

# CORE PRINCIPLES FOR AUSTRALIAN STEINER SCHOOLS 2021

## **1. THE RECOGNITION OF THE UNFOLDING SPIRIT OF EACH INDIVIDUAL INFORMS ALL ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL.**

Steiner/Waldorf schools engage with contemporary insights emerging from Rudolf Steiner's indications about the unfolding human individuality.

One core insight is that the individual is a threefold being of body, soul, and spirit.

Steiner education seeks to enliven the life of feeling and thinking as well as physical, social, artistic, and spiritual capacities.

As the individual evolves, they are able to impart meaning and purpose to their lives and creatively fulfil their unique potential.

## **2. STEINER/WALDORF EDUCATION FOSTERS SOCIAL RENEWAL BY CULTIVATING INDIVIDUALS WHO SERVE AN ETHICAL WORLD FUTURE.**

Steiner education is a world movement which promotes a spirit of universal endeavour and cooperation among all nations, cultures and identity groups.

The schools strive to develop each individual's potential as a resilient, ethical human being who cares for the environment and has reverence for all life.

Students learn from life and are enabled to contribute towards a world ethos upholding cultural diversity, equality of rights and economic sustainability.

## **3. ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSIGHTS INTO CHILD DEVELOPMENT GUIDE THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE.**

Steiner/Waldorf schools work with three developmental phases during which the physical, soul and spiritual aspects progressively integrate.

Each phase has characteristic physical dimensions as well as a metamorphosis of capacities of will, feeling and thinking.

The educational program is inspired by this living understanding and the collegial commitment to the role of teaching as an art in itself.

### Aspects of Core Methodology

- Direct experience informs the development of living concepts, particularly as part of the phenomenological approach to scientific study.
- Teachers give an overview of the whole, then move to the parts.
- Early childhood teachers enact play-based learning, the class teachers extend learning artistically and imaginatively and the secondary teachers cultivate aesthetic and ethical discernment.

- *Goodness, Beauty and Truth* are ideals that are embedded within the education.
- Imagination and creativity are nurtured through music, the arts and storytelling.
- Rhythm and repetition applied within the day, week and year are enhanced by a creative breathing dynamic within lessons.
- A focus on development of healthy life habits
- Main lesson structure is employed over several weeks to facilitate deep learning.
- Observation is a key foundation for assessment.
- Individual 'Child Study' is a collegiate form of supporting each student.
- Being in Nature and using natural materials are valued experiences.

Staff creatively strive towards ongoing deepening of Steiner pedagogy

#### **4. STEINER/WALDORF SCHOOLS SUPPORT CREATIVE FREEDOM TO TEACH WITHIN THE SHARED AGREEMENTS OF THE SCHOOLS' COLLEGIATE.**

The collegiate of teachers works collaboratively to develop, refine, and review the delivery of the educational program as the insights of the pedagogy are purposefully adapted to time and place.

Individual teachers work perceptively and creatively with curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

The teachers' spiritually reflective freedom guides their responsibility to each student, the class as a whole, and the school community.

#### **5. THE CONSCIOUS ESTABLISHMENT OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS FOSTERS INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH.**

The teacher's task is to develop a deep interest in the children, their colleagues, the school community and the world.

Enduring relationships between students and teachers and among the students themselves are at the heart of Steiner/Waldorf education.

The teacher's task is to strive with openness and fresh perspectives with each student and school community member.

These relationships deepen and stabilise when they are cultivated over multiple years.

Healthy relationships and communication with parents and colleagues, local communities and Indigenous cultures are encouraged for the well-being of the school.

#### **6. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH IS AN ONGOING ACTIVITY FOR THE COLLEGIATE OF TEACHERS AND STAFF AND IS SUPPORTED BY THE BOARD.**

School staff cultivate their professional learning, including inner personal and spiritual development, drawing on anthroposophical and other relevant contemporary study and research.

The shared agreements within the faculty around educational study, artistic activity, mentoring, research and reflective practice, are a source of insight and renewal which further personal and professional growth in service to the students.

This collaboration extends to professional sharing among teachers and staff from all schools.

The Board supports the provision of professional learning for staff. The Board also undertakes its own professional learning to maintain its alignment with the school ethos and vision.

## **7. COLLABORATION AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY PROVIDE THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE.**

While Australian Steiner/Waldorf schools are linked through an association of schools and their recognised Steiner Curriculum Framework, the governance, administration and decision-making processes of each school are independent.

Schools cultivate a shared anthroposophical understanding of organisational principles for guiding the school in the following areas:

- a) The educational program is adapted by the collegiate of teachers to meet the needs of their school community in consultation with the pedagogical leadership of the school.
- b) Administrative activities serve the educational program and its delivery.
- c) The Board has a guardianship role to support the mission and vision of the school, working strategically to enable the school's legal and financial health. Well-informed and effective governance is structured and implemented in a manner that cultivates collaboration among the organisational functions and groups.