as much as possible, support is given in the classroom, but there are times when a child needs some one-to-one help. When this is necessary, we try to do it as sensitively as possible.

We offer differentiated learning opportunities to help each individual child to develop at his/her own pace; e.g. taking into account learning English as a second or third language (seen as an obvious advantage, rather than necessarily a learning difficulty), and also those who may have particular learning difficulties. It is not assumed that all children will progress at the same rate, but that all will progress.

The School may also call on professionals to give advice and/or therapies.

The School will liaise with other agencies and professionals; e.g. doctors, therapists, etc., whenever appropriate. Additional staff may be appointed so that a child's particular needs may be met. This may mean someone working in a one-to-one situation with the child, in a small group, or in the whole class at different times and is subject to funding being available.

## **The School Doctor**

The school has an anthroposophical doctor, Dr. Jenny Josephson, who is based in Forest Row in Sussex and visits the school regularly. She sees between 5 and 10 children, (depending on whether she is attending for a whole or half day) chosen by the teachers, on each visit and advises teachers and parents of any help the children may need. On these visits, she gives advice from an educational point of view and may prescribe remedies, anthroposophical medicines, pedagogical exercises and therapies to help with many different things from dyslexia to poor eyesight. Almost all children can be helped in some way and we aim that all children see her at least once while they are at the school. All children who turn six during the current academic year will see the doctor in the summer term as part of the procedure to determine whether or not they are ready to go into Class 1 in September. You will be notified in writing at least a week before the visit if the teachers would like your child to see the doctor and, except for the 'Class 1 readiness' session, you should accompany your child during the visit. Parents' consent for children to see the doctor is given on the general consent form, which parents sign when they join the school.

## **Equipment and Materials**

The school provides paper, crayons and pencils, exercise books, paint, brushes, eurythmy shoes etc. but there will be some things that parents are expected to provide, for example, indoor shoes, extra pencils and wet weather gear. These things vary from class to class and during the summer you will be sent a list of what your child will need at the beginning of the year. Other things may be needed during the year and you will be advised of this by your child's teacher. Some things will be supplied by the school and then you will be billed for them; these include wooden flutes, recorders, geometry equipment and fountain pens. For information about what expenses you are likely to incur during the year, please contact your Class Teacher.

## **School Trips**

The children may go on day trips from Kindergarten and then, from about class 2 or 3, they may camp or stay in Youth Hostels overnight on trips related to the Main Lesson. They may visit a farm in class 3, there is a three-night camp for the 'Olympics' in class 5 and they often visit the site of a Roman settlement in class 6. There are sometimes trips abroad for older children. Experiencing different environments is a vital part of the children's education; it helps them to connect deeply with the world and enriches their understanding of what they learn at school. All class trips are thoroughly researched in advance and written risk assessments are done and made available to parents. Parents are expected to pay for school trips in addition to their school fees.

## **Festivals**

Festivals form an important part of the children's education. The main ones celebrated in our school are Michaelmas, Christmas, Easter and St John's Day but we also celebrate Martinmas (in November), Whitsun (in May or June) and Advent. We have children in our school from many different cultures and so we try to bring their festivals - such as Chanukah, Diwali and Eid - into the school as well, with the help of their families. Some festival celebrations are just for the children, others are for parents as well. Parents are informed of these in the Calendar of Events and in the newsletter.

## **Homework**

The school does not have a universal policy regarding homework. Each teacher is free to decide whether it will be of benefit to the children in each case and so some will give homework, others won't and this should be considered normal. Generally, children will not have homework before class 3, although they may get small assignments, such as trying to answer a riddle or bringing something from home, from class 1.

# How the school is run

## The College

The school is run by teachers and administrative staff working as the 'College'. The College is made up of staff members who have usually been at the school for more than a year and who are able to make a deeper commitment to, and take responsibility for, the school. The College oversees the general wellbeing of the school, ensuring that the aims and vision are kept in mind. The College also deals with legal and statutory matters, and those concerning the school's relationship with official bodies such as Hounslow Council, the Department of Education, the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (SWSF), OfSTED and Social Services. If parents have questions, comments or requests for 'the school', this is where they should be directed. Faculty members, trustees, advisors and other visitors may attend College meetings from time to time by invitation or application. College meets on Thursdays after school. Meetings are chaired by a member of the group; a new Chair is chosen periodically, by the group. Changes to College membership will be communicated to parents via the school newsletter and Association meetings.

### College members at September 2015 are:

Leigha Hipkin  
Amanda Bell  
Pat Alexander  
Brian Jacques  
Katie Sharrock  
Dorothea Van Breda  
Stella Ottewill (ex officio)  
Eleni Karakonstanti (chair)  
Michèle Hunter  
Julia Wallace

## The Faculty

All members of staff belong to the 'Faculty'. Faculty meetings provide a space for Kindergarten and Lower School, full and part time staff to meet and share information, discuss concerns and ideas and generally keep in touch with each other.

## Pedagogical Meetings

Kindergarten, Lower & Middle School and High School staff have their own, separate weekly meetings. The purpose of Pedagogical meetings is the ongoing development of our work with the children.

## Trustees

The school is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity and, as such, must have a majority of Trustees who are not employees of the school. At present, the school has four Trustees who meet with the College once a term. At the most basic level, the Trustees are responsible for seeing that the school is run legally, however they are also chosen because they can contribute to the school in some way out of their knowledge and experience. They are Ann Druitt, Richard Evans, Rob Sim and Simon Gillman.

Ann Druitt is the current chair of the Trustees and her contact details are:  
The Cottage, Highfields, Forest Row, RH18 5AJ

## The School Association

This is a body that represents the whole school community. All parents and staff automatically become Association members when they join the school, unless they request not to be. Anyone else can become an Association member on application to the College. The AGM takes place in the Spring and other meetings may be scheduled during the year.

## Financial Management

For any financial queries, please contact the finance department: [bursar@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk](mailto:bursar@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk) / [finance@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk](mailto:finance@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk) or 0208 890 6719



## Official Registration and Inspections

The school is registered with the DfE and is a full member of the Steiner Waldorf Schools fellowship. All privately funded Steiner Waldorf schools in England are inspected by the Schools' Inspectorate Service (SIS). SIS inspectors are well-informed about our education and are accompanied in the process by lay inspectors from the Waldorf movement who can advise them. The school was last inspected in November 2013 and the report is available to parents via the school website, or request a copy by emailing [admin@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk).

## School Support Teams

Some of the work in the school is supported by smaller groups and individuals as needed, for example, finance, fundraising, publicity & communications, craft, social and outreach, maintenance and premises. Each group is made up of parents and sometimes friends of the school and includes at least one teacher. Where necessary, professionals are engaged, for example, accountants and solicitors, but otherwise, these tasks are unpaid. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the school in this way. Parents who are interested in joining a team should contact the relevant person below to find out more. Contact details are on the phone list.

### Support Team contacts for 2015/16 are:

<b>Social and Outreach:</b>	Leigha Hipkin ( <a href="mailto:leighahipkin@hotmail.com">leighahipkin@hotmail.com</a> )
<b>Publicity &amp; Communication:</b>	Stella Ottewill ( <a href="mailto:admin@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk">admin@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk</a> )
<b>Maintenance:</b>	Dan Blanchard ( <a href="mailto:caretaker@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk">caretaker@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk</a> )
<b>Bursar:</b>	Sarah Houghton ( <a href="mailto:bursar@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk">bursar@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk</a> )
<b>Fundraising:</b>	Eleni Karakonstanti ( <a href="mailto:elenicara@gmail.com">elenicara@gmail.com</a> )

Other temporary support teams are formed from time to time for specific events and projects, e.g. fairs.

## What does the school ask of parents?

- 1) They work towards understanding the principles which lie behind Steiner Waldorf Education so they know what they have chosen for their children and can give the teachers wholehearted support in their work.
- 2) They ensure their children come to school regularly and arrive punctually every day.
- 3) They arrive in good time to meet their children when they have finished school for the day and leave the premises promptly unless they have a legitimate reason for being at school and their children are properly supervised.
- 4) Their children come to school dressed in suitable clothes for the weather and for the activities of the school day, that they bring enough to eat during the day and have had enough sleep.
- 5) They ensure that their children's after-school and weekend activities are appropriate and do not compromise their school work, including homework.
- 6) They are open and honest in their communication with the teachers about their children's health, family circumstances and anything else that may affect their behaviour.
- 7) They limit their children's exposure to television, videos, DVDs, computers, electronic games, cinema and recorded music according to the child's age. It would be of great benefit to children in the lower school, and especially Kindergarten children, if they were kept away from them entirely.
- 8) They meet their financial commitments to the school in full. Any difficulties in this area need to be communicated to the bursar immediately.
- 9) They familiarise themselves with the school's rules, policies and procedures and, by respecting and following them and encouraging their children to do so, help with the smooth running of the school.

## Communication

From Class 1 onwards, we ask parents to make use of the available channels of communication and to avoid trying to speak to teachers before school, when they are preparing for the day, or at pick-up time when they are supervising children. If you wish to communicate something briefly, this can be done in a note handed to the teacher before school, an email or text, or a phone call in the evening.

Communication between parents and teachers is very important, and all Class Teachers have surgery times, which can be booked at reception. Parents who wish, for whatever reason, to speak to a subject teacher, another Class Teacher or a College member can also book appointments in this way.

If you have met with a teacher but are still not satisfied with the outcome, please refer to the Parents' Grievance procedure at the end of this handbook for guidance.

## Reports

Parents of children in the Lower, Middle and High school will receive an annual report from their child's class teacher at the end of the summer term. Please be aware that it may not be appropriate for your child to read his/her report, especially below Class 5. Reports will be shared with High School students by their teachers. If you have any questions about the report, please contact your child's teacher.

## Home Visits

It is essential that a strong relationship can develop between teachers, children and their parents, so that the child feels that his parents and his teachers are united in support of his education. It is very helpful if parents invite their child's Class Teacher to their home occasionally.

## Class Contacts

In each class, one or two parents are designated Class Contacts. The Class Teacher will usually invite someone who has been at the school for at least a term to be Class Contact for a year at a time. The role is to be a point of contact between the Class Teacher and the other parents of the class. Class Contacts should not become involved in matters relating to individual children; these should be directed to the Class Teacher.

## Parents' Workdays

These are for odd jobs and repairs which may need to be done during term time. Parents with relevant skills are very welcome, but without children please. Please check the Calendar of Events for dates and contact the Maintenance School Support Team if you are able to help.

## The Newsletter

The school publishes a monthly newsletter which contains information about forthcoming events, reviews of past ones, something about what the children have been doing in their classes, articles with educational and seasonal themes and other things of interest to parents and friends of the school. Newsletters are available on the school website, and a link to each new edition will be emailed to parents. Hard copies are available by request at reception.

## Parent Education

The way we work with the children is very different from what most parents have experienced. It is vital that parents understand the education and what supports it so that they, in turn, can support their children. The school provides workshops, a weekly study group for parents and talks by teachers and other experienced educationalists and those working in related fields. Details are published in the newsletter.

## Recommended Reading List

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

### Early Childhood

*You are your Child's First Teacher*, Rahima Baldwin; Celestial Arts, California  
*The Incarnating Child*, J. Salter; Hawthorn Press  
*A Guide to Child Health*, M. Glöckler 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  
*Free to Learn*, Lynne Oldfield; Hawthorn Press

### 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  
*Between Form and Freedom*, Betty Staley; Hawthorn Press  
*Millennial Child*, Eugene Schwartz; SteinerBooks Inc  
*Encountering the Self*, Hermann Koepke; Anthroposophic Press  
*On the Threshold of Adolescence*, Hermann Koepke; Anthroposophic Press  
*Free your Child's True Potential*, M. Rawson; Hodder & Stoughton

### Books about Anthroposophy 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

These and many other books about Steiner education are available from the library and bookshop at Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London NW1 6XT Tel: 020 7723 4400 The school has a small collection of books about Anthroposophy, Steiner Waldorf Education, parenting and other related subjects. These are available on request for parents to borrow.

## School Boundaries

Children are not permitted in the car park area, the main drive, the coal shed, the Kindergarten garden (apart from Kindergarten children) or the bin area **at any time**.

**Before and after school** children are also not permitted in the bushes (out of sight) around the main grass area.  
**Before and after school** the lower school is not permitted into the courtyard.

## What are the children allowed to wear and bring to school?

In order for children to learn, they need a safe, comfortable environment, which allows them to concentrate on their lessons without unnecessary distractions. We have kept this basic principle in mind in preparing the classrooms and the timetable and we ask for parents' and students' participation in maintaining this learning environment by ensuring that the children come to school appropriately prepared. In addition to the list below, individual teachers may impose other restrictions on the children in their classes if they feel it is necessary and appropriate. Parents will be informed separately. **Disregard for any of these rules may result in suspension or exclusion from school.**

### Clothing

Children's clothing should be simple, neat and appropriate for the weather. Trousers or skirts should not trail on the ground and clothes should fit well so that the children do not have to hold them up or worry about them in any way. Generally, clothing should allow movement, should it be required in any lesson. Outdoor shoes will be worn for games lessons and so it may be necessary for the children to wear or bring trainers on the days when they have Games. Pupils may not wear sandals in the Woodwork room. Long hair must be tied back for PE, Woodwork, Chemistry etc.

#### **In the Lower School (Classes 1 – 5), we do not allow:**

Slogans, cartoons or logos larger than 10cm on clothing  
Jewellery, except watches and stud earrings for pierced ears  
Nail varnish, dyed hair or make-up  
Bare midriiffs or tops with 'spaghetti' straps  
Backless shoes or high heels  
Very short skirts or shorts

#### **In the Middle School, (Classes 6 – 8)**

We expect pupils to come to school in appropriate, modest, practical clothing that does not inhibit their full participation in their lessons and is not offensive to anyone. Clothes with slogans or cartoons on them and torn clothes, including tights, may not be worn. Jewellery may be worn but must be removed for PE lessons or other activities where it could be hazardous (e.g. some science and craft lessons). Dyed hair and nail varnish are not allowed. Make-up should not be obvious and may not be applied or reapplied during the school day. Tattoos, including temporary ones, and body piercings, other than in the ears, must not be visible. We ask parents to support these guidelines and if necessary, staff will speak to pupils who push the boundaries.

#### **In the High School, (Classes 9 - 12)**

High School students are expected to come to school appropriately dressed. Clothing should be appropriate, practical, inoffensive and modest. Very short skirts or shorts are inappropriate. Torn clothes, including tights, may not be worn. Hair may not be dyed unnatural colours. Tattoos and body piercings, other than in the ears, must not be visible. Make-up should be discreet and may not be applied or reapplied during the school day. Staff will advise students if necessary.

### Food

Food also affects the children's ability to participate fully in their lessons. We ask that they have a good breakfast before they come to school and that they bring healthy food for their break and lunch, avoiding artificial colours, flavours and preservatives as much as possible. Energy drinks and chewing gum are not allowed at all.

#### **In the Lower School (Classes 1 – 5), we do not allow:**

Sweets, chocolate bars, fizzy drinks, flavoured crisps.

**In the Middle School and High School (Classes 6 - 12):**

Energy drinks and chewing gum are not allowed. Otherwise, there are no restrictions on what older students eat at school, but be aware that other children in the school do not have this freedom and that food can affect your health and your ability to participate fully in lessons. Staff will advise and restrict what students eat if necessary.

**Toys, Mobile Phones, iPods, MP3 players etc.**

From Kindergarten to Class 4, pupils are not allowed to bring mobile phones, MP3 players, or any other electronic equipment to school. Children who travel to and from school by themselves may bring mobile phones with prior consent from the Class Teacher.

For Classes 5 to 10, mobile phones, iPods and other electronic devices will be collected at the beginning of the day and returned at home time.

Class 12 are permitted to bring electronic devices to school.

## **School Hours 2015 – 2016**

Children should arrive in the grounds by 8:25am but not before 8.00am.

### **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 & 4**

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

8:30am to 12:30pm Friday

### **Class 5, 6, 7&8**

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

### **High School**

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

## **Term Dates 2015-16**

### **Michaelmas Term 2015**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September - Start of School Year

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October - School Ends for Half-Term

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November - Back to School

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December - End of Term

### **Spring Term 2016**

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> January - Term Starts

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February - School Ends for Half-Term

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February - Back to School

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March - End of Term

### **Summer Term 2016**

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April - Term Starts

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May - School Ends for Half-Term

Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May - Back to School

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> July - End of School Year

*Any changes to these times and dates will be published on the school website and in the newsletter.*

## Attendance and Punctuality

Steiner Waldorf Education depends on continuity. Children should come to school every day unless they are ill.

*We are legally required to inform the Education Welfare Dept. when any child has ten unauthorised absences in one school year and we may do this without warning.*

Please ensure that your child arrives on time in the morning so that he/she is able to take part in the welcoming and the morning verse and generally to begin the day well. It is very disruptive for the class when a child arrives late and unsettling for the child him/herself, especially if it happens repeatedly, and can have a seriously detrimental effect on his/her education.

If lateness is persistent, the teacher may ask that the child be kept at home until the problem is resolved. On occasions when it is unavoidable and you know that your child will be late, please phone the school as soon as possible. Latecomers must report to reception before going to their classes. *All late arrivals are recorded in the register. Lateness and absence is recorded on the child's End of Year Report.*

*It is school policy that we do not authorise parents to take children out of school for holidays during term time except in the case of religious holidays; such absences will be marked as unauthorised in the register.*

## Procedure for arriving and collecting children

### In the morning:

Children should not arrive at school before 8:00am.

Those arriving by car should park in the public car park near the entrance to Hanworth Park (on the right just before the school entrance) or on the street, and walk up the drive. Soon after the beginning of the year, a pedestrian gate will be put into the fence on the park side of the grounds and all children should then enter the school that way. **THE DRIVE IS A SINGLE TRACK ROAD AND THERE IS NO OTHER ENTRANCE OR EXIT. IN ORDER TO AVOID SERIOUS CONGESTION, ONLY STAFF CARS WILL BE ALLOWED ON SCHOOL PREMISES AT ANY TIME.**

Children and parents should wait in the grounds for the bell to ring at 8:25am. If the weather is very bad, teachers may decide to let the children in early, but otherwise, they should not come inside until the bell rings. Children will be advised by their teachers what to do when the bell rings and how to come into the building as this will vary from class to class. *Please note that before 8:25am all children must be supervised by an adult unless they have come to school by themselves.*

Kindergarten parents may come inside with their children to settle them; **WE ASK THAT PARENTS OF CHILDREN FROM CLASS 1 UP DO NOT COME INTO THE BUILDING WITH THEIR CHILDREN.** If you need to speak to the Bursar or the Receptionist, or you are coming for a study group or workshop, there is a separate entrance to the reception area. **PLEASE DO NOT USE THE CHILDREN'S ENTRANCE.**

If children arrive after 8:35, they should register at reception before going to their classrooms. Please note that Class Teachers will have different rules and procedures for latecomers. They will let parents know separately about these.

### At the end of the school day:

Younger children will be brought, and older ones will come by themselves, to the front of the main building and should be collected from there: Children on half days at 12:30pm and those on full days at 3pm or 3.45pm. Kindergarten children should be collected from the Kindergarten at 12:30pm.

Children who are going on the school bus should meet at the meeting point (they will be shown where this is) and will be taken to the bus by the supervising adult.

Please make sure the teacher on duty knows that you have taken your child and anyone else's. If your child is going home with someone other than you, please let his/her teacher know in the morning.

If your child is going home by him/herself, please inform your class teacher.

If children have not been collected within 15 minutes of pick-up time, they will be taken back inside and parents must then come into the building to collect them. *Please note that for lateness beyond 15 minutes, financial penalties may apply.*



# Policies and Procedures

This handbook contains statements or brief summaries of some of the school's policies and procedure that parents may find useful. All full detailed policies are available in the office.

## School Fees

Upon acceptance of a place at the school, the financial agreement must be signed and returned with the required deposit.

Invoicing of school fees is routinely done annually or termly. Fee increases usually occur once a year for the new academic year, which starts each September. Fees for the following September are published in the newsletter during March or April. Any queries about the invoice should be addressed to Andrea (admin/bursar) and in any case before the term begins.

Parents are expected to honour their financial commitments as communicated on the bottom of any invoice they receive from the school, without the need for the school to issue a reminder for payment.

### School Fees For 2015-16

	<b>Per Annum</b>
Kindergarten 5 mornings (part-time pro rata)	£6700.00
Afternoon Care for Kindergarten :	£17/session/child
Parent & Child :	£6/session/family
Class 1 :	£7900.00
Class 2 :	£8100.00
Class 3 :	£8300.00
Class 4 :	£8550.00
Class 5 :	£8700.00
Class 6 :	£8800.00
Class 7/8 :	£8900.00
Class 10 :	£9100.00
Class 12 :	£11000.00

Fee invoices may be paid either:

1. Annually in advance by September 10th or:
2. Termly by the first day of each term or:
3. By regular monthly instalments commencing in September with financial commitment to be met in full not later than the following June.

***Preferred payment method is via internet banking directly to the school account, please:***

Information for BACS payments:

Account name: THE ST MICHAEL STEINER SCHOOL LTD.

Account number: 65098413

Bank: THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK

Sort code: 08-92-99

Please quote your child's name as a reference so that we can identify your payment.

Otherwise, cheques should be made payable to The St Michael Steiner School Ltd.

Payment for extra items as listed on the school fee schedule is expected to be made within 14 days of the invoice being issued by the school.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the school's bursar is notified of any changes in family circumstances which might affect their ability to pay fees by the agreed due dates. To cover the school's costs, a charge of 5% of the outstanding amount of the fee may be added to any bills which are not paid by the due date.

In the case of cheques returned unpaid (not cleared by the bank), bank charges incurred by the school will be added to the bill.

### **Withdrawal of a child**

Withdrawal of a student requires a term's notice or a term's payment in lieu. Notice of withdrawal of a child must be made in writing to the College as well as to the child's Class Teacher. The school will issue a final invoice which states the date of receipt of notice to withdraw the child(ren) from school, a credit for the remaining part of the year and a charge for one term's fees will be issued to the parents. If more than one term's notice is given, then the invoice will reflect this. If the date of leaving is uncertain, and as a result, the leaving date exceeds one term's notice, an additional invoice will be raised for the extra time that the child attends school, to be settled by return.

Refund of any deposit is deducted from the final invoice as calculated above. If the deduction results in a credit balance remaining, this will be refunded (in a form of cheque) within two weeks of the child(ren) leaving the school.

The child's first term at the school is a trial period for both the child and the school. If the child leaves during this period, or at the end of the trial period, there is no requirement for a term's notice to be given, and any deposit will be refunded subject to any outstanding balance on the student's account.

Persistent non-payment may result in a child being asked to leave the school. In any case, any outstanding fees will remain payable to the school, and the school will take court action to recover this money if necessary.

### **Bursaries**

A letter from the finance group is sent each February, inviting everyone to donate to the Bursary fund. Anyone may apply for a Bursary. Bursaries will be awarded in April for the start of the following Michaelmas term. All Bursary applicants must demonstrate an inability to pay school fees, and provide documentation in support of their application.

A bursary is awarded for one year. At the end of that period, everyone who requires a Bursary for the following year needs to reapply, and will be expected gradually to increase their financial contribution to the school.

Bursaries will not usually be granted to new families in their first year at the school. They will also usually not be granted for more than two consecutive years. It is the school's intention to grant short-term bursaries so that we may assist more families, whilst still allowing those who need time to find the resources to pay their fees in the longer term.

Bursaries this year are limited to 10 % of last year's revenue of the whole school, exclusive of the council's 3 and 4-year old funding. The percentage is reviewed on a yearly basis following guidance from The Charity Commission regarding Public Benefit.

All payments are to be made by standing order by the 10th of each month for 10 months of the year. If parents who have been awarded a Bursary do not keep to their agreed payments and do not contact the school, the Bursary will be withdrawn and the child may be asked to leave the school. (Please refer to the section 'Exclusion and Suspension of pupils in the handbook')

### **Sibling Discounts**

Sibling discounts, for families with more than one child in the school, are not means tested but are intended as support for those who need it. For this reason, we do not apply them automatically, giving parents the opportunity to pay the full fee if they can, but they are available on request.

## Code of Conduct

Our code of conduct is based on the principle that there should be as few rules as possible and that those we have are there for good reasons and must be respected by everyone.

### 1. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect:

- Be courteous towards everyone you meet
- Do not endanger others through your own actions
- Respect other people's belongings
- Do not use bad language or insult others
- Do not bully or make fun of others

### 2. School is a place where children come to work and learn:

- Come to school regularly and on time
- Come to school properly equipped
- Come to school ready to work
- Do not disrupt lessons
- Do not disturb lessons in other classes
- Do not wear or bring anything to school which might distract you or others - e.g. toys, jewellery, electronic gadgets, mobile phones.
- Parents should not be on the premises during school time except for study groups, workshops, pre-arranged meetings or to see the Bursar or Receptionist.

## Detention

From class 3 onwards, a child may be required to stay after school, or come to school on a Saturday, for detention in order to:

1. Complete homework that was not done on time
2. Complete work that was not finished in class because of chatting or other time wasting
3. Make up for rudeness, disregard for school rules, including the Code of Conduct, or disruptive behaviour.

Parents will be informed at least 24 hours in advance of the reason, date, time and duration of the detention. Children will be properly supervised during detentions. A single detention will not exceed one hour.

Detentions will only be given for repeated transgressions and the child concerned will have been warned and given the opportunity to redeem him/herself. If a detention is given, it will be because the teacher believes it will help the child to improve his/her work habits or behaviour. Please do your best to support us in our efforts to guide the children towards good work habits and appropriate behaviour, but if it is impossible for your child to stay after school or come to school on the date given, please speak to the teacher who has given the detention as soon as possible and he/she may be able to arrange an alternative time.

## Illness and Infectious Diseases

Parents are asked to keep children with infectious diseases at home. If your child is too ill to come to school, please phone and leave a message on the school answer phone before lessons start in the morning, or call the Administrator as soon as possible so that your child's teacher knows at the beginning of the day not to expect him/her. Please keep the school informed each day your child is away and on his/her return to school, please send a note or email regarding the absence for our records. *It is a statutory requirement that we have some record of the reasons given for any absence.*

*Please inform the school if any member of your family has an infectious illness as soon as possible in order that the wider school community can be alerted.*

## First Aid

All staff regularly undergo First Aid training and there is always at least one trained First-Aider on site and on all outings. Minor injuries are treated with water only, but we may also use Homoeopathic treatments unless it is inappropriate (e.g. for a child who is stung and is allergic to wasp stings) or at parents' specific request.

We are not allowed to give Homoeopathic or other medicines without permission from parents, so please remember to sign and return your consent form at the beginning of term. Any treatment given is recorded in the 'Accident Book'

## **Parents' Use of School Premises**

The purpose of the school is for the education of children. This must always be the paramount consideration when the premises are used for other things. As the school grows, the use of space has to be carefully planned and considerations of noise levels, security and classroom management, etc. have to be weighed against the benefits of things like parent workshops and meetings. However, it is possible for these to take place at school, for example, parent and child groups, study groups and parent workshops are regularly held in the building.

If parents wish to hold meetings or organise events to take place in the building, they should apply in writing to the Chair of College for permission, stating a date and time as well as the length of the meeting and approximately how many people are expected to attend. Applications need to be submitted in good time to allow them to be considered properly, otherwise events will not be able to go ahead.

## **Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs and Weapons**

It is against the law for anyone to smoke anywhere on school premises. The use or possession of alcohol, illegal substances or weapons will not be tolerated and will result in suspension or permanent exclusion from the school.

## **Dogs**

Dogs are not allowed on school premises, except for guide dogs.

## **Scooters, Skateboards, Bicycles, Buggies etc.**

Children are not allowed to ride their scooters or bicycles anywhere in the school grounds. Bicycles and scooters and buggies may be left secured to the bicycle rack or in the buggy shelter and must not be brought into the school buildings.

## **Equal Opportunities**

We recognise and value the fact that our school is part of a multicultural society and believe that the atmosphere of respect for others, which our ethos seeks to foster, actively discourages prejudice. We will strive to ensure that our teaching continues to meet the needs of people from diverse backgrounds while, at the same time, taking steps to deal with any overtly racist or sexist attitudes we encounter in the school and its community. The school wishes to offer an educational environment that is open to all.

## **Child Protection**

We seek to nourish the emerging individuality of each child in various ways. One of these is by protecting the children from abuse and neglect - physical, emotional, psychological and sexual - and to help them maintain faith in our common humanity. This may involve working with the insights into human nature and child development given by Rudolf Steiner, with our school doctor, with professional advisors and also in co-operation with outside agencies such as Social Services, Education Welfare Officers, Child Protection Units or the Police as and where appropriate.

Whatever our particular role is in the school, be it as a parent, guardian, teacher or another member of staff, it is the responsibility of each of us to be alert to the possibility of child abuse or neglect and to acknowledge and alleviate, where possible, any suffering a child may experience.

As an educational establishment, our procedure is in compliance with The Children's Act 1989 and 2004 and we are obliged to follow the borough guidelines for reporting cases of suspected abuse to Social Services Dept.

The school follows procedures drawn from the Wandsworth Child Protection procedures and The SWSF's Rudolf Steiner Schools' Child Protection Policy Paper (2000). If you suspect that a child has been or is being abused in any way, please contact one of the designated teachers, and follow the guidelines given in the policy.

The school's Child Protection Policy is available in the office, together with procedures to be followed by staff, parents and pupils.

### **Contact Numbers:**

School 020 8893 1299

Hounslow Child Protection Line: 020 8583 3456 (24hrs answerphone)

Email: [childrensocialcare@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:childrensocialcare@hounslow.gov.uk)

Childline - a national helpline for children; calls are free 0800 1111

## **Bullying**

The ethos behind our education aims to foster an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect among staff and pupils, and the long term relationship between a class of children and their teacher is one of the most important contributors to the building of trust and security in the school. Even so, these qualities can take some time to develop and incidents of bullying do arise. The aim of the school's anti-bullying policy is to contribute to providing an environment in which all pupils feel supported, safe and valued and where they can learn, work and mix socially with their peers without fear.

We acknowledge that a certain amount of physical interaction and banter between children is a normal and healthy part of the process of learning what is and is not acceptable social behaviour. Children will test themselves against each other and sometimes they will get hurt or hurt others, but this, in itself, is not bullying.

Bullying is defined as deliberate and persistent hurtful behaviour, where those towards whom this behaviour is directed find it difficult to defend themselves. It is the use of superior strength, age or social status deliberately and repeatedly to subjugate, hurt or humiliate someone younger, smaller or, in some way, weaker. It is anti-social behaviour that can destroy the social fabric of the school. It affects everyone and it cannot be ignored or tolerated.

Bullying can take many forms, but three main types are:

- physical (hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, theft)
- verbal (name calling, racist or other remarks designed to humiliate)
- indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone)

Pupils who are suffering bullying may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn, nervous or tearful, pretending to be ill, having frequent stomach and headaches, frequent absences, clinging to adults. There may be changes in the pupil's work, a lack of concentration, deterioration in behaviour or truanting from school.

Staff need to be alert to these signs and take prompt and appropriate action when they know or suspect that a pupil is being bullied. Staff must work towards making the school a place where pupils feel they can and should report incidents of bullying whether they themselves, or someone else, is the victim.

### **Statutory duty of schools**

Schools have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils.

### **Implementation**

If a member of staff witnesses or has reported to him/her, an incident of bullying, the following steps will be taken:

1. If possible, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has witnessed it or been approached
2. Inform the Class Teacher(s) of the child(ren) involved who will then:

3. Listen to the people involved.
4. Consider the individuals involved with regard to age, temperament, history and personal circumstances.
5. Make an assessment of the situation, for example, is it an isolated incident? How serious is it?
6. Assess what steps need to be taken, for example whether parents need to be informed.
7. Initiate the action required including, if appropriate, informing parents, recording the incident and planning a strategy to prevent further occurrences.
8. Reports in the Incident book are read weekly at the College meeting.
9. Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with other staff and the child's parents.

Steps taken after an incident may include, with younger children, modelling of appropriate behaviour, a pedagogical story or a special prayer; while the child still acts out of imitation and lives strongly in a picture consciousness this kind of subtle approach can be very effective. In the case of older children, they will be spoken to directly and they and their peers may also be involved in planning a strategy to resolve conflict or to help a child who is being bullied.

The teachers may decide to work through a child study or a Class study in the pedagogical meeting. Sometimes the advice of the school doctor will be sought.

Communication between parents and teachers with regard to children's behaviour and welfare is essential. For example, if a child is suddenly and inexplicably reluctant to come to school, this could indicate that the child is experiencing difficulties that need to be addressed.

If parents are worried about their children's emotional well-being or know of circumstances which may be affecting their behaviour, the child's Class Teacher needs to be told. This is stated in the Parents' handbook.

### **Support of Pupils**

Pupils will be supported by their class teachers in the first instance, because of the relationship that is already established. Sometimes another teacher or member of staff will help, for example, a girl who has a male class teacher may need the support of a woman and vice versa. Action taken and the form of support given will vary depending on the pupil affected and the nature and circumstances of the bullying. Other members of staff will be made aware at Pedagogical or College meetings of any difficulties pupils are experiencing, although sensitivity will be exercised about what details are given.

### **Sanctions**

The school's first responsibility in cases of bullying is to protect the victim. Perpetrators of bullying will be spoken to and warned to stop the behaviour and staff will be vigilant and supportive to guide 'bullies' away from what may be habitual behaviour and towards more constructive and acceptable ways of interacting with their peers. If the bullying does not stop, the steps that may then be taken are as given under the heading "Exclusion and Suspension of pupils."

### **Reviews**

The school will review this policy regularly and assess its effectiveness. All staff will be involved in the review and will be made aware of any changes in the school's policy.

## **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, visit to doctor.

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.

Possible reasons for not accepting a child after the probationary period are the same as those given in the section under '*Exclusion and Suspension of Pupils*'.

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.

## **Exclusion and Suspension of Pupils**

Under circumstances where the school no longer feels able to support a child, for example in cases of serious or repeated acts of vandalism, violence, disruptive, defiant, dangerous or abusive behaviour, or for any of the reasons given under the 'Exclusion' section below, a pupil may be suspended or permanently excluded from school, even when the probationary period has ended and the child has been accepted into the school.

### **Suspension**

The length of the period of suspension will depend on the age of the child and the details of the situation and will be decided by the Class Teacher in consultation with at least one other colleague.

Parents will be informed by telephone (if the suspension is immediate) and in writing of the period of suspension and the reasons for it.

Tasks or conditions may be set which must be completed before the pupil returns to school. These will be made clear to the pupil and his/her parents.

### **Permanent Exclusion**

Possible reasons for excluding a child permanently may include:

1. The child is found to have educational needs which the school is unable to meet at the present time.
2. The child's parents do not fulfill their financial commitment to the school.
3. The child presents unacceptable behaviour which teachers feel unable to meet in the context of the school or class, given the limitations of available resources.
4. The child is very unhappy in the school or class.
5. The child's parents are not willing to support their child's education, e.g. in the ways indicated in this handbook under '*What does the school ask of parents?*'
6. The child's parents are not willing to co-operate with the school in trying to overcome the child's difficulties.
7. The school discovers that important, relevant information about the child was not disclosed by the parents at the time of interview, e.g. that the child has been expelled from another school.
8. The school feels that, in some other way, the best interests of the child are not being served, e.g. the journey to school is too long or attendance or punctuality are very poor.

### **Procedure**

Before the decision is made to exclude a child the teachers will seek advice and support from the child's parents about the child's difficulties and make every reasonable effort to resolve them.

Teachers will consult one another and other professionals where appropriate, e.g. where there is reason to believe that they may be able to help, where a delay would not have serious adverse consequences for the child or other children (e.g. in cases of abuse), and where the principles and methods of those professionals are not at odds with those of the school (e.g. the use of keyboards in the Lower School for dyslexic children would not be acceptable).

The child's parents would be informed as soon as there was a question of possible exclusion and, when a decision to exclude has been made, the parents will be given ten weeks' notice in writing. If it is in the interests of the child, parents may be advised to remove him/her from school before the official exclusion date.

In extreme circumstances, a child may be suspended from school until the date of permanent exclusion.

If a child is excluded from school for any of the reasons given above, school fees are payable, as usual, for the term of the exclusion.

## **Parents' Grievance Procedure**

### **Introduction**

The St. Michael Steiner School aims to provide quality teaching and pastoral care to its pupils. However, if parents do have a complaint, they can expect to be treated by the school in accordance with the following procedure.

### **Stage 1 - Informal Resolution**

We will endeavour to resolve concerns and complaints quickly and informally if possible.

If parents have a concern or complaint they should normally contact their son/daughter's Class Teacher. In most cases, the matter will be resolved straightaway by this method. If the Class teacher cannot resolve the matter alone, he/she may consult another colleague.

If the complaint concerns a member of staff other than the Class teacher, it is advisable to contact that teacher directly or, if that is not preferable, to contact the child's Class teacher, who, in most cases would be able to resolve the situation informally, together with the teacher concerned.

Complaints may be made directly to the College, but these will usually be referred to the relevant teacher and to the Class teacher of the child, unless the College Chair feels it is appropriate for him/her to deal with the matter personally. In such cases, the College chair may agree to facilitate a meeting between both parties.

The Class teacher (or the College Chair if he/she is dealing with the complaint) will make a written record of all the concerns and complaints and the date on which they were received. This written record will be shown to all people involved who agree to it being an accurate record of what has taken place. Should the matter not be resolved within 7 days, or in the event that the parties concerned fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, then parents will be advised to proceed with their complaint in accordance with Stage 2 of this procedure.

If the complainant is not a parent, the complaint can be directed to the College Chair who will deal with the matter as deemed appropriate, referring it to the appropriate person or acting as mediator at a meeting.

### **Stage 2 - Formal Resolution**

If the complaint cannot be resolved on an informal basis, then the complainant/parent(s) should put their complaint in writing to the College Chair. He/she will decide, after considering the complaint, the appropriate course of action to take.

In most cases, the College Chair will have a meeting with the complainant/parent(s) concerned., normally within 7 days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the College Chair to carry out further investigations.

The College Chair will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint. Such records will be viewed by all parties and seen to be accurate.

Once the College Chair is satisfied that, so far as is practicable, all the relevant facts have been established. A decision will be made and the complainants/parent(s) will be informed of the decision in writing within 7 days. He/she will also give reasons for his/her decision.



If complainants/parent(s) are still not satisfied with the decision, they should proceed to Stage 3 of this procedure.

### **Stage 3 - Hearing Group**

If complainants/parent(s) seek(s) to invoke Stage 3 (following a failure to reach an earlier resolution) they will be referred to a delegated College member.

The matter will then be referred to the Hearing Group for consideration.

The Hearing Group will consist of at least three persons not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint- and at least one of who will be independent of the management of the running of the school. Each of the Hearing Group members will be appointed by the College. The delegated College member, on behalf of the Hearing Group, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as is practicable, and normally within 7 days.

If the Hearing Group deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing. Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 days prior to the hearing.

The complainant/parent(s) may be accompanied to the hearing by one other person. This may be a relative, teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

If possible, the Hearing Group will resolve the complainant/parent(s) complaint immediately without need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Hearing Group will decide how it should be carried out. After due consideration of all the facts they consider relevant, the Hearing Group will reach a decision (and may make recommendations) which it shall complete within 7 days of the hearing. The Hearing Group will write to the complainant informing them of its decision and the reasons for it. The decision of the Hearing Group will be final. The Hearing Group's findings and, if any, recommendations will be sent in writing to the parents, the College Chair and, where relevant, the person at whom the complaint was directed. In accordance with the Staff Grievance Procedure, if the complaint is upheld, the Hearing Group will give a formal warning, with the right to appeal within 2 days, to the person against whom the complaint has been made.

Parents can be assured that all concerns and complaints will be treated seriously and confidentially. Correspondence, statements and records will be kept confidential except in so far as is required of the school by paragraph 6 (2) (j) of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003, where disclosure is required in the course of the school's inspection, or where other legal obligation prevails.

The handbook will be updated annually;  
if there is anything you think we have overlooked, please let us know.

## **The St Michael Steiner School**

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