

TRINITY GARDENS SCHOOL

**STATEMENT
OF
OPERATING PROTOCOLS**

for a

**Steiner Education Stream
at
Trinity Gardens School**

December 2009

INTRODUCTION

Trinity Gardens School is a government school, where both the mainstream and the Steiner Education stream are subject to the Education Act of 1972 and abide by all rules, regulations and instructions that apply to all government schools. The school implements the DECS curriculum as outlined in the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA) as approved by the Chief Executive (Director General of Education). It is anticipated that the Australian Curriculum will be addressed according to the required mandate from late 2010.

This document is a statement of operating protocols for the Steiner Education stream at Trinity Gardens School (TGS). The purpose of this document is to provide information about the Steiner Education stream to members of the Trinity Gardens school community and to potential parents/caregivers of children enrolling at Trinity Gardens School in the Steiner stream.

Background to the establishment of the Steiner Education stream

The Adelaide Steiner Education Association (ASEA) first approached the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) in May 2003 with the intent of establishing a stream of Steiner Education in a mainstream public school in Adelaide. Through a long process Trinity Gardens School was selected as the preferred school.

Following a lengthy investigative and consultative process the Governing Council formally voted to request permission from the Minister of Education to implement a stream of Steiner Education. This process involved community meetings, information sessions and a working party visit to public schools in Melbourne that were running Steiner streams. Staff at TGS were involved at all stages and also formally voted to support the introduction of a Steiner Education stream. It was felt by staff and Governing Council that a Steiner Education stream would further emphasise the uniqueness of TGS, where the diversity of preschool education, inclusivity of students with multiple and severe disabilities and children from non English speaking backgrounds is valued.

In February 2005 a working party, named the Steiner Education Reference Group (SERG), was established to develop and document intentions in the implementation and maintenance of the Steiner Education stream at Trinity Gardens School. This group comprised equal representation from the Governing Council and ASEA. DECS representation included the District Director, a curriculum officer, the school principal and elected staff members.

The statement of operating protocols is the result of the working party and has been endorsed by Governing Council and staff. This statement will be reviewed biennially, and may be amended to reflect any changed understandings regarding the Steiner Education Stream at Trinity Gardens School.

School Vision Statement

Our school community is committed to creating an environment conducive to learning. We recognise the uniqueness of every child and support them as a learner to develop resilience, optimism, skills, confidence and social responsibility to achieve their full potential.

Attendance protocol for all children attending TGS

It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to notify the school if a student is to be absent from school. In the case of sickness a phone call early on the day of absence is preferred.

The school will contact the family after three consecutive days of unexplained absence.

It is a DECS requirement that reasons are provided for all absence and lateness. These are recorded on the class roll, which is an official document.

The class teacher records students late to school and the reason for lateness. It is essential that all children arrive punctually at school.

In the event of a proposed family holiday during term time of up to 4 weeks, a letter needs to be written to the school principal seeking permission for a child to be absent from school. Over four weeks permission needs to be sought from the Director of School Operations on a special form obtained from the school office.

Home - school communication

Two-way communication between home and school is valued and encouraged at all times. Class teachers set up a method for communication at the beginning of every year. Parents/caregivers are asked to advise the class teacher of any changes in the home life, so that due consideration can be given to the affected students as there is sometimes a change in behaviour. The acknowledgement of notes is expected.

Parents/caregivers are always welcome to meet with the class teacher at a mutually agreed time. Appointments can be set up through the communication book, by phone or in person. Parents are requested to respect the teacher's responsibility to prepare for the children's arrival in the morning and to use the after school time for meetings.

Newsletters

The school newsletter is published fortnightly and is available by email/hard copy or through the school website.

Information about the Steiner stream will be included in the school newsletter on a regular basis as appropriate. Learning in class, from both streams, is shared in the school newsletters on a regular basis. In addition, classes from both streams publish class letters regularly and at the discretion of the teacher.

Break times

Recess and lunch break times are the same for both streams.

Classroom environment

In every classroom there is earnest endeavour to create an aesthetically pleasing classroom environment in the Steiner Education tradition.

Student work is displayed and age appropriate classroom resources are available. There is usually a quiet area and another set up to support literacy. It is acknowledged that in Steiner Education there is a preference for natural materials where possible.

Classroom location

In order to value both streams they will be represented across the site, so that school buildings have a mix of Steiner and Mainstream classes.

The location of classes for both streams has been determined by the Trinity Gardens School teaching staff. The locations are as follows:

Steiner Reception and Class 1 - Devitt building

Class 2 and class 3 - Wellington building

Class 4 and class 5 - Jones building

Class 6 and class 7 - Aberdare campus.

Enrolment priority & protocols

Children who have turned five years of age by the start of the school year are eligible for Steiner Reception. In the Steiner education tradition many parents will choose to begin school once their child has turned six years of age. The age of compulsory school attendance in South Australia is six years of age.

When the maximum number of enrolments has been accepted for a class, subsequent enrolments are placed on a waiting list. Parents are encouraged to enrol siblings as soon as possible as no preference can be given to siblings. Once enrolled, a confirmation letter of enrolment is sent to the family identifying the expected start date if a place is available in the class. If there are no vacancies a letter is sent advising a place on the waiting list.

Waiting lists

The Reception class has a ceiling of 28-30 enrolments and once this has been reached a waiting list is established for those students whose enrolment application was received after the class ceiling of numbers has been reached. Enrolment lists are maintained for the 5 years before school starting.

Transfer from another school or mainstream

An interview with the Principal is necessary for parents seeking to transfer their child to Class 1 or higher Steiner classes and who did not begin in the Reception class. Where possible a teacher from the Steiner Education stream also attends the meeting.

Students with a disability/learning difficulty

An interview with the Principal is required for children with a disability. Where possible each class (as with mainstream education) is balanced with gender, ethnicity, learning dispositions and disabilities.

Reception class size

To ensure sustainability of the Steiner stream it is necessary to begin with a larger number of students in the Reception class as these children stay together through their schooling. There is no availability to reconfigure classes at Year 3 as in mainstream. To compensate for higher numbers the Reception Class has a class assistant to reduce the staff student ratio. In addition there is a dedicated outdoor learning area adjoining the classroom providing the opportunity for small group activity. Many children have 'home days' during their first year and a play based curriculum contributes to manageability.

Expectations of Steiner stream parents

Steiner stream parents will be expected to fulfill all roles and duties expected of any parent at TGS and will be welcomed to integrate their families into the social structure of the school. Parents and families from both streams will form the school community and it is not expected that there will be division amongst students and their families.

In particular relation to Steiner Education, parents are expected to attend the class parent meetings once per term and to support the stream through undertaking requests from the Steiner Education Sub-Committee (SESC) of Governing Council (eg festival organisation) or requests from the class teacher.

Fees

Every effort is made to provide a quality Steiner Education for the most affordable fee.

It is requested that fees for the year are paid in full upon receipt of an invoice from the school unless an alternative payment plan is negotiated with the Principal. As agreed and minuted by Governing Council non-payment of compulsory component of school fees by the due date without any negotiated arrangements are referred to the DECS debt collection agency.

Governing Council, in line with DECS guidelines, sets the annual Materials and Services charges. The Materials and Services charge for the Steiner Education stream is greater than for mainstream due to the cost associated with the specific and quality materials. Families

who are eligible may apply for financial assistance through the Government sponsored School Card scheme. Families are expected to pay the gap between government assistance and the Materials and Services charge otherwise the Steiner stream cannot remain viable.

In addition to the Materials and Services fee there are additional costs depending upon the class. For example in Class 1 a pentatonic recorder is required and from Class 3 this changes to a diatonic recorder. From Class 3 there will be instrument hire and from Class 4 music tuition. From Class 3 onwards there will be an additional cost per year for overnight camps. As we increase classes to Year 7 there may be other costs.

Finances and budgets

All finances in relation to the Steiner Education stream form part of the school's global budget and are managed by the Finance Advisory Committee of Governing Council in conjunction with the school principal. Teachers in the Steiner Education stream have a class budget greater in amount than for mainstream from which they order specific items used that year. In addition there is a Steiner development and maintenance budget that supports specific projects, furniture, class set up and staff professional development. Each teacher is responsible for managing the class budget and is able to determine expenditure of the budget to meet the needs of their students.

Food

It is recognised that parents adopting a Steiner Education approach at home are particularly aware of the potential negative effects of some foods on children's behaviour and concentration and are therefore keen to limit their children's access to sweet/treat foods both inside and outside the home. The onus is on all parents to monitor the food their children bring to or buy at school.

Fundraising

All parents will be encouraged to participate in TGS fundraising activities and are invited to be part of the Fundraising committee, so that they can have direct input into choosing and supporting fundraising events. The Steiner philosophy encourages all parents to actively support all aspects of school community life, including fundraising ventures. It is the policy of Governing Council to refrain from separate fundraising.

Governance

The role of Governing Council is to ensure the participation of the school community in important decisions about the school and the education services it delivers. School governance is a shared responsibility of the Governing Council and the Principal who, with parents, staff and community representatives, is a Governing Council member. The TGS Governing Council operates within its constitution and includes a code of practice. The Governing Council of TGS has 14 members, including the principal and two elected staff representatives. There are up to 11 parent members. All members of the school community are entitled to nominate for Governing Council. Elections are held at the Annual General Meeting. Governing Council will address the matter of future membership balance if it deems it necessary to do so.

Information

- *for prospective parents of both streams*

All parents applying for enrolment at TGS will be made aware of the dual stream education offered at TGS. An information pack is available and will provide general information and links to further information. An introductory parent information evening will be held on a regular basis with both new and existing parents welcome to attend.

Classroom visits by prospective parents will be carefully managed and kept to a minimum per term to minimise disruption.

- *for existing Steiner Education stream families*

Each class will host one teacher/parent information evening every term, during which relevant information for each term's activities and the curriculum will be discussed, demonstrated and explained.

Additional information sessions and parent workshops explaining Steiner Education for parents of children in the Steiner stream and for the wider school community are organized and advertised as required. Details of meetings will be available from the school office.

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)

The existing Out of School Hours Care and Vacation Care will be available to all children attending TGS, regardless of which stream they attend.

Parent Grievance Procedures

If a parent/carer has a grievance about the School they are expected to:

- make an appointment with the person closest to the issue, usually the teacher concerned. Telling them at the time what the issue is, so that the teacher can meet with them, with all necessary information.
- if unresolved, make an appointment with the Principal

If a parent/carer has a grievance about another parent/carer or student they must see the Principal. Parents are **not** to contact other students in relation to any grievances.

Partnerships between streams

At TGS the integrity of the Steiner Education stream will be maintained alongside that of the Mainstream. Within this framework there are opportunities for active collaboration to learn from and with each other. Both streams participate in the school's special events i.e. Sports Days and will continuously work towards deepening a mutual understanding of the two streams of education offered at Trinity Gardens School.

Physical environment

Junior Primary students from both streams have a designated play area. Middle and Upper primary also have a designated play area.

Both streams at TGS assist in the development to beautify the school environment and encourage care and respect for the school grounds. Parents and families are encouraged to work on this aspect of the school, to plant trees and landscape the grounds, and help create shaded areas.

These activities lead to community cohesion and enhance the whole school.

Principal's role

The Principal has overall responsibility for effective and efficient running of the whole school inclusive of both streams. This includes physical resource management, financial management, Occupational Health Safety Welfare (OHSW) practices, human resource management and deployment and curriculum.

Promotion of Steiner Stream

A brochure on the Steiner Stream is available for circulation to interested people. Information sessions and school tours will be offered to prospective parents twice per year. Bookings are made through the school office.

The Adelaide Steiner Education Association will continue to promote the Steiner Stream at TGS as part of its ongoing functions and this is appreciated.

Pupil Free Days

Two days per year will be dedicated to the professional learning of staff from both streams. The school community is advised of the focus for staff learning and is given advance notices of dates for pupil free days.

Review

The Statement of Operating Protocols will be reviewed biennially and/or as required.

1. Any changes to this Statement of Operating Protocols must be approved by Governing Council and the Principal.
2. The Governing Council reviewed the impact of the Steiner Education Stream at Trinity Gardens School in 2008. Governing Council in conjunction with the Principal will consider the need and timing of future reviews and make decisions about any action to be taken.

School Card

The School Card scheme is a government strategy to support low income families. Steiner parents who meet the criteria are eligible to apply for School Card funding. Forms are available at the school office and the school's finance officer will support families in the application process.

Refer to fee structure.

School uniform

Steiner Stream students will wear the TGS uniform available for purchase from the uniform shop. TGS is a Sun Smart School and hats are worn during outdoor activities and break times in terms 1 and 4, the first half of term 2 and the last half of term 3.

School uniforms are worn on excursions.

The wearing of school uniform is a safety matter and exhibits pride in belonging to TGS. The wearing of school uniform avoids sorting by difference as all children are students of TGS regardless of which stream they attend.

Steiner Education Stream Sub-Committee (SESC)

SESC is a sub-committee of Governing Council and works on matters arising within the Steiner stream. SESC is made up of one or two GC members, one parent member from each class in the Steiner stream, one or two teachers from the Steiner stream, and the Principal or delegate is an ex-officio member. There is a role statement pertaining to this committee.

Teacher appointments

Traditionally, in Steiner streams, teachers take their classes from class 1 to class 7, however, some teachers have greater expertise and interest in junior primary, while others prefer older students. Consequently, there may be a teacher change at the conclusion of Year 3. This will depend entirely on teacher preference and availability. It is intended to appoint teachers to the Steiner Education stream through using the Local Selection process. Positions will be advertised and a selection panel comprising the Principal and an elected staff representative will make the decision of appointing new staff.

Section 2

CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Assessment of learning

Staff within the Steiner stream will use the same assessment strategies as for the mainstream.

These include:

- Teacher observation
- Analysis of student work samples
- Assessment of student work samples
- Participation in class by student
- Focused child studies conducted by teaching staff
- Teacher reflection over time
- Informal classroom interactions

All students in Years 5 and 7 will be expected to complete the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests that are conducted annually. In Year 3 sitting the test is at the discretion of the parents. It is a DECS requirement that parents not supporting this testing regime sign a form requesting exemption.

Behaviour Management

The Trinity Gardens Behaviour Management Policy applies to both streams and is in place to enable students to learn in a safe and supportive environment. The behaviour code is fully explained to all students. The behaviour management practices are based on an in depth knowledge of a child and founded on a basis of mutual respect.

Behaviour management processes are set within a Restorative Practices framework.

Class teachers are responsible for the behaviour management practices in the classroom.

In the schoolyard students from both streams are expected to follow the school's behaviour code. The code includes explanations of out of bounds areas and safe play. Teachers are on duty in the yard during all play periods. Teachers from both streams support the current school practice in regards to the behaviour code.

Any extreme or ongoing challenging behaviour requires involvement from school leadership staff. Parents/caregivers are informed if there are behaviour concerns regarding their child. If inappropriate behaviour continues a conference will be called with the family to address the concern. At times it may be necessary to involve DECS support personnel.

Cooking

Cooking is an integral part of many class programs. As part of the cooking process, students are encouraged to harvest, prepare and cook simple meals as well as to learn about the importance of healthy eating. The Trinity Gardens School gym offers a kitchen venue.

Curriculum

Curriculum for South Australian public schools is described in the *South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA)*.

A traditional Steiner Education stream uses some nomenclature which differs from mainstream, such as main lesson, however the Steiner Education curriculum addresses the Essential Learnings of:

- Identity
- Futures
- Interdependence
- Thinking
- Communication

The curriculum for Steiner stream classes meets the standard outcomes as described in the SACSA framework. It is the intention of the Steiner stream at TGS to maintain the integrity of the methodology of Steiner Education through the implementation of the curriculum that has an emphasis on the arts and the creation of an aesthetically pleasing classroom environment. The curriculum is rigorous and has the following learning areas:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Design and Technology
- Studies Of Society and the Environment (SOSE)
- The Arts – Visual Arts, Drama, Music
- Languages Other Than English
- Health and Physical Education

Documents addressing curriculum alignment with the SACSA framework are available on request.

Environmental education

Awareness of natural life cycles, seasons and the environment are central to Steiner Education, and find their practical expression in regular gardening lessons. TGS has class garden areas and a kitchen garden and will continue to allocate resources for land-care and gardening activities.

Equity

Education is central to the making of a fairer society. The flexibility of the SACSA framework and the Steiner Curriculum enables programs to be devised which do not privilege or exclude particular groups, and which encourage all learners to reach their potential and achieve success. In addition equity is made a central curriculum consideration through the Learning Areas (described above) and cross-curriculum perspectives. In this way learners come to recognise the nature and causes of inequality, and understand that these are socially constructed and can therefore be changed through people's actions.

Excursions

Excursion procedures will follow DECS and TGS requirements, for example adult: student ratios. Parental permission is required for any excursion. Steiner stream classes will participate in excursions as appropriate to the curriculum in the same way as mainstream classes. Children from both streams will have the opportunity to participate in in-school performances, for example musical performances and plays. Teaching staff undertake a risk assessment as part of planning for an excursion.

Festivals

Seasonal festivals are celebrated by individual classes or collectively across the Steiner stream as determined by the Steiner teaching team and supported by SESC. They may be celebrated with the whole school, according to the decisions made by the TGS staff in general.

Homework

Homework is not required for students in Junior Primary although reading of a text at a child's reading level is encouraged. Homework in the higher year levels encourages children to engage in extending their learning, rather than finishing class work. At home children are encouraged to be physically active and creative.

Information Technology

Students from the Steiner stream will be introduced to computers from Class 5 to support learning in the 21st Century and assist our students to become global citizens. The class teacher will work with the ICT Co-ordinator to implement learning activities to compliment and support the teaching and learning program. Computer use prior to secondary school is considered important in order not to disadvantage a student.

Languages other than English (LOTE)

In some Steiner schools two languages are offered, chosen to differ in their structure and grammar. One language would be from the same language group as English e.g. German, Italian, and the other from a different language group such as an Asian language e.g. Japanese, Indonesian.

As Italian is the existing LOTE offered at TGS, Steiner Stream classes will learn Italian. In order to enhance the integration process, the Steiner stream class teacher could work with the TGS Italian teacher in this subject.

A second language may be introduced at a later stage.

Learning Difficulties

If a child presents with a learning difficulty, parents will have the choice of accessing DECS service providers (at no cost) or private specialists (at their own cost). If a child verifies as a student with a disability under the Students with a Disability Policy a negotiated education plan will be developed and monitored in conjunction with the child's parents, the school's teacher in charge of Special Education, the class teacher and relevant support personnel.

Movement between streams

Movement between streams is not encouraged, as a continuing commitment to the chosen learning stream is expected. Movement will only occur after extensive consultation with the Principal and parents where it is deemed to be the most appropriate option for the student.

Music

Music plays an important role in Steiner Education and is a compulsory component of the curriculum as singing and instrumental music is an integral part of the daily program. Children in Class 1 and Class 2 learn the pentatonic recorder, Class 3 children learn diatonic recorders, and string instruments are introduced in Class 3.

In order to enhance the integration process, the Steiner stream class teacher could work with the TGS music teacher towards a modified music program, to underpin the Steiner approach in these subjects, which would include school choir and orchestra for the older children.

Physical Education

One component of physical education is Eurythmy, a form of dance, and is taught to classes of the Steiner stream at TGS depending on availability of instructors. Eurythmy involves movement exercises to bring spatial awareness, coordination and physical control. Other components of physical education are the same as mainstream. Specialist lessons are conducted by the PE teacher and focus on skill development and not on competition. Staff have received training in Eurythmy in order to lead their class.

Preschool Education

Trinity Gardens Early Learning Centre is located on campus and offers a quality preschool program for children aged four years. A Steiner Kinder program currently operates on a private basis. Children from either preschool are welcome to enroll in either mainstream or Steiner stream.

Professional learning of staff

It is an expectation that teachers from both streams engage in ongoing professional learning and support school priorities as outlined in the School Improvement Plan. Some in-school professional development opportunities will include a Steiner approach for the benefit of all teaching staff. The aim is for mutual respect and professional collegiality between staff regardless of teaching stream.

Reporting to Parents

Reporting student achievement to children and families follows DECS recommendations. In both streams, two written reports are provided to parents by the class teacher, reflecting the child's personal growth throughout the year. Parent/teacher interviews are arranged once a year at the end of term 1. Beyond this, regular and ongoing two-way communication is encouraged between parents and teachers and interviews may be arranged at anytime during the year.

Each Steiner class will host one teacher/parent information evening every term, during which relevant information for each term's activities and the curriculum will be discussed, demonstrated and explained. Parent education on the Steiner approach additional to class meetings is open to all parents.

School Improvement Plan

It is a DECS requirement that every school has a school improvement plan that outlines school priorities and is endorsed by Governing Council. The Steiner Education stream, through the teaching team and SESC will be expected to set improvement strategies each year and to participate in the process for identifying school priorities and the implementation of action plans.

Special events

Teachers and students from the Steiner stream will be involved in the special events of the school including sports, assembly, choir, performances, celebrations and swimming.

Special needs students

Students with special needs are welcome in the school community and endeavours are made to accommodate the children and families that apply, without discrimination. Refer to section *Learning Difficulties*

Sport

Games and physical exercise are included in every class curriculum. However, competitive sport is only included from Class 5 for Steiner stream students. In order to enhance the integration process, the Steiner stream class teacher works with the TGS physical education teacher, to underpin the Steiner approach. All students from Class 2 to 7 are invited to participate in out of hours sports teams organised by the school and coached by parents.

Television

Steiner Education cites research on the negative effects of TV, videos and computers on young children, so parents of children in the Steiner stream are encouraged to reduce TV, videos and computers to a minimum, and to set out clear guidelines for these activities.

Timetabling

The Steiner Education stream teacher's program reflects an understanding that the day's schedule is in keeping with the children's biorhythms, ie. to program academic learning earlier in the day, with creative/practical/social activities from 1pm onwards.

Well-being strategies

Student well being is a priority for all children attending TGS. It is important that children see themselves as successful learners, become resilient and have a sense of optimism about the world. The Virtues program is one program used in the school and in the Steiner stream holistic approaches offer students' emotional and physical well-being.

Consultation with parents is an integral part of this approach.

Whole School Assemblies

Students from both streams will attend school performance assemblies. Each class takes turns to host an assembly and children have the opportunity to perform an item, such as singing a song or playing a musical instrument.