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## ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### Introduction

Ringwood Waldorf School is an educational centre that offers Waldorf (Steiner) Education based on the philosophy of Dr. Rudolf Steiner. Waldorf Education is a worldwide educational movement where the education is practiced regardless of creed, race and religion.

As part of this movement Ringwood Waldorf School aims to welcome all those who choose Steiner education. The school aspires to a non-selective admissions policy and does not discriminate between applicants on grounds of academic ability, gender, disability, race or religion or any other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Children will be considered for admission in accordance with the school's Admissions Policy and Procedures which are set out below.

### The sole criteria for admission are as follows:

- The availability of a place in the class appropriate to the applicant's age
- The capacity of the school to meet the applicant's educational needs, taking into account its responsibility to the children already in the class and the distinctive nature of the curriculum
- The agreement of the applicant's family or guardian(s) to contribute financially.
- The agreement of the applicant's family to support the ethos of the school

### Ethos

In Waldorf Education the pedagogy, curriculum and management practices are integral to the education itself and these are informed by Anthroposophy, its concept of the universe, the world and the human being. This is the basis of the art of education and all endeavours in the school. It includes celebrating festivals which are Christian in the broadest sense and free of dogma or sectarianism.

Parents applying to enrol their children to Ringwood Waldorf School need to demonstrate that they have given consideration to this form of education, agree and support the educational principles on which it is based and wish it for their children. This is an active, not passive, process. The school supports these considerations by offering Introductory Mornings where an overview of the education is outlined. In addition, there are scheduled Open Days and appropriate reading lists available. Courses and seminars are also periodically available, and the admissions process itself also offers opportunities for discussion and for questions to be asked.

When an application for admission is accepted by the Admissions Group, the Admission Agreement requires that parents continue to support the educational principles and ethos on which the school is founded. See Appendix 1

## **Waiting List Management**

We can under normal circumstances accommodate the following numbers of children per class:

Kindergarten: 24

Classes 1-10: 25

These are the levels at which the classes are regarded as full. When the number in a class is below these levels, places will usually be given to applicants who meet the other criteria for admission in the following order:

- Children of staff members
- Siblings of students already enrolled in the school.
- Students transferring from other Waldorf Schools.
- Other applicants who have demonstrated commitment to Steiner education on a first come first served basis.

## **Family Policy**

Ringwood Waldorf School has a Family Policy where preference for admission is given to families who have other siblings in the school. Experience has shown that it is preferable educationally for siblings to attend the same school. This will also better enable the family to maintain the educational principles stated. Please read our Family Policy for further information.

## **The capacity of the school to meet the applicant's educational needs**

The school has always endeavoured to offer places to families regardless of financial circumstances. As a result of this, there are some constraints on resources available to support pupils requiring additional learning support and/or have special educational needs.

Each class is able to accept some children with specific learning needs, with extra help from the school's SENCo. This assessment will be made by the Admissions Group, which assesses the ability of the school to meet the educational needs of the child, now and in the future. This forms the first part of the assessment made during the admission process. This assessment is made in the light of the resources currently available in the school for this purpose and in addition the needs of the rest of the class will also be considered.

This assessment will require that records of work, medical records, school reports and other relevant documents be made available before the educational interview takes place. Interviews with the parents and the student will also form part of this process of assessment. Ringwood Waldorf School will contact the previous educational setting before or after the interview.

## **FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

The school requests an Admissions Administration fee when an application is made, and a deposit upon offer of a place. School contributions support the school's operating costs.

Applicants are required, as part of the application process, to agree to pay the requested amount or a lower amount if agreed by the school as fairly reflecting the applicant's financial circumstances.

Parents enrolling their children at Ringwood Waldorf School will be required to complete a Financial Contribution Promise Form prior to interview. The school aims to be socially inclusive and to welcome families having a wide range of financial circumstances. It aims to be fair in the level of contributions requested from individual families. It is also greatly appreciated if families, whose circumstances allow, contribute more than the expected amount as this helps the school to provide the bursaries that allow it to be financially inclusive.

Applicants are made aware of the school's need for non-financial support in the form of volunteer work in the school community, as set out in the Financial Contributions Policy.

More information on Financial Contributions to the school can be found on the school website in the 'Financial Contributions Policy' and the 'Financial Information' document.

Failure to meet financial and community responsibilities may result in a family being required to withdraw from the school on the basis of non co-operation.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **1. Attend an open morning**

The school holds regular events, encouraging parents to tour the school and access information. These events include Introductory Mornings, Open Evenings and Parent Educational talks and conferences.

Prospective parents can also gain information from the school web-site or by contacting the school office to set up a talk with a school teacher. Impromptu tours of the school can also be arranged. Taster days are available for children wishing to experience a day in the classroom. These can be arranged by contacting the Admissions Secretary.

### **2. Application**

The application pack contains the Application form, the Financial Contribution form, Financial Guidance on costs and a copy of the Admissions policy. There is an administrative fee of £50 when applying to the school. On return of the completed application forms, parents receive an acknowledgement of the application with any requests for further information required.

### **3. Further Documentation**

The Admissions Secretary has the authority to progress the application and will inform the parents of the next step. If further school reports/medical reports or assessments are required, these must be received before the educational interview is arranged. If no further documentation or discussion is required, the next step is the educational interview. Parents are invited to attend the educational interview with their child. At least two staff members conduct the educational part of the interview; normally one of these would be the main teacher of the class concerned. If deemed necessary, a learning support teacher will be present. The child will be interviewed by the teacher. During this time a colleague will discuss the child's background with the parents whilst completing the interview form. In the lower and middle school, the class teacher, possibly together with a colleague will assess the child's literacy and numeracy skills and co-ordination. The class teacher aims to get a sense of how the child and the class would fit together. Both the parents and the teacher need to arrive at a sense of the suitability of the education offered by Ringwood Waldorf School.

If there is a delay in the admissions procedure, this is because the application requires further investigation or discussion. This is usually due to financial or educational considerations.

#### **4. Financial interview and further information**

Parents will be informed if they need to make an appointment with the Bursar for a financial meeting or further information is required about the needs of the child. A learning support assessment may also take place as part of the admissions procedure. On receipt of all necessary documentation, a final decision to be reached within two weeks.

#### **5. Decision**

If it is decided that the school can not offer a place, the application will not progress to the educational interview. Parents are informed about the decision on the same day. Whilst there is no legal obligation to inform parents of the reasoning for a rejected application, we would always do our best to communicate clearly and help parents understand the decision.

There is no right of appeal. However, if a re-application can be considered at a later date, we will inform the parents.

#### **6. Admission (including an admission fee)**

If successful the parents will be advised in writing and sent the Admission Agreement together with various consent forms and the Parents' Handbook. Once signed and returned with a £500 deposit, the Admission Agreement forms a legally binding contract between the school and the signing parents. A start date is arranged and the integration process into the school begins.

#### **7. Trial Period**

The first half term is considered a trial period. During this time, the school or the parents can end the child's stay at the school without notice or further obligation. Throughout the trial time, the child's progress and integration into the school will be reviewed by the teachers and management. The outcome of this may result in the ending of the child's stay at the school, an extension of the trial period or full acceptance into the school. This trial period involves consultation and review with the parents. This may be extended in exceptional circumstances by written agreement to a term's trial.

Withdrawal by the parents after the trial period is subject to a full term's notice or equivalent financial contribution being payable.

#### **Flexi-Schooling**

This will only be considered if it is deemed in the best interests of the child, taking into consideration educational, developmental and social impact this may have on the child as well as their class. Flexi-schooling is only agreed in exceptional circumstances.

The school provides a Home-School agreement to cover any children admitted as part-time, i.e. where the number of hours of education falls significantly short of current DfE guidance. Such an agreement involves the parent undertaking educational responsibility for part of the day.

#### **Data Protection**

Documentation of important records for each child is kept centrally from enrolment onwards according to data protection legislation. Once the child has been admitted appropriate details are entered into the formal admissions register/database; even if this is a trial period of more than one week – date of leaving are entered against the

entry in the register.

Any data collected in the application process will be used solely for the administration of your application and care of your child. We will not contact you for any other purpose unless you give your express permission. Ringwood Waldorf School will not share any data with a third party unless strictly necessary for the care of your child or we are legally required to do so. You can read our full Data Protection Privacy Notice and Policy on our website.