

# Ringwood Waldorf School Financial Contribution Policy

This policy sets out the principles that stand behind how we ask for financial contributions from the families choosing this school and why we do it in the way that we do. It contains some background information about why we want to create a sense of community responsibility and explains what we expect from families with respect to their financial contribution and their support for our ethos. It also explains the importance of families contributing to the wider needs of the school in other, non-financial ways.

## Background Information

Ringwood Waldorf School is a charity and therefore a not-for-profit organisation. All funds raised by the school are used for the educational aims of the charity and the provision of related facilities. The school endeavours to keep expected contributions to an affordable level whilst ensuring the quality of the education it provides, covering the actual running costs of the school and meeting development aims. All contributions to the school should be viewed as a gift in meeting these aims – both for the current generation and for the long-term sustainability of the school.

The fundamental principles that underpin how we collect financial contributions are rooted in our ethos as a Steiner/ Waldorf school. The school aspires to offer the best Steiner/ Waldorf education that it can within the resources that it has available. We endeavour to create a sense of community responsibility, as the provision of these resources is the responsibility of the community and each individual within the community. The impulse behind our policy is inspired by Rudolf Steiner's ideas for social renewal.

Steiner's thinking behind his ideas for social renewal stems from a critique of the ideals of Freedom, Cooperation and Equality. These ideals can be defined as follows:

**Freedom** relates to each individual or group being free to create art, worship and learn without interference from government or business. It is the realm of culture and spiritual life.

**Cooperation** is the recognition that the work that each individual carries out in a community has an impact on every other individual and should be done with a sense of responsibility, appreciation and care for others, not for personal gain. This should be the inspiration behind work and the economic realm.

**Equality.** Everybody in society is of equal importance, and thus equality is the impulse out of which rights and laws should be made.

Steiner suggested that certain activities of a society, such as a school, could be permeated by these guiding impulses or principles. Our policy is an attempt to embrace a sense of cooperation and community in our dealings with money and the impulse of freedom in the relationship of that money to the education.

## What we ask of the community

Every year we will ask each family to pledge a financial contribution to the school for that particular academic year. We will provide a figure that is our 'Expected

Contribution' from each family, relating to the number of children they have in the school and where in the school they are. This 'Expected Contribution' is calculated to ensure that the school will not only cover its costs but also reach its development aims and provide sustainability for the future.

We want to create a diverse and inclusive community and recognize that not all families will be able to meet this expected level of contribution. In this case families will need to apply to the Bursary committee for a level of bursary and to make an actual financial promise based on this need. There is some provision in the Expected Contribution to allow the school to offer these bursaries, but we also need those families who can pay more than the expected contribution to do so as this helps us to meet our goal of being able to offer places to families with less ability to contribute financially. The 'expected contribution' is a guideline and just as we expect those who cannot meet it to stretch themselves as close to it as they can, we also expect that those who can easily afford it recognize that they can also stretch and give more. If everybody is genuinely giving as much as they can, then the whole community is best using its available financial resources to fund the school. These additional funds are set aside in the 'community support fund' to assist with bursary provision.

Our annual budget is formed out of the promises made, so it is essential to the viability and stability of the school that families maintain their financial commitment as any unplanned shortfalls can have a significant impact on the school's ability to deliver services.

## **Sibling Discounts**

We have a lower Expected Contribution for each sibling. In this way we hope to encourage those with more than one child to choose Ringwood Waldorf School for the whole family, where possible and appropriate. The level of discount will be published each year with the Expected Contribution amounts.

## **What if families do not meet the Expected contribution or do not pay their actual Promise in full?**

It is at the discretion of the school's management that bursaries are awarded and on the understanding that families have made an honest assessment of their ability to pay as well as shown a commitment to prioritizing contributions to the school in their family budgeting. If the school management believes that this is not the case or a family is not making the promised payments, a financial interview will be held with the family to agree a new payment scheme. The School reserves the right to withdraw a place at the school in cases where no mutually acceptable contribution is agreed.

## **Non-Financial Support and Responsibilities**

In order to keep costs down and keep the expected contribution as low as possible it is essential that members of the school community volunteer time and work to the various needs of the school. It is also part of the ethos of the school that we all, as a community, contribute to its upkeep.

**Cleaning.** Each class has a Rota for twice weekly cleans and half-termly deep cleans that all the parents are expected to take part in. There are also those who volunteer time to keep communal areas, such as the hall, clean. In this way the

children are provided with a clean environment, cared for by the parents, thus encouraging them to care for it too.

**Maintenance and Gardening.** TLC days are organized regularly, throughout the year, where families can help to maintain the fabric and improve the surroundings of the school.

**Fundraising.** There are many opportunities to raise additional income through fundraising activities and parents are expected to take part in these.

**Community Activities.** There are many events and activities during the year where parents, either as personal initiative or as part of a group, can contribute socially and culturally as well as materially to the community.

**Professional and trade skills and materials.** Parents are encouraged to share and contribute their skills with and to the community.

Every time somebody volunteers for these tasks it saves the school money and builds community. Any contribution of time and effort in this regard is greatly appreciated and its importance and value is not underestimated. We ask all families, but especially those who cannot meet the Expected Contribution, to consider what they can offer in this area since there is an implicit understanding that receipt of a bursary requires a measure of non-financial contribution to the community.

## **Additional Charges**

On joining the school, all families will pay a £500 deposit. This deposit is refundable when their last child leaves the school providing that there are no outstanding liabilities. One term's notice is required if a family wish to withdraw their child.

There will be some items that are charged in addition to the expected contribution. These will be things such as field trips, class trips, some therapies or additional support and personal educational items such as recorders.

All financial agreements with the school will be renewed annually.