

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is unique about Steiner Schools and how is it different from other types of schools?

A: Steiner Schools are based on a consistent philosophy and understanding of the nature of children and how they grow and learn. Steiner Schools seek to educate the whole child, integrating academics with emotional and spiritual growth and physical skills. The Arts play a big part at all levels as do movement and craft. Self-expression, self-discipline and the wholeness of life are the key elements teachers weave into every lesson.

Steiner School teachers aim to foster a genuine love of learning within each child. Through the skillful interweaving of arts and activities, students naturally develop their own internal motivation to learn.

Some distinctive features of Steiner education include the following:

- Children learn as much as possible through direct personal experience and interaction with people, materials, subjects and ideas. In this way children become more personally engaged in whatever they are learning.
- Kindergarten and first grade set the stage for later academic learning while containing little direct academic material. Specific types of play, story-telling and artistic activities cultivate the skills that will make academic learning more interesting and effective in later years.

Learning in a Steiner School is a non-competitive activity. Testing and grading are not used to motivate study.

Q: Do Steiner Schools have NAPLAN tests?

A: It is a requirement for all Australian schools to offer NAPLAN. Students at Steiner schools, as compared to students at all Australian schools, typically perform at the same level or better in all NAPLAN areas with the exception of Year 3. Due to the difference in the order of the curriculum regular Australian schools are ahead of our teachings in regards to numeracy and literacy in Year 3, but by Year 5 most Steiner Schools are performing better than regular schools.

Q: Is the education academic?

A: Steiner School students have comparable academic skills with respect to their counterparts in regular education settings.

Q: How do children from Steiner Schools fare when they transfer to regular schools?

A: Generally the transition to a public school, when properly planned, does not cause a problem. The most common transition from a Class 6 to a regular high school usually takes place without significant difficulties. Transitions in the lower grades, particularly between the first and fourth grades, can be problematic because of the differences in curriculum and the pace of learning.

Q: Are Steiner Schools religious?

A: Steiner Schools are non-denominational, however they are based out of a generally Christian perspective. The historic festivals of Christianity, and of other major religions, are observed in the class rooms and in school assemblies. Classes in religious doctrine are not part of the Steiner curriculum, and children of all religious backgrounds attend Steiner schools. Spiritual guidance is aimed at awakening the child's natural reverence for the wonder and beauty of life.

Q: Can children with special needs attend a Steiner School?

A: Steiner schools cater for all students – every child is unique, and we work with each individual throughout their development and education. There is a similar level of special needs students at Steiner schools compared to any other schools.

Q: Does my child need to be immunised?

A: Steiner schools in Australia follow the same state health regulations and public health orders in regard to vaccinations as public schools.

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/schools/immunisation/legislation>

Q: Why do Steiner Schools avoid using digital technology in primary school?

A: An important principle of Steiner education is that young children need to communicate and learn deeply without the mediation of complex technology. Material learned through computers arrives purely as information. Knowledge gained through direct personal experience and integrated into a broader understanding of life and the world is considered more vital than technology based on educational needs. However, the 21st century skills students learn in the Steiner primary curriculum are transferable to a digital world – critical thinking, problem solving, creativity and collaboration, for example. When students then enter high school education they embrace digital technologies effectively, creatively and ethically. The book "Failure to Connect: How Computers Affect Our Children's Minds for Better and Worse" by Jane Healy examines the subject in greater detail.

Q: How is the children's behaviour managed?

A: All Steiner schools have Behaviour Management Policies which state clearly their approach to discipline which is neither rigid in the traditional sense nor free in the progressive sense. Each school day is clearly structured. There are clear expectations and clear boundaries. Children learn best when they feel secure and when they know what to expect. A warm, well structured environment gives them essential support in finding out about the world and themselves in an age-appropriate fashion.

Q: What kind of role do parents play?

A: Parents play a significant role at a Steiner School. Since a Steiner education concerns a child's whole life, communication between parents and teachers is frequent and important. Parents participate in special events and festivals and help on committees. The school offers occasional educational seminars and classes for parents. Active participation in school events by parents is beneficial for everyone.