



EDINBURGH
STEINER
SCHOOL

Edinburgh Steiner School Parents Handbook

Updated 2020*

**During 2020 and 2021 it is likely that certain practices and procedures outlined in this handbook will be subject to repeated changes as restrictions evolve in response to Covid-19. As far as possible, this handbook describes the School as it would function 'normally'.*

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Introduction

Welcome to Edinburgh Steiner School.

This handbook has been prepared to give parents/carers vital information about our school and the philosophy on which it is based.

In Sections 1 to 3 we hope to answer most of the common questions you might have, including how the School is structured, organised and administered; the channels of communication that are open to you; information about policies and rules. In Section 4, we provide detailed information about how parents/carers can become more involved in the wider school community. By familiarising yourself with this, you will be able to give your child real support throughout their learning experience.

We are always open to feedback, so if you have suggestions or recommendations for improvement, please contact the School Office directly or raise ideas by attending PTA (Parent Teacher Association) meetings. (For details on how to contact the PTA and get involved please see Section 4).

Section 1: The Organisation of the School

The College of Teachers

When the original Waldorf School was founded, on Rudolf Steiner's initiative in 1919, it had a 'College of Teachers' (normally referred to as 'College') at its very heart. The mission of College is to carry the spiritual and pedagogical leadership of a school. At Edinburgh Steiner School, the majority of teachers—following a year in post, and provided they support the fundamental ethos of the education—are normally invited to join College. College meets at 7pm every Thursday evening during term time for about two and a half hours and deliberates on all matters relating to how the School is run—with the exception of financial and legal matters, which are the responsibility of the Trustees.

College has an executive arm, called the Management Team, which ensures that the wishes of College are carried out. College also establishes and oversees a number of 'mandate' groups (which take responsibility for different areas of the School, such as Maintenance, Festivals and Staff Development) and establishes working groups to conduct research and bring forward recommendations on specific matters of interest. College fulfils the leadership role of 'Principal' or 'Head Teacher,' except that in College meetings decisions are almost always reached by consensus.

The Management Group

Day-to-day running of the School is delegated to the Management Group. Up to three members of College serve in rotation as the Management Group. It is the task of this Group to prepare the College Agenda and to see that the decisions taken by College are implemented. The Management Group also deals with day-to-day matters and holds an overview of the various mandated groups within the School. Management Group members have different portfolio responsibilities. Surgery times are usually available each week when any member of the School community can book an appointment to see a member of Management.

Management Team

This consists of the Management Group, plus the School Coordinator and Kindergarten Coordinator. This group manages the relationship between administration, staffing and the curriculum. The School Coordinator does not currently 'rotate' and is considered for the time being 'permanent.' The Coordinator manages the Admissions Secretary and School Office, and oversees communication in the School. The financial matters of the School are managed by the Bursar, Lesley Chari.

Estates Group

This Group looks at the aesthetics of the School and oversees the maintenance and development of classrooms, buildings and grounds.

The Trustees

The legal, financial and employment matters of the School are the responsibility of the Trustees, who are usually present or former parents. The School is constituted under The Memorandum and Articles of Association, which established the School as a 'limited trust' in 1947. The Articles were updated in May 2015. The School is therefore a company limited by guarantee and the Trustees are its directors. The School is also a registered charity and is subject to the provisions of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 including supervision by the Office of the Scottish Regulator (OSCR). To stand as a Trustee, any member of the trust can be nominated and elected at the Trust AGM. The trust is open to anyone who has the welfare of the School at heart.

How the School is Financed

The continued existence and well being of the school depends on its financial and material needs being met by the School community. Responsibility for the School's finances is vested in the Board of Trustees. Fees are due monthly by direct debit. The School reserves the right to charge unpaid fees at 10% per annum to cover costs.

If parents wish to withdraw a child from the School following successful completion of the trial period, written notice is required **one full term** before the last day the child attends school. If parents do not do this, then fees for that child for the term following the date of withdrawal will be payable. Please also note that if a child is withdrawn during a term, the fee for that term is still payable.

While this is not an exhaustive list, there will be additional charges (invoiced separately from fees) for such items as recorders, textbooks, atlases, some craft materials, Class photographs, performances, After School Club, other school clubs or special Class outings. On occasions it may be necessary to charge for some form of additional learning support. There is no longer a separate charge for examinations fees.

Communication

Effective communication is essential for the harmonious life of the School. Parents are strongly encouraged to direct questions and concerns to the appropriate person as soon as they arise, so they can be dealt with quickly and openly.

General Enquiries

The School Office team is on hand during open hours to answer your calls and emails as well as sending out need to know information. The Office is very busy during the day so if your call is not answered, please leave a message or send an email.

Contact email: office@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

Telephone: 0131 337 3410

Communicating with Teachers

Messages for teachers can be taken by the School Office and teachers will return your call as soon as it is convenient (see below).

Issues & Concerns

If you have questions or concerns regarding your child's experience at school, the curriculum, discipline, homework or any other matter which can be discussed via the parent-teacher relationship, the following steps are suggested:

- If the child is in the Baby Group, Parent & Child groups, Playgroup or the Kindergarten, speak to the group leader or Teacher.
- If the child is in the Lower School, contact the Class Teacher in the first instance.
- If the child is in the Upper School, contact the Class Guardian in the first instance.

If the problem/question remains, you can:

- Contact the Management Group by making an appointment via the School Office, or by booking a slot at the weekly Management Surgery. Timings for the available hours of these are published in the Tuesday Notice (see below). Management Surgeries can also be booked via an electronic form in the Parent Portal.
- Write to the College of Teachers by sending an email, for the attention of The College of Teachers to: management@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

For questions of school policy, procedures or concerns beyond the parent-teacher relationship, you can:

- Contact the Management Group: management@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk
- Write to the College of Teachers

For matters concerning the Class

- Contact the Class Teacher
The Class Teacher/Guardian should be the primary point of contact for Class related matters. Teachers are happy to help and will endeavour to respond to emails within 2 days, however, please be patient. If waiting for an answer, you may contact the School Office to leave a note for the Teacher.
- Contact the Class Convenor. Class Convenors form an important social link between the Class Teacher or Class Guardian and all the families in the Class. They are responsible for contacting and welcoming new parents on behalf of the Class community and assisting the Class Teacher with the organisation of Class, including helping to organise Class outings, baking for parents' evenings, redecoration of the Classroom or inviting parents to join work groups for the Christmas Market.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

For matters concerning school events or how to become involved in the School, study groups or other general questions:

- Contact the PTA: PTA@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

Financial Matters

Communication to the Trustees should be sent to the Chair of Trustees, c/o the Bursar.

Contact: trustees@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

Questions about financial matters should be directed to the Bursar

Contact: Bursar@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

Digital Communications

Tuesday Notice

The weekly school newsletter is sent on Tuesdays. This publication is sent via Mailchimp to those who have opted in. We aim to provide parents with event information, news and other information relevant to school life. There is also a space for advertising relevant to the school community. We warmly welcome contributions of content for this so if you ever have something to share or celebrate with the school community, you can contact:

communications@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

Emails & Notices

The School aims to keep email contact at a minimum level. Essential and urgent information will be sent out via email to the contacts who have opted in to 'general correspondence' upon enrolment. If you would like to check or change your preferences, please contact:

IT@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

For non-urgent information, we are trialling the 'Bulletin' and 'News' sections of our Parent Portal (more on the Parent Portal below) with the aim to make the dedicated parent platform as useful as possible for you.

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal is a parental hub linked to our school database. It is a requirement that at least one Parent Portal account is created per family as this is where we securely publish academic reports. New parents/carers that have opted in will be sent an invitation to set up their account shortly after their child joins the School.

The portal is a personalised information hub for your family where you can find documents (e.g. school policies, bursary information etc.), electronic forms (e.g. request a leave of absence, update personal information etc.), academic reports, real-time attendance data and more.

The School intends to make use of the Parent Portal calendar, bulletin board, news and events section more over time in order to make it a 'one stop shop' for all relevant information for Parents.

The Parent Portal can be accessed via a web browser. It also has a free app which is optional for you to use.

Web access:

<https://edinburghsteiner.parents.isams.cloud/api/login/>

This link can always be found via the School website within the 'Parents' button in the top right corner of the screen.

App Access:

Download link: Google Playstore

To register with the app, you will need to enter the School code which is: **ESS**

You then simply enter your personal Parent Portal details to log in.

The app can be downloaded from the 'Apple Store' or 'Google Playstore' on your mobile phone/tablet. The app makes it quick and easy to check the Parent Portal from a smartphone and allows you to opt in/out on 'push notifications' and activity alerts.

Payments for after school clubs

The School offers many after-school clubs and additional activities which need to be booked and paid for. We are currently developing a payment system that will allow all clubs, activities, trips, meals and more to be booked and paid for online. Details of this will be announced in due course.

Communicating via email and telephone

The guidelines below are intended for all members of the School community: parents, teachers and school support staff. They are not 'formal policies,' or regulations, although similar matters relating to communication may be covered more rigorously in other documents

Email

Email is now the preferred medium of communication between most parents, teachers, support staff, school management, the School Office and Trustees. Most members of school staff have a school email address; 'personal' email addresses should, wherever possible, not be used for matters relating to school business. Exceptions might include occasions when members of staff are travelling, or abroad, and may not have secure access to their school email account.

To ensure that email communication remains efficient, sustainable, clear and respectful, and to help members of school staff maintain a healthy work/life balance, all members of the School community should adhere to the following guidelines:

- It is possible to send an email at any time of the day or night. However, if parents/carers send an email to school staff after 4.30pm (during term time), or at the weekend (during term time), they should not expect an immediate reply. Emails sent after 4.30pm, or at the

weekend, are likely to be acknowledged during the next working day, or at the latest within 48 hours, or in the 48 hours following a weekend.

- Class teachers, Class Guardians and subject teachers are not required to check their emails and respond during schools holidays, but may do so if they so wish. In some cases, teachers will be abroad during the holidays, in locations where they may have no secure access to their emails, some of which may be sensitive. In such cases, teachers should not feel obliged to open or send documents and other attachments. If an urgent matter arises during a school holiday then a parent or member of staff should, in the first instance, contact the Management Team through the School Office.
- Teachers and other members of school staff will endeavour to acknowledge all emails within two working days, if not sooner. However, the resolution of a concern, or a full answer to a concern or query, may take at least 7 days. This is to allow departments and other groups—which often meet once a week—to meet and discuss the matter
- Email content should be respectful, factual and relevant; personal comments, intemperate language or repetition of hearsay should be avoided. Parents/carers and members of school staff have the right to expect courteous communication at all times. Any email received by parents/carers which they regard as falling short of this standard may be referred to the Management Group or the Board of Trustees. Similarly, any email received by members of staff which falls short of this standard may not receive a response from the recipient and may be referred to the Management Group or the Board of Trustees, who may request a meeting with the individual who sent it
- Any parent who is dissatisfied with the manner in which their email correspondence has been dealt with may follow the procedure outlined in the School's Complaints Policy [Link](#)
- Emails regarding a query or concern about any aspect of a pupil's education or experience in school should be sent in the first instance to the pupil's Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian. Queries for the attention of subject teachers may be sent to them by email via Class Teachers or Class Guardians
- All emails concerning pupils which are sent by subject teachers or support staff to other members of staff or to a pupil's parents/carers should also be CCd (copied in) to the pupil's Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian. All emails which express a concern about a pupil, or deal with matters that might give rise to a concern about a pupil, should be copied in to the School Coordinator: management@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk
- Subject teachers and other individual members of staff may, at their discretion, give their school email addresses to pupils and/or parents/carers, provided the guidelines above are followed. Subject teachers' email addresses, and the email addresses of support staff, are not normally made available for general use by parents/carers
- Email addresses for individuals, groups or parts of the School that are publicly available for general use will be listed on the School's website, in handbooks or in the Tuesday Notice
- Parents' email addresses from Class email lists must not be passed on to third parties or used for purposes other than school business except with the explicit permission of those parents.
- All members of the school community should remember that emails may contain sensitive personal information which, if inappropriately shared, would breach GDPR guidelines. To ensure that sensitive information is not shared widely, it is wise to restrict the number of recipients for each email to the smallest number possible.

Phone

Despite the growing popularity of email, telephone (landline or mobile) is still the preferred medium of communication for some staff and parents/carers at Edinburgh Steiner School. Following the introduction of the General Data Protection Guidelines (GDPR), however, the School, in common with other organisations, must be very careful about how, when, and for what purpose personal details such as telephone numbers are shared. The School no longer circulates a list of teachers' contact details to parents; nor does the school circulate—automatically, via a Class list—the contact details of parents among the wider parent body. This can make it more difficult to organise, for example, 'phone trees,' and may complicate the arrangements for certain events and trips. Currently, parents are invited to sign a form saying that they are happy to be on a Class email list; parents may choose to share phone numbers among themselves, provided they do not pass on the phone numbers of other parents to third parties without their explicit permission.

Contacting teachers and other members of staff by phone

Members of school staff may be contacted in school via the School Office (0131 337 3410). A number of teachers, School Office staff and support staff have internal phones, and it may be possible to connect to them directly via an extension. Alternatively, a message can be left with the School Office, and members of staff will be asked to return your call.

Members of staff may, at their discretion, share their personal contact details, including phone numbers, with parents/carers. Kindergarten Teachers, Class Teachers and Class Guardians will normally share this information as a matter of course, but they are not obliged to do so. Members of school staff often work on different days, and their hours of work may vary according to their role. Please bear in mind that a part-time member of staff may not be able to return a phone call until they are next in school. This may not be for several days. Full-time teachers are normally available between 8.45am and 3.45pm on weekdays during term time, but may be teaching throughout the day and therefore may not be able to return a call until late afternoon at the earliest.

Some teachers are happy to receive a phone call in the evening, or at weekends; others would prefer only to make and receive phone calls, where possible, during school hours, or before 9pm at night, or during week days only, or not during a school holiday: the School believes that, given the nature of our work, flexibility in regard to personal phone numbers is essential, and that therefore the matter of finding 'a convenient time to call' should be at the discretion of individual members of staff. This should be respected by the whole school community.

In the case of Kindergarten Teachers, Class Teachers and Class Guardians, who communicate frequently with parents, it is reasonable to ask them to give a picture of when and how they would prefer to be contacted outside of school hours. This might be an item for discussion at the first parents' evening of the school session.

Phone numbers for individuals, groups or parts of the School that are publicly available for general use will be listed on the School's website, in handbooks or in the Tuesday Notice.

Changing Personal Information & Preferences

Please ensure that the School Office has up-to-date information on how to contact each parent/carer both at home and at work. The emergency telephone number of an additional responsible adult should also be provided.

Changes to key information can be made via the Parent Portal using the relevant electronic form. Each time a form is submitted, the history is made available to you so you can check previous submissions and only update what is necessary each time. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure all information held by the School is accurate. We will remind you to update any changes periodically at the beginning of new academic years.

Alternatively, you are welcome to use the following forms to update any information (however, due to most of the fields being 'required' this may take longer than using the Parent Portal method).

[Data Collection Form A: Pupil Details, Contact Information & Medical Info](#)

[Data Collection Form B: Privacy & Consent Preferences](#)

Digital /Virtual Learning & IT Systems

Following the outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19), the School was required to develop a digital learning platform in order to facilitate education from home. The Google Workspace for Education (formerly known as GSuite) system was chosen and established. The system now forms the foundation of all digital communication for the internal school community (Staff, Teachers & Pupils).

Things to note:

- Each pupil will receive a school email address and user account for Google Workspace. This is to facilitate sharing of homework, materials and other communications from Teachers to a dedicated school email. Instructions for setting up this account will be sent to the primary contacts of the pupil shortly after joining.
- It is expected that parents will manage the access of pupil accounts until Class 8 onwards.
- The pupil account will stay with the child for their time at Edinburgh Steiner School
- All school accounts are password protected (with all staff accounts using 2-step verification for additional security)
- The use of digital education measures is new for the School and we are seeking to strike an appropriate balance in how to move forward with it. Parents will be kept in the loop regarding developments in this space.

Key Features of the Google Workspace:

- Google Classroom is where digital work/materials will be posted by Teachers. Each physical Class that is taught can have a digital 'classroom' to work in tandem together. Pupils will be invited to classes relevant to them.
- Emails can be sent/received via Gmail

- Each account has a Google Drive account with unlimited storage. This means that files can be saved in this space and accessed from any device with internet when required (i.e. at home or at school)
- Pupils can make use of the content creation tools such as 'Docs' (for writing and word processing), 'Sheets' (spreadsheets) & 'Slides' for visual presentations and PowerPoint's.
- Files can be stored and organised within the pupils personal 'Drive' (My Drive) and can be easily shared with other people making collaboration on work/projects quick and simple.
- Teachers can share files with pupil groups via 'Shared Drives'
- Teachers may also choose to utilise 'Shared Drives' as a method to share files with parents. In order for this to work, you will need to ensure that you have a google account. You could either use a personal google email (gmail) account if you have one, [or if you use a different email provider, you can create a google account for that email address and use it to access the Shared Drive.](#)
- Google Meet is a video communication tool that will be used for any online/virtual lessons

IT Support

Support is available to parents and pupils for any technical/IT related issues.

Contact the IT Administrator: IT@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

Change of Address, Email or Phone Number

Please ensure that the School Office has up-to-date information on how to contact each parent/carer both at home and at work. The emergency telephone number of an additional responsible adult should also be provided.

Afterschool Club (formerly 'Afternoon Care')

In recognition of the fact that many parents/carers are unable to take their children home once their school day is finished, we provide an Afterschool Club facility here at school. The times are reviewed every year and we respond according to requirements when it is cost effective to do so. Pupils are requested to bring a packed lunch if entering Afterschool Club at lunchtime. Booking is essential: please see the School website for details and charges.

No child may be left unless they have pre-booked. Afterschool Club is also available in the Kindergarten.

School Hours and Absences

School begins at 8:45am for all children. The school is open from 8:20am. Pupils in Classes 1-12 are expected to be in their classroom by 8:40am for registration, so lessons can begin promptly at 8:45am.

Kindergarten children should not be left before 8:35am, by which time the Teacher will be ready to receive them. Kindergarten children finish at 12:55pm.

Pupils arriving after 8:45am should come directly to the office. Pupils (or parents/carers of pupils in Kindergarten) are asked to register in the Signing In/Out Book, giving the reason for their late arrival. They are also issued a late slip which should be passed to the Class Teacher/Class Guardian or subject teacher.

Pupils in Class 1 finish school at 1:00pm each day apart from one day per week when they finish at 3:15pm. In Classes 2, 3, 4 and 5 there are some 'half days' when pupils finish at 1:00pm; on other days they finish at 3:15pm. Notice of which days are half days will be given at the beginning of the new session.

For curriculum and staffing reasons, lessons in the Middle School (Classes 6, 7 and 8) may finish at 3:15pm on some days and 4:00pm on others.

Upper School lessons can finish at either at 3:15pm or 4:00pm, but pupils may occasionally have a lesson until later.

Early departure

Pupils leaving early for appointments, or parents/carers collecting children early, should also sign the Signing In/Out Book. Please ensure you child is aware of this procedure—this is to ensure we have an accurate record in case of fire.

Notification of general absence/lateness

If your child is sick, or absent for any other reason apart from a leave of absence, it is essential that you notify the School Office before 9am.

You may either leave a message on the School voicemail (option 1), or email absences@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk You must notify the School each day that your child is absent, even if it is for the same illness.

Absences are recorded by the School as either authorised or unauthorised. Please ensure you give the reason for absence. If no explanation is received, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

For all pupils marked 'not present,' and for whom no prior leave of absence or parental notification has been given, The School Office will phone the parents/carers at home or work.

Please ensure that notifications regarding absence or authorised lateness (e.g. for a medical appointment) are always communicated by the parent/carer (by email, phone or written note). It is not sufficient to just receive verbal notification from the pupil themselves.

It is helpful if parents notify BOTH the office (by email or phone) as well as the Kindergarten Teacher/Class Teacher/Class Guardian. Teachers are very busy and these messages do not always reach the School Office in time for the pupil absence check in the morning.

Please see the 'Attendance Policy' for further details on all of the above.

Leave of absence (LOA) requests

Parents should request permission from the School if they wish leave of absence for their children during term time, giving a minimum of two weeks' notice.

These requests are for unavoidable absences of a day or more, for any reason other than health or bereavement. Authorisation for an absence is at the discretion of the Management Group.

To request a leave of absence, please use the electronic form available within the Parent Portal as the preferred method.

Alternatively, requests can be emailed to LOA@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

Please see the 'Attendance Policy' for further details.

Section 2: The Education

The Aim and Ethos of the School

The primary task of Edinburgh Steiner School is to provide the best possible education for its pupils, so that they may become knowledgeable but also inwardly free, secure and creative adults.

Rudolf Steiner described his ideal of a comprehensive education as one that encompasses everyone regardless of social or religious background. The basis of this 'art of education' was—and still is—a deep understanding of the human being and recognition of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of the developing human being.

The philosophy (Anthroposophy) behind the education can be applied to all walks of life and it is out of this that the teachers at Edinburgh Steiner School work. **The philosophy itself, however, is not taught to the children.**

The broad curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the child at each stage of their development. The teacher is free, within these guidelines, to present the subject material in an individual way that aims to awaken and inspire the children, encouraging them to discover and learn for themselves. In this way the child is not educated solely in the 'three Rs' but also in the 'three Hs'—Hand, Heart and Head—the practical, feeling and thinking capacities.

The School strives to provide an environment in which a child can find security, moral strength and confidence to face the challenges of life with initiative and responsibility.

Religious Education

The purpose of the weekly religion lesson, which starts in Class 2, is to foster a natural reverence. As the child progresses through the School, these religion lessons change in character. In

accordance with the general curriculum, they aim to guide the children towards a deeper appreciation of right and wrong. Religion lessons are not seen as something separate from the rest of the curriculum, but rather provide a focus for the values, which are at the heart of our education. Although the School is in essence Christian, and celebrates the Christian festivals of the year, it welcomes children of all faiths and denominations. The rhythm of the year is marked out by the celebration of the festivals.

Festivals, Assemblies and Cultural Life

The way in which festivals are celebrated may vary from year to year, but often the Lower and Upper Schools will come together in the School Hall to present to each other the items they have been preparing in their respective Classes. We always try to strike an appropriately seasonal and festive note with these festival gatherings. Parents are usually invited to join us although tickets may need to be booked in advance through the School Office. Details of this will be given through the Tuesday Notice, the school's weekly newsletter. (For further information on the festivals, please visit Section 4 of this handbook).

In addition, the School gathers together at least twice a term to share some aspect of its work. There are many cultural events put on at the School, including plays, concerts and Eurythmy performances. Some of these are brought to the School by touring artists and are usually of a very high standard. Many are performed by our own pupils, such as the Class 8 play, school concerts, musicals and Upper School dramatic presentations. The children always appreciate it when other parents/carers as well as their own can support their efforts by attending their performances.

Shortly before Christmas, the teachers perform two plays from the Oberufer cycle of Christmas Mystery Plays. These are offered as a gift to the pupils of the School from their teachers and are also performed in the evening for parents, carers and friends. All parents/carers are invited to attend these performances.

Pupil Support

Edinburgh Steiner School aims to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of all pupils, within the framework of Scottish legislation for education and as an Independent School. The Pupil Support Department is central to this, working with the teachers, parents and professionals as well as the children and young people themselves.

Pupil Support embraces:

- Cognition and learning – including those who are gifted or talented, neurodiverse learning styles and hindrances to learning
- Communication and interaction – including EAL provision
- Social and emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Physical development and hindrances and sensory difficulties

The Department has three Coordinators, each of which has specialised knowledge and experience in a School area – Kindergarten, Lower School and Upper School – as well as specialists in Supportive Eurythmy, English as an Additional Language, experienced tutors in literacy and numeracy and other specialists whenever possible. We provide support either by advising teachers about appropriate approaches or by sessions with individual pupils or small groups.

EAL (English as an Additional Language) needs are addressed across the Lower School and Upper School for all pupils. Our aim is to ensure that EAL pupils can successfully access the curriculum in order to learn at their highest potential. This may be done via Class Teacher implementation (pedagogical techniques informed by current EAL practice) or by arranging supplementary EAL lessons with an EAL Specialist Teacher, generally one or two sessions per week.

Assessments are provided at strategic stages to help ensure an understanding of the children and young people’s development and their progress in literacy and numeracy. This is also frequently done when a pupil is new to the School, especially if parents or a previous school suggest it would be helpful, or if a pupil has English as an Additional Language (with parent/carer consent). If a Class Teacher or Guardian is worried about an area of a pupil’s wellbeing or learning, they will discuss this with the Support Department and together they will plan what action should be taken. Parents are usually kept informed and consulted at every stage.

Parents can email pupil.support@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk, send a Wellbeing Concern Form (on school website: about our school / pupil support / pupil support department) or phone via the office.

Pupils can also speak to us whenever they need to. In a small school such as ours, we are easy to find and will make time available whenever possible. New pupils can ask their Class Teacher or Guardian how to do that or they can post a letter in the “eyes and ears box”.

Working within the GIRFEC framework, the Department liaises with parents, outside professionals and agencies to fully support pupils. We however, as an Independent School, cannot usually engage with Local Authority financed provision and parents may have to finance some additional support themselves, but we will always advise on this where relevant.

New Pupils Entering Classes 5–8: Modern Languages

If a new pupil entering Classes 5 to 8 comes to the School with no previous experience of the French and/or German languages, they will be expected to have extra tuition in one or both languages on a weekly basis. If tuition in both languages is needed, these classes will be offered in different terms so as not to overwhelm the pupil. Extra tuition should continue until the child is integrated into the level of language learning that the Class average has achieved. The cost for extra tuition is assumed by the parents/carers. Extra tuition lessons will be offered after school hours at the School although the parents/carers are free to find their own teacher for this, as long as progress is consistent. Any further questions about this should be directed to the Lower School Modern Languages Department. Pupils entering the Upper School may also need extra tuition in French and German if they wish to pursue these subjects to examination level. Private tuition may be available from the School’s language teachers for an additional charge. Parents/carers should

consult with the Class Guardian. Alternative activities *may* be timetabled for those pupils who choose not to pursue either language to examination level.

Instrumental Music Lessons

As a school, we encourage pupils to take up musical instruments at the appropriate age. A small number of instrumental teachers come to the School and offer music lessons during school hours. Usually, however, instrumental lessons have to be arranged privately. The School keeps a small stock of instruments, which may be borrowed. From Class 5 upwards, pupils who play instruments become eligible to play in the School Orchestra, which gives regular performances at assemblies and festivals.

If a pupil has private tuition or music lessons at school, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to contact the tutor personally at least 24 hours in advance if a music lesson is to be missed for any reason (including attending a school event such as sports day or the performance of a play) otherwise that lesson may have to be charged. It is not sufficient simply to inform the Class Teacher or School Office in this case.

After School Activities

The Steiner curriculum aims to cover a wide range of activities for the pupils throughout each day. For those, however, who wish to extend their interest beyond school hours a number of opportunities exist, particularly in the realm of sport and physical activity. Details of the current programme are available from the School Office. Advance booking and payment is normally required.

Medical Aspects

In this school a child's general medical care is held to be the responsibility of the child's parents or carers; there are no routine health inspections.

There are first aid points in all the School's main buildings and all staff are trained in first aid. The administration for first aid is under the supervision of members of staff. Only homeopathic remedies are used, unless medicines are provided, where necessary and with written consent, by the parent of a pupil (see the School's 'medication policy' for details). If pupils are too unwell to attend lessons for the rest of the school day, or if they have sustained an injury requiring more than first aid, we recommend they return to their parents'/carers' care with the minimum of delay. In cases of injury that requires hospital attention we will seek to inform parents immediately, but if parents cannot be contacted in an emergency, we will see that the injured pupil is accompanied to hospital.

It is important that parents/carers keep the School Office up to date with their daytime contact numbers and pertinent details of their children's health. A medical/emergency contact form is provided for this information. **For children with serious medical conditions (such as epilepsy) or**

severe allergies parents/carers should submit a Care Plan alongside the medical form. Care Plans can be obtained from a GP.

Infectious Illness (not Covid-related)

Pupils suffering from infectious diseases should be cared for at home. Parents/carers are also reminded of the School's policy to keep children at home for 48 hours after the last bout of vomiting or diarrhoea. For quarantine times for other illnesses, please consult your doctor for guidance.

Meals

Upper School Classes and Class 8 provide school lunches and the preparation of lunches forms part of the school curriculum. Class 8 prepare fresh organic pizza one day per week. Pizza orders are made using a form filled out at the start of the day by the Class Teacher or Class Guardian. Exact money is required. On other days, lunches can be block-booked in advance for individual days or whole weeks using a form available from the School Office. Payment can be made by cheque or in cash. Those parents/carers who do not wish their child to order a school lunch are asked to provide their children with a packed lunch. In the interests of healthy eating, we would ask you to provide wholesome, nourishing food and to keep pre-packed, convenience foods to a minimum. In the Lower School, crisps, chocolate bars and canned drinks are not permitted on normal school days.

Upper School pupils are strongly discouraged from consuming junk food, and are not allowed to eat crisps, chocolate or fizzy drinks in public areas during normal school days. Several areas of the School, including those classrooms which are home to pupils with severe allergies are strictly nut-free zones. Parents/carers are asked to err on the side of caution and not provide their children with snacks or lunches that contain nuts. This applies especially to birthday cakes, which are often shared among pupils.

Television and Computer Games

The experience of teachers is that exposure to television and computer games can significantly interfere with the educational work of the School. This is found to be true for all ages, but is especially so for younger children.

Although television may have a justified place in the life of an adult, television viewing for children is now acknowledged as a medium which impairs strength and creativity, as well as interfering with healthy social development and weakening academic performance. It is preferable for small children not to watch television (or any other screen) at all; the younger the child, the more pronounced the effect is likely to be.

Computers have become a part of everyday life, and the School's computing facilities are an integral part of the Upper School curriculum. However, when children become attracted to computer games, their hands, eyes and attention become increasingly focused upon a small area

just a short distance in front of them. As more time is spent on computer games, less is spent on developing broader social and physical abilities that are essential for healthy growth.

For all these reasons, both television and computer games are felt to impede the work of the School.

(For more information on this important topic, please visit Section 4 of this handbook)

Safe Routes to School

The School actively supports the national Safe Routes to School Initiative. The aims of which are to:

- Enable children to be safe and to feel safe walking or cycling to and from school
- Encourage parents/carers to consider alternatives to driving their children to school
- Improve pedestrian and road safety, and environmental quality for all

While recognising that many people travel great distances to the School, thus relying on a car, we would still encourage parents/carers to use other means of transport i.e. bus, bike, walk or car share if at all possible. The PTA is continually working on issues of road safety relevant to our school. The School also offers cycling proficiency tests. If any parent has a particular interest in this area, please contact the PTA. A copy of the School's Travel Plan can be obtained from the School Office.

Admission and Trial periods

Kindergarten

When applying for a place in Kindergarten, families are offered an initial meeting with the Kindergarten Teachers. At this meeting, a conversation will take place about the child's development and needs, what is offered in the Kindergarten and how the education is delivered and best supported. Parents/carers can then decide if this is the educational approach they wish for their child.

Once a place has been accepted, the Kindergarten staff will observe the child closely and record observations, so as to follow the development of the child through the kindergarten years.

If at any time the Teacher has concerns about a child, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The Teacher will bring concerns to the Kindergarten staff meeting, so that observations of the child can be discussed in depth and ideas for supporting the child shared and agreed upon.
2. If appropriate, a member of the Additional Support for Learning (ASL) staff will attend the Kindergarten to observe the child. The ASL teacher will share observations with the child's Teacher and record these in a report. An appointment with the School Doctor may be recommended.

3. A meeting with the child's parent/carer will be arranged to discuss the observations of school staff. Next steps will be agreed upon to support the child's development. This may include utilising the GIRFEC approach to wellbeing.
4. Next steps will be written down in an Additional Support Plan (ASP) or GIRFEC wellbeing concern form and shared with parents/carers and appropriate school staff.
5. The ASP will be reviewed and discussed with parents/carers and appropriate school staff.

At all times, Kindergarten staff focus on observing the child and meeting their needs wherever possible. The focus is always on enabling positive development for all children within the setting.

Lower School

Every pupil joining the School begins with a term's Trial Period and at the end of this period the following points will be used at the review. This list is intended as a guide for new pupils and their parents/carers:

1. Social integration into the Class is important and it is expected that new pupils endeavour to find their place within the Class.
2. The pupil is willing and co-operative with teachers and completes work and assignments consistently. Work is kept up-to-date and is of the pupil's best standard.
3. The attendance record should be satisfactory and there should not be any unauthorised for absences from school (either full or part day or missed lessons). All absences due to illness must be detailed in writing by the parents/carers according to the Attendance Policy. Absences for other reasons should be requested in advance according to the Attendance Policy.
4. Homework is done regularly and handed in on time (if this is not possible a note must be written by the parents/carers to explain the circumstances that prevent the assignment from being completed).
5. Pupils are expected to familiarise themselves with the School Rules and keep them at all times.

Please note: The School reserves the right to curtail the Trial Period in situations where there is a serious breakdown of co-operation with the above points.

Upper School

Every pupil joining the School begins with a term's Trial Period and at the end of this period the following points will be used at the review. This list is intended as a guide for new pupils and their parents/carers:

1. The pupil is willing and co-operative with teachers and completes work and assignments consistently. Work is kept up-to-date and is of the pupil's best standard and shows endeavour.
2. Homework is done regularly and handed in on time (if this is not possible a note must be written by the parents/carers to explain the circumstances that prevented the assignment from being completed).
3. The attendance record should be satisfactory and there should not be any unaccounted absences from school (either full or part day or missed lessons). All absences due to illness must be detailed in writing by the parents/carers according to the Attendance Policy. Absences for other reasons should be requested in advance according to the Attendance Policy.
4. Pupils are expected to familiarise themselves with the School Rules and keep them at all times.

5. Social integration into the Class is important and it is expected that new pupils do their best to achieve this.

Please note: The School reserves the right to curtail the Trail Period in situations where there is a serious breakdown of co-operation.

Punctuality

Among the special aspects of a Steiner school is the need for a strong social environment that is provided by parents/carers working together to support the educational work. The School considers punctuality to be of vital importance. If teachers and parents/carers are punctual, the children will learn reliability and respect for others; habits that will last into later life. It is therefore expected that parents/carers will help provide uninterrupted and punctual attendance at school. To arrive late for the start of school or for individual lessons is not only inconsiderate towards others in the Class and disruptive to the flow of the lesson but, if allowed to continue, can give rise to the formation of habits that may be hard to break later in life. Further details can be found in the Attendance Policy.

Kindergarten

When a child arrives late at Kindergarten they may have settling in, and the rhythm of the day will have been disrupted for all the children. Parents/carers are therefore requested to make every effort to ensure their child is at school on time. It is also very important to collect your child punctually. **It can be upsetting for young children to be left behind after their friends have already gone home.** The teachers are also busy with meetings and other commitments in the afternoon. Further details can be found in the Attendance Policy

Lower School

In the Lower School, it is considered the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at 8:40am for an 8:45am start. Class Teachers will monitor punctuality and take appropriate measures in cases of repeated lateness. All pupils arriving after the register has been taken **must** report to the School Office to get a lateness slip. If a child is late more than three times in a term, a letter will go out to their parents/carers. Further details can be found in the Attendance Policy.

Upper School

In the Upper School we believe that the pupils share the responsibility for being punctual. Pupils should be at school by 8:40am. If a pupil is late, they must report to the School Office to get a lateness slip. If a pupil is late three times within a term, they will receive a detention. If they continue to be late following this detention, the matter will be looked into by the Management Group and a meeting with parents/carers will be arranged. Further details can be found in the Attendance Policy.

Homework: Lower School

There is no set homework in Classes 1 and 2, though the children may be asked to practise the skills they are learning and individual tasks may occasionally be set.

Homework usually begins in Class 3 and from then on will gradually increase until, by the end of the Lower School, pupils will be expected to complete at least one piece of homework in Maths, English, French and German per week. Pupils will also be expected to keep up-to-date with their Main Lesson work.

Projects and book reviews are set regularly from Class 4, and these will usually be set in addition to other homework. The exact amount of homework will be at the discretion of the Class Teacher, who will ensure that the homework is spread evenly throughout the week.

Class Teachers and parents/carers work together to make sure that homework is handed in on time. From Class 5 onwards, failure to hand in homework on time may result in homework detention. The time and place for such a detention will be communicated to the parents/carers via the Class Teacher.

Homework and Detention: Upper School

In the Upper School, failure to hand in homework will normally result in detention. The detention system for the Upper School is outlined below. All detentions will take place in the detention room, currently the Geography Room. The pupils attending detention must bring a signed detention slip and a pen.

Offence	Punishment	Action by teacher
In lessons <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Misbehaviour● Rudeness● Lateness● None-presentation of Homework● Eating/drinking● Lack of necessary books / equipment	Warning Lunchtime detention (1.10 – 1.45)	Issue detention slip. Add name to detention register.
In school <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Missing a lesson	Lunchtime detention	Issue detention slip.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breaking school rules ● Chewing gum ● Misusing mobile phone 	(1.10 – 1.45)	Add name to detention register.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3 x detention 		Refer to Management Group

Upper School Detention Policy

Evaluation, Assessment and Examinations

Regular and open communication between parents/carers and teachers is a vital aspect of Steiner education. Evaluation is a continuous process and parents/carers should feel free to ask the teacher at any time how their child is getting on. The termly parents' evenings are also an opportunity for parents to see their child's work and to hear about their progress from the Class Teacher and other subject teachers.

At the end of each school year a written report is sent out for each child. These narrative reports aim to give a picture of the pupil's development, his or her strengths and weaknesses, areas of progress and potential for the future. For the Upper School reports are sent out twice a year, at the end of the Autumn Term and at the end of the session. The Class Guardian is responsible for the collation of reports. Reports aim to be comprehensive, but they cannot take the place of regular meetings between parents/carers and teachers for an objective discussion of the pupil's performance. Meetings can be set up at either the parent's/carers' or teachers' initiative and home visits can also be requested by either party. This can be mutually beneficial and help foster the relationship between home and school.

Examinations and Testing

Pupils' progress is assessed through a consideration of their whole development, which includes social and artistic capacities as well as academic performance. Neither formal tests nor examinations feature in the life of a Lower School child. The joy of learning is its own motivation force in these middle years of childhood.

Because it is necessary for a teacher to ascertain that children have learned what the teacher set out to teach, assessments in various subjects occur in the older Classes. The emphasis, however, is always on how pupils have performed in terms of their own ability rather than measuring them against that of their classmates.

Subject lessons are brought to examination level in Class 10 (age 15-16yrs). Up to four 'exam' subjects are taken in Class 10 (all at National 4 or National 5) leaving others to be taken the following year, after pupils make their subject choices. By spreading the exam load over three years, we are able to continue with the Steiner curriculum of Main Lessons and subject lessons throughout the Upper School. In Class 11 pupils normally sit a combination of National 5s and GCSEs. SQA Higher exams are taken at the end of Class 12 (age 17-18yrs). Most pupils sit between 4 and 6 Highers. Some Main Lessons are also accredited through One Awards. There are two

members of staff responsible for exams administration: the *SQA Coordinator* (who is responsible for SQA qualifications such as National 4 & 5 and Highers) and the *Examinations Officer* (who is responsible for GCSEs).

At the end of Class 10, all pupils must complete two weeks' work experience in an area of their choice. Many of our pupils go on to further education, whilst others pursue a wide variety of careers after school. Our aim is to enable the young people who leave our school to make free choices based on sound judgement.

The School is an official centre for the SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority), The AQA (The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) and OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations) boards. Pupils are normally registered with exam boards in Class 10. Certificates for SQA qualifications are posted directly to candidates' addresses by the SQA. If a candidate had moved house between the time of registration and the time of the exams it is advisable to double check with the SQA Coordinator that the exam board holds the correct address.

- Further details are contained in the *Qualifications, Exams and Careers Handbook*, available on the School's Website in the 'Publications and Policies' section:
<https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/parents/publicationspolicies/>

Internal Appeals Procedure

The Joint Council for Qualifications on behalf of all the English Examination Boards requires centres to have and publicise an Internal Appeals Procedure relating to internal assessment. The full policy is set out below:

Edinburgh Steiner School is committed to ensuring that whenever its staff assesses student work for external qualification, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments are conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills and who have been trained in this activity. The centre is committed to ensuring that assessment evidence provided by candidates is produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the relevant specifications for each subject. Where a set of work is divided between staff, internal moderation and standardisation will ensure consistency.

If a student feels that this may not have happened in relation to their, they may make use of this appeals procedure. Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade submitted by the centre for moderation by the awarding body.

This procedure is as follows:

1. *Appeals should be made as early as possible and at least two weeks before the end of the last externally assessed paper in the examination series (e.g. the last GCSE written paper in the June GCSE exam series).*

2. *Appeals should be made in writing by the candidate's parent/carer to the Chair of the College of Teachers, who will investigate the appeal with an appropriately qualified subject teacher who has not been involved in the internal assessment decision. The purpose of the appeal will be to decide whether the process used for the internal assessment conformed to the published requirements of the awarding body and the examinations code of practice of the QCA.*
3. *The appellant will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal, including any relevant correspondence with the awarding body and any changes made to the procedure relating to internal assessment.*
4. *The outcome of the appeal will be made known to the Management Group and will be logged as a complaint. A written record will be kept and made available to the awarding body upon request. Should the appeal bring any significant irregularity to light, the awarding body will be informed.*

After work has been assessed internally, it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work. That is outside the control of the Edinburgh Steiner School and is not covered by this procedure. If you have concerns about it, please ask the Examination Officer for a copy of the appeals procedure of the relevant awarding body.

Where there is a disagreement with a decision by the centre not to support an Enquiry About Results, the candidate can make an appeal on private ground through the centre. The candidate will be required to pay for the process. The decision for the centre not to make an Enquiry About Results will be reached using the process described above.

Careers Education and Guidance in the Upper School

The School has seen extensive development of the Careers Department in recent years. As part of our holistic education, the application of skills learned in school to real-life contexts is embedded throughout the curriculum. Furthermore, the pupils receive targeted support all the way through the Upper School in taking their next steps forwards. We enjoy an excellent record of successful applications to university and college, and view as one of the markers of success the diversity of routes which our pupils choose to pursue when they have left school. The work of this department is framed by four aims and objectives:

- No pupil should leave the School without a clear—and positive - route forwards.
- Encouraging high aspirations, while putting safety nets in place.
- The department aims to facilitate and enable rather than teach.
- We have a strong focus on pupil independence, on the basis that this aspect of the school aims to make not only a practical link for the pupils between school and the outside world, but where appropriate to shift their methods of working away from receiving 'taught' careers lessons to driving their own careers forwards.

Learning and Teaching

In *Class 8*, pupils are encouraged to develop the responsible working habits that will stand them in good stead later on in the Upper School (and beyond) through their Class 8 project. They receive age-appropriate lessons on the relationship of this project to their future careers choices in the

spring term.

Class 9, pupils are (strongly) encouraged to work beyond the school curriculum, whether through the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, local volunteering, or getting a part-time job, with the aims of boosting their workplace skills, allowing them to experience the world of work and hone their interests, and start to build experiences on which they can draw for post-school applications. The department runs careers information sessions at parents' evenings, and if appropriate, starts informal discussions with pupils, parents, and class guardians about areas the pupils might focus on.

By *Class 10*, the focus of the pupils centres around exam outcomes, and subject choices. Pupils receive lessons around subject-choice time on the impact of their subject selections to their options for post-school careers. The work experience block plays an important role in the careers curriculum: not just the experience of being on work experience, but the process of searching for a suitable position, and making the application gives the pupils the opportunity to put into practice the taught content on how to write a letter of application. Fundamental to the work of classes nine and ten is the recognition that a pupil has studied only a small number of exam courses at this point; and we make every effort to keep every possible route of study open to the pupils.

During *Class 11*, Pupils are encouraged to consider, as they pursue their courses, the ramifications of those courses for potential careers. After the GCSE exam diet, they then have dedicated one-to-one careers interviews with Inspiring Futures. Preparation for these interviews is a crucial part of the interview process. Following the interview, pupils are issued with a detailed interview report, for consideration over the summer months. In the summer term of *Class 11*, pupils receive talks from the Project Trust on gap year opportunities.

Class 12 is the time in which the work of the previous years will come to fruition, and is when the majority of the pupils' careers guidance takes place. We delay any decision-making on the part of the pupils until they have a) received their *Class 11* exam results and b) commenced their Higher courses in *Class 12*, in order to allow them to have the broadest possible grasp of the content of the exam courses which they are pursuing. The year commences with a Main Lesson in which pupils are introduced to the variety of options available to them at the end of the year. This allows the pupils to register for Apply and various college application systems. We also visit the UCAS convention (which has options going far beyond university applications) as a group. Pupils are then encouraged to attend university and college open days independently, and receive extensive one-one support in forming onward plans, and making applications to University, College, or other options such as Modern Apprenticeships. The school works with external agencies, and welcomes presentations from SAAS (the Student Awards Agency for Scotland) and the Stewart Ivory Financial Education Trust in order to support and inform the pupils' transition from school into the wider world.

The 'backup' safety net

For every pupil who is not offered an unconditional place at university (in reality, this is the majority of our pupils) there is the expectation that they will also make an application to college, or form another concrete back up plan (such as a planned gap year). Our experience is that,

should they miss their offers for University, that a college place is a good fall-back option. Furthermore, it allows the pupils to explore an entirely different path to that which they may have chosen for their university application.

Putting the pupil in charge.

Despite our carefully structured approach, the work of the Careers Department is largely facilitative: we aim to open doors for pupils, rather than lead them to a careers destination. We believe that one of the indicators of readiness to make the next step on from school is that the pupil is consciously leading the process of choosing their route forwards. Therefore, we would expect a pupil who is approaching school leaving age to demonstrate, and drive, a clear set of next steps! This might take the form of knowing what they want to do next, having conducted some independent research, making and keeping careers appointments, and demonstrating an interest in moving towards a positive destination.

Supporting lifelong learning

From time to time, pupils make the decision to change direction once they have left school. This is not uncommon in young people generally. However, the School has a commitment to supporting the individual pupils' lifelong learning. Therefore, we make it possible for the pupils to keep in touch with us once they have left school, which takes many forms across the whole school. However, in the case of The Careers Department, we encourage pupils to share successes, ask for informal advice, and feel welcome to share the experiences they encounter along the way.

Requirements for Class work

Lower School

Please refer to the list for your child's Class issued to you via the School Office and check with your child's teacher for any possible amendments.

Classes 6, 7 and 8

In addition to the issued list, French and German dictionaries and Grammar books will be provided by the School and charged to the pupils' account. One A4 binder with a divider for French and German is also required.

Upper School

As Classes 6 - 8 above plus:

2H lead pencil

360 degree protractor

A4 lined file paper

Four A4 envelope card folders

A scientific calculator will be required towards the end of Class 9. Parents/guardians will be notified about which model to purchase. ***We strongly advise all materials (including crayons and pencils) be labelled with the child's name or initials.***

Stockists

Most required items can be purchased from the School Shop. Order forms are available from the School Office, either hard copy or digital. Please say which Class your child is in. The School Shop also has a presence at the Friday Market.

The Mulberry Bush, Morningside Road, (Tel: 0131 447 5145) also stocks various items

Caran d'ache 'Neocolour II' water soluble crayons are available from Greyfriars Art Shop, 1 Greyfriars Place, Edinburgh, EH1 2QQ. Tel: (0131) 225 4600.

School Trips

School trips form an important part of the curriculum. They widen the educational experience and the whole Class is expected to take part. The Class Teacher, Class Guardian or subject teacher will send out a form giving information and requesting permission for each trip involving travel over a mile from school, and it is vital that you return this form, or else let the teacher know if your child cannot go with the Class.

Parents/carers are expected to contribute towards the cost of these trips, both via extra payments and through fundraising activities which benefit the Class fund. One of the purposes of the Class fund is to assist with the cost of trips, either in part for each Class member or in full where the family cannot meet the cost.

In Class 5, the curriculum deals with Ancient Greece. The children take part in an organised Olympic Games camp at Michael Hall Steiner School in Sussex. This is an occasion when many Class 5s from across the UK come together. Please note that the Class 12 Trip is an integral part of the curriculum, but may occur *after* the end of the pupils' final term at school.

Below is an outline of trips by Class. This may vary from year to year:

Class 1: Whole or half day outing into nature

Class 2: Whole or half day outing into nature

Class 3: A number of whole or half day outings to include visits to: a farm, mining museum and fishing museum

Class 4: A number of whole or half day outings to explore local geography; 1 overnight trip staying at a youth hostel for 1 or 2 nights

Class 5: Greek Olympics: June: 4 days

Class 6: Hadrian's Wall: 2/3 days or 'outward bound' trip: 2/3 days

Class 7: 'Outward bound' exploration: 2/3 days

Class 8: Exchange: May/June: 4-6 weeks: German or French speaking country

Class 9: Work on a farm: Autumn: 1-2 weeks; Geology and Biology field trips

Class 10: Work experience: June: 2 weeks; various field trips connected to Main Lessons

Class 11: Surveying Trip: June, 5 days; various field trips connected to Main Lessons; careers visits

Class 12: Class 12 Trip: July, approximately 1-2 weeks; various field trips connected to Main Lessons; careers visits

Section 3: Policies and Rules

Policies and rules can be seen as common understandings and agreements that allow everyone to participate in the purpose of the School, which is to educate children. Rules are pedagogically based and are the result of many years of experience. In addition, rules support your family by helping with the inevitable peer pressures that arise as part of growing up. More than anything, the rules are intended to support children on their educational journey towards freedom by teaching them about responsibility in an age-appropriate way.

It is very important that the family and school work together with common and agreed values and we earnestly seek your support in the application of the School Rules.

For a full detail of all policies and documentation, please use the documents section within the [Parent Portal](#).

Discipline

Where there is a good understanding between teacher and pupil, discipline arises naturally. Problems may occur when this understanding breaks down for one reason or another. If a child behaves in an unacceptable way, the teacher must find a way to help the child with this. In the case of young children, an appropriate story may be told; through which the child becomes more conscious of why their action has distressed others. In some cases, Lower School pupils may be sent to a younger Class to be supervised by their teacher, but only if this action does not cause further disruption to another Class. In other cases a member of the Management Group may become involved. Further details can be found in the Discipline Policy.

Additional notes regarding suspension and exclusion

If suspension is required, the teachers' decision and the reasons for it will be summarised in a written statement to the parent(s)/carer(s) and the situation will be considered by the College of Teachers at their next meeting. It is usual for a meeting of pupil, parent(s)/carer(s) and the teachers concerned to take place before the pupil rejoins the Class.

Suspension is a very serious sanction. The pupil may be suspended 'internally' (withdrawn from normal lessons and given alternative work) or temporarily excluded from school altogether for a period of time. Specific commitments are normally required before they may return. It is likely to be mentioned in the pupil's end of session report.

Exclusion is a last resort and all concerned should help the pupil to avoid this sanction. However, if the required commitments are not honoured, or if further incidents leading to suspensions occur—either of the summary variety or as a result of repeated misconduct requiring supervision or resulting in detentions—a warning may be issued that exclusion will result unless there is substantial improvement and a change of attitude within a stated period. It is very rare that such an extreme sanction has been warranted in our school.

Dress Code

As the School does not have a uniform, the requirements for school dress are based on considerations of health, neatness and cleanliness together with practicality and suitability for school. Therefore we seek the co-operation of parents/carers and pupils in steering a course between strict formality and casual attire. Consequently we would consider the following **unsuitable** for school:

- Clothing which is badly worn, torn or heavily soiled
- Clothing displaying pictures or slogans. NB The only writing on garments which is acceptable is the maker's logo, and then when no more than 10cm at its widest point
- Sports team tops or football shirts
- Military garments or similar uniforms
- Garments which reveal a bare midriff i.e. low slung trousers or skirts or cropped tops
- Garments which do not cover the upper torso/shoulders properly i.e. vest tops with thin shoelace straps
- Miniskirts. That is, skirts with a hem more than 6 inches above the knee
- Any facial piercings (apart from earrings) including nose or eyebrow studs/bars/rings and any piercings in the area of the mouth
- Any tattoos on conspicuous parts of the body (for example hands, arms, neck etc.)
- Sunglasses may not be worn by Lower School pupils unless required for medical reasons, in which case a medical letter supporting this must be given to the school. Upper school pupils may wear sunglasses outside in the School grounds, but not inside the buildings. Pupils are asked to remove their sunglasses when talking to an adult.

Please note:

- Sportswear is not allowed in class outside PE or sports lessons
- Woolly hats, baseball caps and all other forms of headgear are not to be worn in class
- Clothing should be sufficiently warm so that outer garments, jackets, coats and anoraks need not be worn in class under normal circumstances
- Patterned fabrics are permissible
- **Only** trainers, plimsolls or eurythmy shoes are to worn in the gym hall
- All articles of clothing /equipment must be clearly marked with the owner's name. The School cannot take responsibility for lost belongings or clothing

Jewellery and make up

Lower School: Pupils are not permitted to wear any make-up (including unnatural hair colourants and nail varnish). Jewellery is not allowed below Class 7, except for sleepers which may be worn in pierced ears.

Any jewellery worn in Classes 7 & 8 must be in moderation and be in keeping with the guidelines set out by the Class Teacher.

Upper School: Pupils are required to ensure that their dress, make-up and jewellery (if worn) are within moderate bounds and in keeping with the considerations above.

Infringement of the above dress code will incur a detention and /or parents/carers will be informed. (For further information please also see Section 4 of this handbook).

School Rules

We expect that every pupil will be considerate of others and try their best when they are in and out of school.

1. Pupils should feel safe and free from words and actions that, intentionally or otherwise, hurt others.
2. In class, every pupil has the right to partake in the lesson free of interruptions and distractions.
3. Pupils should be protected from activities that may cause physical or mental harm.
4. Pupils should actively promote good 'Health & Safety' practice.
5. Pupils must follow the School Rules in order to make the above rights and freedoms available.
6. In general, except in specific circumstances (which are outlined in the school's mobile phone policy), mobile phones should be turned off and kept out of sight within School Grounds. Parents are asked not to use their mobile phones on campus during school hours.

For more details and an interpretation of the School Rules and Dress Code, please contact the School Office.

Movement/Physical Education Lessons - Clothing / Footwear expectations

Currently pupils are not required to change for Movement/Physical Education lessons.

Pupils, particularly in Classes 6 to 11, are encouraged to do so with time and facilities given for those that wish to change. However, ALL pupils must wear appropriate footwear: lace-up trainers, running shoes, sneakers, tennis shoes etc. Sandals, slip-ons, hiking shoes, boots etc are not permitted.

Appropriate clothing for both indoor and outdoor Play and Activity is important and pupils should be prepared for either scenario on their P.E day, as often the location is weather-dependent and decided at the last minute. Pupils should feel comfortable and able to 'move' freely and have warm layers and a coat available.

Warm outdoor clothing including hats, gloves etc, is particularly important for the younger pupils as we try to be outdoors as much as possible.

Valuables

It is unwise for pupils to come to school with valuables or more money than they need; and for obvious reasons money and such things as calculators should not be left unattended in a desk or

cloakroom. When necessary, a teacher can hold something in safe keeping until the end of the school day, or it may be left in the School Office.

Breakages

In cases where a breakage is directly attributable to a pupil's misconduct, the parent(s)/carer(s) of that pupil will be asked to cover the costs of any repairs that may be needed.

Insurance

The School's Liability Insurance covers the School in cases where the School has been proven to be negligent. The School does **not** hold a Personal Accident Policy to cover pupils in cases of injury or accident at school. Parents/carers should consider whether they wish to cover this contingency themselves.

Child Protection

The School's policies on child protection and safeguarding will—if and when it becomes mandatory—fulfil the national requirements of GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) and follow the guidelines issued by the City of Edinburgh Council (as a partner provider) and those published by SCIS (the Scottish Council for Independent Schools) of which Edinburgh Steiner School is a member.

The School has a Child Protection Co-ordinator and Deputies and they advise staff and those with concerns as to the appropriate course of action. Please enquire at the School Office if you wish to know who holds these posts at present. All staff members receive regular training in issues of child protection.

All allegations brought to the School's attention are taken seriously and dealt with confidentially in as far as they can within the criteria outlined in the Confidentiality Policy. Any parent/carers with a concern for the welfare of any pupil can contact any member of staff about the concern. It is best if an appointment to meet about the issues can be arranged. This is preferable to a telephone discussion. It is helpful if as much detail as possible can be provided of any evidence on which this concern is based.

Equal Opportunity Statement

Edinburgh Steiner School recognises and has regard for each child's religious background, ethnic origins, and cultural and linguistic background, so that each child is valued as an individual without racial or gender prejudice.

Bullying

The School does not condone bullying under any circumstance, be it physical or psychological in nature. Any report of an incident of bullying, whether from a child, a concerned parent/carers or a

member of staff, will be taken seriously. Any child who sees or hears another child being bullied is encouraged to report it to a teacher. Attention can be drawn to cases directly, via Class Teachers or Guardians, or anonymously, by pupils, via the 'Eyes and Ears' box. The School has a detailed Social Inclusion Policy.

All teachers have responsibility to initially investigate every reported incident and to inform Kindergarten Teachers, Class Teachers or Class Guardians. After this initial investigation it will be decided whether the incident should be referred to the Management Group, which has overall responsibility for wellbeing and pupil support on behalf of the College of Teachers.

It is the responsibility of Kindergarten Teachers, Class Teachers and Class Guardians to do their utmost to prevent bullying in their Class. The manner in which each case is dealt with will depend on the circumstances and the individual children involved, but the above principles should be adhered to at all times.

Health and Safety

Our comprehensive Health & Safety Policy can be viewed in the School Office.

Policy on Theft

When a theft is discovered, every effort will be made to find out how it occurred and to get the culprit to own up. This will be done by addressing whole Classes, talking to individual pupils, or to groups of pupils. Class Teachers/Class Guardians will be involved at this stage. Sometimes confidentiality has to be respected and teachers are not able to 'search' pupils, but pupils' own sense of right and wrong should be appealed to. The police may be informed, depending on the nature of the theft.

Once some of the relevant facts have been gathered, parents/carers can be informed and further discussions may take place if appropriate. Where necessary, other members of staff will be informed of the incident. Although each case is different, it is normal to expect money or goods to be returned and for those responsible to undertake some community work within the School.

School trips are regarded in the same way as being at school. Incidents of theft out of school are rare, but it could be that the School becomes involved and it would then work with the parents/carers and the police in order to resolve the situation.

Policy on Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs and Illegal Substances

One of the aims of the School is that pupils should abstain from drugs and other harmful substances as a matter of personal choice. Guidance and advice is provided to this end. However, circumstances arise and temptations occur. This is the current school policy on this issue:

Drugs are defined as all legally banned or age-restricted substances, substances which may significantly affect mood or behaviour, plus any substance (or usage) specifically proscribed by the

School. The School reserves the right to proscribe substances or usages in addition to those legally banned (such as glue or lighter fuel) or on which legislation may be pending (such as so-called 'legal highs').

Tobacco and Alcohol

These may not be consumed during school hours or during school functions on the premises; nor should they be consumed off the premises within the vicinity of the School, immediately before or after school hours or during school evening functions. Any pupil who does not comply with this, or is in the company of someone not complying, is liable to face disciplinary action.

Drugs and other illegal substances

The possession and/or use of drugs and other illegal substances on the School's premises is strictly forbidden.

In the event of a pupil or pupils being suspected of possessing and/or using drugs or other illegal substances, whether on or off the School's premises, the School may follow one or more of the following options:

- Initiate action to ascertain the relevant facts and circumstances
- Inform the parents/carers of the pupil(s) involved
- Suspend the pupil(s) concerned
- Inform the police
- Inform the parents/carers of other pupils in the same Class(es) as the suspected pupil(s)

All these considerations will depend upon the individual circumstances of each case. Other possibilities such as reparation in the form of work inside or outside the School will also be seriously considered.

Permanent exclusion is normally automatic for those who have previously offended, irrespective of the time or place of the offence. This includes Overseas' Students if it comes to the School's notice that they have offended in their home school.

In the event of a pupil or pupils being found in possession of or using drugs or other illegal substances during school hours or on school premises, the School will, under normal circumstances, immediately and permanently exclude the pupils concerned.

This policy may be amended from time to time at the discretion of the College of Teachers. The PTA will be part of this process.

Complaints Policy

Parents and carers have a right to make a complaint to the School in relation to any aspect of their child's education. Parents and carers also have the right to make a complaint about any aspect of the School community. It is the School's policy to acknowledge the receipt of all complaints

quickly and consider each one carefully. A full copy of the Complaints Policy (below) is also available from the School's website:

<https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/parents/publicationspolicies/> or on request from the School Office.

For the purpose of clarification, for this document, and for general practice:

A **concern** shares information or expresses a hopeful resolution to something which is perceived to be a problem. A concern is **informal**.

A **complaint** expresses a desire for redress of a grievance. A complaint is therefore a **formal** request for action to be taken.

Complaints Procedure

A. Informal procedure

The maintenance of a good working relationship between children, teachers and parents/carers is a vital ingredient of a successful education. Inevitably, however, differences of perception do occur and these put a strain on relationships from time to time.

While every circumstance is different and must be examined on its own terms, it is helpful to set out the general procedures which apply to addressing problems. Prevention is always better than cure. Parents/carers are therefore requested to tackle problems as they emerge so that they do not get worse. Not all problems, of course, are easily resolvable. Nevertheless, openness, humility, humour and a little imagination can often help transform a situation. In some cases, patience is the essential ingredient.

If the concern is about a pupil, then the first point of contact in registering a concern is to the pupil's Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian. If, for whatever reason, that is difficult, then a member of the Management Group should be approached. This may be done either in person, by telephone via the School Office, or by booking an appointment for a Management surgery. Times for these surgeries are listed in the Tuesday Notice. The Management Group will consider what action is appropriate. This may mean taking the matter to the College of Teachers for discussion, or perhaps arranging a meeting between the parties concerned. For matters with school-wide implications or issues concerning school policy, a member of the Board of Trustees can be contacted via the Bursar. If the above informal approach cannot be adopted, or if it has not been effective in resolving the problem, the Formal Procedure outlined below may be followed.

If the concern is of a more general nature, then details of the concern can be put in writing and sent by email to the Management Group via the School Coordinator: management@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk or sent as a letter by post to the School's registered address and marked for the attention of 'Management.'

Alternatively, any member of the School community may book an appointment in person with a member of the Management Group. Times for 'Management surgeries' are listed in the Tuesday Notice.

B. Formal Procedure

A parent/carer may register a formal complaint with the Management Group. Details of the complaint should be put in writing and sent by email to the Management Group via the School Coordinator: management@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

1. Following the receipt of an enquiry or written correspondence, The School Coordinator will determine whether it should be regarded as a concern or a complaint
2. The School Coordinator will acknowledge receipt of written correspondence within two working days and forward details of the process, including timelines, to the complainant
3. If the complaint is deemed 'formal,' a designated Trustee will be appointed to oversee the process The Trustee will be copied in to all correspondence but will take no active part in the process until the final stages
4. Communication between the School and the complainant will normally be via email, or by phone if preferred. A log of telephone conversations will be kept. Meetings may be arranged in school if appropriate. Minutes will be taken of any meetings that do take place and these will be made available to the designated Trustee on request
5. The concern/complaint is passed to the Chair of Management who appoints a Management Group member as the Named Member of Management (NMM) to personally oversee the concern/complaint
6. The NMM assigned to the concern/complaint will contact the complainant and copy in the designated Trustee
7. The NMM investigates the concern/complaint by following the complaints procedure
8. College is informed about the concern/complaint to maintain oversight, except in cases involving child protection or where confidentiality has been requested by the complainant
9. The NMM may request, in writing, that the relevant department, mandate group, Early Years Practitioner, Class Teacher or Guardian takes action to resolve the concern/complaint. Following such a request, a response must be provided in writing to the NMM within 7 days
10. The NMM will update the complainant in writing on the progress of the concern/complaint within 7 days (subject to the restrictions outlined in the notes below and assuming it has not already been resolved)
11. The NMM will provide a full response in writing to the complainant within 28 days (subject to the restrictions outlined in the notes below). The designated Trustee is copied in
12. Unresolved concerns/complaints will be passed to the Chair of Trustees
13. College will be informed when a concern/complaint has been resolved, and when a concern/complaint has been passed to the Chair of Trustees
14. The designated Trustee will contact the complainant to solicit confidential feedback on the way the concern/complaint has been handled

15. If a complaint remains unresolved, complainants may seek further advice from: The Steiner Waldorf School Fellowship, The Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), Education Scotland, or the Care Inspectorate (Early Years).

Timeline

1. Following acknowledgement of a concern/complaint, the NMM will update the complainant in writing within 7 days (subject to the restrictions outlined in the notes below), and copy in the School Coordinator and the designated Trustee
2. A full response will be provided, if possible, within 28 days (subject to the restrictions outlined in the notes below). If the concern/complaint has not been resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, the matter will be passed to the Chair of Trustees.

For additional guidance notes please see the full Complaints Policy, available on the School website

Section 4: Parental Involvement and Participation

Children are more likely to thrive when there is a close relationship between home and school. Parents/carers are invited and encouraged to become part of the School community, thereby creating a strong social environment to support the educational work of the School. While the amount of time any particular family can give will vary according to individual circumstances, all are asked to share what they can.

Protocol for Teacher/Parent/Carer Relationship

The relationship between teachers and parents/carers is based upon their common aim, which is actively to support and guide their children in their development and education. This will best be achieved when the relationship that exists is one of mutual respect and understanding. Frank and open communication is of immense importance in establishing the trust that should grow between them.

Every Class in the School is composed of children who come together daily from a wide variety of families, homes and cultural and religious backgrounds. What they experience as a group is the Steiner/Waldorf curriculum, as interpreted and presented to them by their teachers. While the standards of behaviour, conventions etc. may, in many cases, differ from those required at home, children will readily adapt to such differences so long as they feel the mutual support of both teachers and parents/carers.

Disagreements and misunderstandings may sometimes occur between teachers and parents/carers. While these must be settled as soon as possible, it is also important to find an appropriate moment to discuss these matters and the teacher should be contacted in order to arrange this (see Section 1, Communication). On occasions, a teacher may request some parental help in the classroom. This is very much appreciated by both teachers and children. Parents/carers may not, however, be present during a lesson without the prior consent of the teacher in charge.

If a message, an item of equipment, lunch box etc. needs to be delivered to a pupil or a teacher during school hours, it should be brought to the School Office rather than directly to the classroom so that lessons are not disturbed. Parents of pupils in the Lower and Upper Schools may not visit a classroom except with prior approval of the School Office, a teacher or Class Guardian. This does not apply during scheduled drop-off and pick-up times in younger Classes.

As parents/carers, you can participate in the life of the School by:

- Supporting your child's learning at home

- Participating with the teachers and parents/carers in your child's Class
- Participating in the School as a whole

Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home

We have only to look back to our own childhood to recall the important part that home life played in our own growth and development.

Daily Rhythm

From Kindergarten through to Upper School, Steiner/Waldorf education provides a well-defined daily rhythm for the school day, week and year so that children have a secure framework in which to learn. A consistent daily cycle at home complements this aspect of school life, with well-defined times for getting up in the morning, meals and going to bed.

Homework is given in the Middle and Upper School years, and your interest, encouragement and support for a regular study routine at home will benefit your child enormously. Pupils need to be fresh and alert to work hard at our school, so a healthy diet and adequate sleep are very important to support your child's learning.

Main Lesson subjects are taught in blocks which usually build one upon the other. The rhythm of daily, weekly and seasonal cycles also forms an important part of the life of the School. For these reasons, experiences missed through absence cannot easily be made up at a later time, especially at the beginning and end of the terms.

School Dress

The School has no uniform and so the requirements for school dress are based on a consideration of health, neatness, cleanliness and suitability for work at school. While it may be difficult to resist the pressures of advertising and fashion, nevertheless both parents/carers and children are asked to cooperate with the School in steering a sensible course between strict formality and overly casual attire for the following reasons:

1. We strive to create a beautiful environment in the classrooms and in the buildings. We would like the children's manner of dress to be in keeping with this, avoiding logos, harsh colours and day-glow which disturb this harmonious environment.
2. We aim to teach children that they are not 'walking advertisements.' We endeavour to create a space for the children that is free of commercialism and where there is not a constant barrage of media-imposed consumer images.
3. The child's own imagination should stimulate and direct their play. Mass media characters, superheroes and sports iconography on clothing inhibit the development of a healthy imagination.

For the above reasons, College strongly requests parents'/carers' co-operation in ensuring that children are in accordance with the dress code (see Section 3 for more detail).

Younger children especially are advised to wear strong shoes with a firm sole, so that their feet develop healthily and normally. In bad weather, all pupils should have waterproof footwear. Trainers with soft soles, which may be appropriate for games lessons, are not suitable for wearing throughout the day.

Healthy body, healthy mind—the importance of nutrition

Healthy food is a prerequisite for a healthy life and a healthy outlook; it is no coincidence that the terms ‘health’ and ‘wellbeing’ are so often bracketed together. As part of its wider ethos, the School makes a commitment to the nutritional needs of its pupils. Healthier pupils are more likely to perform better and less likely to miss school through illness.

Young people who consume a lot of food containing additives, and sugar in junk food, find it harder to concentrate on learning. Children who bring packed lunches should therefore bring wholesome, nutritious sandwiches or other healthy, filling foods. Crisps, chocolate, sweets and fizzy drinks are not permitted in the Lower School while Upper School pupils are not allowed to consume these products in public areas.

Each child may bring a cake to celebrate their birthday with their Class, but teachers ask that chocolate be avoided and low sugar recipes are recommended. Please check with your child’s Class Teacher about any food allergies or intolerances there may be among pupils in the Class. Nuts should be avoided as a matter of course. Food sold for fundraising should also be as healthy as possible, low in sugar and avoid nuts.

Television and computer games

Watching television and playing computer games, especially during the most crucial years of development, are two occupations, which we find incompatible with the holistic and humanly truthful quality of education we are striving to deliver. We ask the co-operation of parents/carers to minimise the exposure of the children to the unhelpful influences of these media, especially during infancy and the Lower School years. This may seem a lot to ask in our present media-dominated culture. Here are some of the criteria we consider important for your consideration:

At the time of birth many of the vital organs are not yet fully formed. Their healthy development is gradually completed through physical nourishment and through the child’s experience of its own movements and the feedback gained through sense impressions. This is particularly important for neurological development, on which the ability for intellectual learning later depends. Watching a TV screen inhibits all movements but, most seriously, it causes eye-focus to be fixed rigidly at the distance of the screen, while the illusion of a three-dimensional picture is presented. On the objective level of sense impressions this is a lie, which can cause subconscious confusion to the nervous system while preventing the movement and feedback which would provide a natural correction. When such things are experienced frequently at a young age, inner habits are formed which can become stumbling blocks for conceptual learning.

Young children learn by imitation and take all sense impressions deeply into their being. Play and amusement are not just time-fillers. The first-hand experiences they bring are the joyful means of developing the child's faculties for doing, feeling and thinking. All sense impressions are food for the growth of both body and soul and children trustfully welcome whatever loved adults bring them. Many well-meaning adults do not realise the extent of their children's dependence in this respect.

Once it is realised that children up to the age of 8/9 will subconsciously imitate what they see, one sees in a new light the effect of the caricatures and stereotypes which pervade so many 'innocent' programmes.

Around the age of 7, the shaping of the physical organs should have reached a certain stage of completion, which frees the forces that were engaged in forming them to serve the forming of ideas instead. In the years 7 to 14, the most important things to educate, besides the skills that will be needed, are a healthy imagination and a feeling for beauty. The ready-made images from film and TV screens blunt and distort a child's own imaginative faculties. At the same time, the physical inactivity while watching, coupled with the speed of the flickering images, tend to produce a reaction of hyperactivity in some children, whereas others become inwardly torpid. The one-sided situation of reacting to a non-responsive stimulus dulls the social faculties in all cases.

Most of the above points also apply to computer games, with an additional dimension to be considered: while a computer does respond in its own way, the type of linear thinking it demands has little to do with human interactions or with a child's natural mode of experience. It is undeniable that computers are of great practical use for specialised tasks in adult life. However, for normally healthy children, who are still finding their place in a three-dimensional world and learning to relate to fellow human beings in a socially harmonious way, computer games constrain their developing faculties and alienate them from live realities.

Concern regarding these activities is not restricted to Steiner schools. Ongoing research continues to suggest that many professionals who work with children are becoming increasingly concerned that TV, smartphones and computer games are associated with an increase in significantly disturbed behaviour among some children. An experienced teacher can tell almost immediately by a child's behaviour whether he or she has been watching TV or playing computer games. We ask you, as parents/carers, to act in support of our efforts to provide a truly human-centred education.

Participating in your Child's Class

General Parents Evenings

Parents evenings are held once a term, to enable the parents/carers and teachers to discuss the Class as a whole. The teacher will speak to the assembled group of parents/carers about work being done with the children and describe the curriculum. A broad outline is given of the children's learning process at their current stage of development. The teacher will also present a 'picture' of the Class dynamics. Parents/carers can bring their insights and ask questions about changes their children may be undergoing. These meetings are important. To miss them is to miss a vital link in understanding the curriculum. They also give an opportunity for getting to know

fellow parents/carers of the Class. For the child, the parents'/carers' participation in these meetings is a sign of their involvement and support.

Once a year, in the Middle School and Upper School, an evening is set aside for one-one meetings between teachers and parents/carers when pupils can be discussed individually. At other times, it is usually possible to arrange one-one meetings with subject teachers on request.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Regular and candid communication between parents/carers and their child's teachers is an essential part of Steiner education (see also Communication in Section 1).

Your child's Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian relies upon you to tell them about any requirements for physical attention or medication that your child may need during the day. Sometimes changes at home can affect your child's behaviour, such as the absence of a parent/carer, a serious illness in the family or any other upset. It is important that you let your Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian know about such changes, so that your child's emotional needs can also be acknowledged—confidentially, if that is your wish—at school.

Lower School parents are encouraged to meet with the Class Teacher at least once a year for an objective assessment of their child's progress. Such meetings can be arranged at the initiative of the Class Teacher or the parents/carers, and the Class Teacher will appreciate at least one visit to the home of each pupil. Home visits are mutually beneficial for all concerned and help to foster the close relationship between home and school.

Class Convenors

Every year, and in every Class, one or two parents/carers volunteer to act as Class Convenors. The Convenors form an important social link between the Class Teacher or Class Guardian and all the families in the Class. They are responsible for contacting and welcoming new parents and assisting the Class Teacher with the organisation of Class, including helping to organise Class outings, baking for parents' evenings, redecoration of the Classroom or inviting parents to join work groups for the Christmas Market.

A Class Convenor's term of office is normally one year, which means that every parent/carer has the opportunity to become Class Convenor while their child is at the School. Your child's Class Teacher or Class Guardian, or the PTA, can provide more information on this topic if required.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an important part of the school community, helping to nurture the healthy social life of the school and supporting the education—in its widest sense—of the children. All parents/carers are members of the PTA, which is managed by a committee elected annually.

The role of the PTA is wide and varied and includes working with and supporting Class Convenors, developing initiatives within the School, assisting or supporting new parents/carers and mediating between parents/carers and the School where the need arises. The PTA maintains links with the

Trustees and the Management Group. The PTA represents the interests of all parents/carers in the School and welcomes suggestions, concerns and ideas.

Contact: PTA@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

The Christmas Market

The annual Christmas Market is a vital fundraising and social event in the school calendar. Each year the parents of Class 4 take on its overall organisation but the whole school community is involved in the production of goods for sale and their presentation on the day. On this Saturday, usually just before Advent, the School is transformed. There are many beautiful and unusual things for sale: dolls of all sizes, pottery, woodwork, dried flowers, baked goods, preserves, raffle tickets and much more.

Hot lunches, coffees and cakes are served in a stylish cafe in one of the classrooms. There are activities for the younger children, puppet shows and music. It is a busy day, which regularly raises more than £10,000. This money is spent on vital resources, which the School would not otherwise be able to afford.

The school parents/carers are an ever-changing body but skills for the making of traditional items for the Market are passed on and new ideas are incorporated as people come and go. New parents/carers are always welcome in the groups making goods for the Market and it is a good way to meet other parents/carers with children in different Classes up and down the School.

Participating in the School as a Whole

Each parent/carer is an important part of a Steiner/Waldorf school community. The foremost contribution the parent/carer makes is in supporting the education at home. There is also a very real need for each parent/carer to participate in the overall life of the School, to whatever degree time and resources allow. There are many ways to help; here is a list of the most obvious ways:

- becoming a Class Convenor
- attending PTA meetings
- participating in fund raising activities

Parents/carers can also be involved in the School community by supporting activities in the School such as the Class plays, concerts, whole school productions, eurythmy performances (which will enhance your understanding of what the children are doing in their eurythmy lessons) and the Christmas plays.

There are classes and study groups offered for parents/carers. If you would like to become involved, to whatever extent you are able, and you are unsure of how to go about it, please speak to your Class Convenor or a member of the PTA.

Festivals and Events

When looking at the path of the festivals through the year, they can be seen in a variety of ways. They can be looked at as special markers, or signposts in time, or as turning points within seasonal patterns. Many people, particularly children, enjoy the security of celebrating traditional festivals and they play an important part in the life of our school. Festivals mark special times of the year in which some aspect of the spiritual entering into human life is a cause for celebration—this is not only for each individual, but also for the community.

We celebrate a wide variety of festivals throughout the cycle of the year. Whenever possible, the Lower and Upper Schools are gathered together for these occasions which usually include some form of artistic activity, such as music, drama, eurythmy or speech and there is often a story or a talk. There may also be activities which arise out of the festival and can take place in smaller groups. Other festivals are introduced and/or acknowledged in the classroom situation and can arise from the members of a particular faith or from the context of a particular Main Lesson.

The Kindergarten celebrates many of its own festivals. More information about these can be found in the *Early Years Handbook*.

Michaelmas

We begin the year with Michaelmas—the festival of the Archangel Michael. Michaelmas comes at a turning point in the year when the world of nature appears to be less active and is fading and apparently dying. We, however, need to draw on inner resources so that we do not ‘fade away’ as does the natural world. The human qualities we need to draw on at this time are those of the ‘will.’ We call on courage, on inner strength and on clarity of thought. Michaelmas is a good time for new initiatives, not only in our immediate surroundings but also in the wider world.

One way in which we mark this festival in our school is with an assembly where pupils of Classes 2-4 perform a special Michaelmas play. This is followed later in the day with a meal that everyone helps to prepare before the whole of the Lower and Upper School sit and eat together.

As the weeks pass, so the outer light dims and we bring to mind a picture of inner light and warmth to counteract the outer cold and darkness. The younger children (Kindergarten and Classes 1-3) celebrate Martinmas on or around November 11th, a festival of light. This includes a lantern walk around the School grounds.

Advent and Christmas

For adults, the weeks of Advent can be a time of trials and struggles, as everything we try to do to foster a mood of quiet contemplation and tranquility is hindered by the forces of commercialism and materialism.

For the children, Advent is a season of expectation, of contemplation and of preparation for the birth of the Christ at Christmas. The beginning of Advent is marked by the Advent Spiral (or

Advent Garden) for the younger children and celebrations are held every morning for the Lower and Upper Schools in the classroom with the lighting of candles and the singing of carols. Pre-Christmas celebrations include the annual Christmas Music concert and the presentation of two medieval plays to the School by teachers and older pupils. The Shepherds' Play is for the whole school but the children do not normally see the Paradise Play until they have experienced the first Old Testament main lesson in Class 3. The plays are also presented to the wider school community and the general public in the evening.

Epiphany

Epiphany—traditionally the day on which the Three Kings brought gifts to the baby Jesus—usually falls during the Christmas holidays, on the 6th January, but it is often given recognition by a third play (seen by Class 6 and up)—the Kings' Play—towards the end of January. The first assembly of the new term is another opportunity for an Epiphany Festival.

Easter

Due to the Easter holidays we frequently do not have the opportunity to celebrate Easter in school, but in our assemblies at the end of the spring term and at the beginning of the summer term we try to reflect the dramatic changes of mood within the Easter period. We can illustrate the polarities of life and death, light and darkness, contraction and expansion, destruction and renewal.

Ascension and Whitsun

These two festivals lie close together and the quality of experience is more accessible to the older pupils. Ascension is a time when we can experience a reunion of the earth with the cosmos, a time when we can recognise signs of heavenly forces here on the earth and as the earth breathes out into summer, so our consciousness can begin to expand. It is a time when we can receive the revelation that the earth's living forces have been renewed for the benefit of the whole of humanity. On this day, the School community may go on an early morning walk together.

Whitsun is the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit into the soul of humanity. The challenge for us is on the one hand individual—namely, for us to try and understand the event of Easter and its meaning for us all—and on the other a community one, to appreciate diversity and understand one another despite differences of language and cultural background.

St John's Festival

At the height of midsummer, we celebrate the festival of St John. The sun is at its highest, the days are at their longest and it is the time when inner work is most difficult. We celebrate the outer light and the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ and the voice of conscience. In recent years there have been different ways of marking this festival, either by going on a midsummer walk or by having a celebration around a midsummer bonfire.

Teacher Education Course

The Edinburgh Steiner Teacher Education Course, for anyone wanting to become a Steiner Teacher, runs all day Saturday in term time. This course, which runs for six months from

September to March, is open to anyone interested in the philosophy behind the education and would like to develop their creative potential. For further information on both our adult education courses go to the teacher training pages of the School's website:
<https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/teacher-training/>

Useful Links

1. Publications & Policies: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/parents/publicationspolicies/>
2. School news: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/news/>
3. School shop (supplies, after school clubs, lunches): <http://bit.ly/EdinburghSteinerSchoolShop>
4. Extra Curricular Activities: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/parents/after-school-clubs/>
5. Campus Development: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/growin8paces/>
6. Teacher Education Course: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/teacher-training/> note: first term aimed at parents wanting to learn more about Steiner education
7. Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/steiner-education/frequently-asked-questions/>
8. Social Responsibility: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/community/social-responsibility/>
9. Parent Portal: <https://edinburghsteiner.isams.cloud/>
10. Social media platforms:
 - a. Facebook Page @EdSteinerSchool
 - b. Instagram: @edinburghsteiner.school
 - c. Twitter: @EdSteinerSchool
 - d. YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYL1SKVKxmlqgU0Z1vr8Xw>
11. Webinars, Films & Talks: <https://talks.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/>
12. Our people: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/parents/our-people/>
13. Session dates: <https://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/parents/session-dates/>

Further Reading

Steiner/Waldorf Education

Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the inside out by Jack Petrash (Gryphon House)

The Way of a Child by A. C. Harwood (Rudolf Steiner Press)

Teaching as a Lively Art by Marjorie Spock (Rudolf Steiner Press)

Lifeways by Gudrun Davy and Bons Voors (Hawthorn Press)

Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Education (Steiner Schools Fellowship)

Steiner Education by Gilbert Childs (Floris Books)

Waldorf Education by Christopher Clauder & Martyn Rawson (Floris Books)

For Parents/Carers of Younger Children

Children at Play by Heidi Britz-Crecelius (Floris Books)

Ready to Learn by Martin Rawson (Hawthorn Press)

Free to Learn by Lynne Oldfield (Hawthorn Press)

The Well Balanced Child by Sally Goddard Blyne (Hawthorn Press)

Toxic Childhood by Sue Palmer (Orion Publishers)

Further Reading about Festivals

Festivals, Family and Food by D Carey and J Large, published by Hawthorn Press

All Year Round by Druitt, Fynes and Rowling, published by Hawthorn Press

Family Festivals & Food by Diana Carey and Judy Large (Hawthorn Press)

Festivals with Children by Brigitte Barz, published by Floris Books

Festivals and their Meaning by Rudolf Steiner, published by Rudolf Steiner Press

Celebrating Festivals with Children by Lenz, published by Anthroposophic Press Inc.

Festival Images for Today by Carlo Pietzner, published by Camphill Books

Festivals Together by Fitzjon, Weston and Large, published by Hawthorn Press

Stories for the Festivals of the Year by Irene Johanson, published by Robinswood Press.

About Stories

The Power of Stories by Horst Kornberger (Floris Books)

The Wisdom of Fairy Tales by Rudolf Meyer (Floris Books)

Stockists: These and other books can be bought or ordered from:

- The Mulberry Bush, 77 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 4AY (0131 447 5145)
- The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (www.steinerwaldorf.org)