

# Golden Hill

## Steiner School



Into my will  
Let there pour strength  
Into my feeling  
Let there flow warmth  
Into my thinking  
let there shine light  
That I may nurture this child  
with enlightened purpose  
Caring with heart's love  
And bringing wisdom into all things

### Kindergarten Parent Handbook

"Kindergarten" comes from the German words for children (Kinder) and garden (garten). From this word arises the image of a beautiful place where children are able to grow and develop at a natural pace in a healthy, nurturing environment.

Our Kindergarten, as with all Waldorf/Steiner Kindergartens worldwide is an artistically shaped free space, a warm environment providing the setting for what the imaginative play of the child demands. We provide a variety of treasures from nature as well as simple playthings made from natural materials for free play. The more unfinished the toy, the more the child will bring to complete it with his/her imagination. A child's play is an activity demanding his/her full, serious attention. Through this activity a child develops many skills required for future learning.

We do not disturb children in their sacred realm of childhood where out of respect and reverence we allow them the freedom to play undisturbed. When necessary the teacher or assistant will guide or re-direct a child, often by having the child work alongside her until the child is once more calm and focused. In the Kindergarten the adults work, cook meals, make bread, clean the room, care for the garden, sew and knit. The children observe the work and begin to join in the tasks and activities, learning through observation, play and imitation. Adults in the Kindergarten strive to carry out their daily tasks so that they are worthy of imitation by the children.

The aims of the Kindergarten are;

- \* To provide opportunities for children to be active in meaningful imitation.
- \* To work with rhythm and repetition.
- \* To encourage personal, social and moral development.
- \* To provide an integrated learning experience.
- \* To encourage learning through imaginative play.
- \* To support physical development.
- \* To encourage children to know and love the world.
- \* To provide a warm, safe, nurturing environment.
- \* To work in partnership with parents.
- \* To create an environment in which the senses are refined and nourished.
- \* To foster gratitude and reverence towards the natural world.

### Rhythms

Children are carried along by the rhythms of the world in which they live- from the rhythms of breathing and heartbeat in their bodies to the daily rhythms of sleeping and waking. The yearly cycle of the seasons, the rising and setting of the sun, the phases of the moon, the ebb and flow of the tides surround and enfold all of us. Children flourish when their daily and weekly activities are arranged rhythmically to reflect the natural order of life.

Thus the Kindergarten activities flow with a sense of "breathing in" and "breathing out", from the quiet moments of story and circle to the active times of vigorous work and play.

The children arrive at Kindergarten at 8.50 and enjoy outside play until all have arrived at 9am when a tune played on the recorder gathers them to enter the Kindergarten, change into their inside shoes and move inside for a

welcoming circle during which some songs are sung and verses spoken.. A different activity is offered each day. Monday is painting day, Tuesday is beeswax, Wednesday we bake bread, Thursday is drawing and Friday is cleaning and polishing. Seasonal craft activities may also be offered. The children are then able to engage in self-directed imaginative play. During this time the teacher and assistant cut the fruit and prepare the morning snack, as well as any other housekeeping chores that need to be done. At about 10.30am the adults begin packing away in a conscious way, whilst singing a song to signal to the children that it is time to clean up.

Once the room is in order the children gather for morning circle time. Traditional and rhythmical verses are spoken and songs are sung with actions and movement. The circle may have a seasonal or fairytale focus and is repeated each day for about three weeks with new verses and songs sometimes added.

After washing hands we sit at the tables, sing a blessing and enjoy fruit and grains cooked earlier. Then it is time to play and work outside in the garden. At about 12.15 it is time to return inside to hear the story, usually a fairytale, folktale or seasonal story.

The story is told, not read and repeated for a number of days and then a puppet play of the story may be presented. The development of listening skills and oral literacy through story-time assists the smooth transition to writing and reading in primary school.

After story the younger children go home (at 12.30pm) while those staying for the day work on their on-going craft projects (sewing, french knitting etc). At 1pm their work is packed away and the children have their lunch. After lunch the children brush teeth then curl up with their blankets and pillows for a well-earned rest. We finish the afternoon with more play and work in the garden before going home at 2.45pm.

We also have annual and seasonal rhythms including cooking hot cross buns at Easter time, making lanterns for the winter festival and special advent activities. Individual birthdays are celebrated with a ceremony and a birthday cake baked by us at Kindergarten.

### Birthdays

Your child's presence in the Kindergarten is regarded as a blessing and we are grateful for the opportunity to express appreciation on his or her birthday. Please contact the teacher at least a week before the birthday to arrange the celebration. Parents are invited to come to school on the chosen day to participate in the ceremony. The birthday ceremony is usually held first thing in the morning. A birthday story is told which, through the imagination describes an understandable picture of the human birth experience. Parents are asked to contribute by sharing some special memories of their child from each year of their life. Parents are welcome to stay for the morning and bake the birthday cake with the children for a festive morning tea. If you are unable to stay for the morning, please send in the ingredients for the cake and we will bake it with the children. The recipe we usually use is included below, but if you wish to bake a "family favourite", please do, being aware that there is limited time for preparing and cooking the celebration cake.

### Golden Hill Kindergarten Birthday Cake

125g softened butter

2 tbsps raw sugar

4 eggs

½ cup walnuts and/or pkt glace cherries/dried apricots

4 large granny smith apples

2 cups wholemeal S/R flour

Peel and chop apples and cook on stove. Cut walnuts, cherries, apricots. Cream butter and sugar. Add beaten eggs, mix well. Fold in flour. Add apples, cherries, apricots, walnuts. Pour mixture into greased tin. Bake at 180C for 30 mins. Alternative chocolate carrot cake; substitute 2 grated carrots for the apple. Add ½ cup cocoa (or carob powder and two more tablespoons of sugar)

### What to bring?

- \* Flowers, when possible
- \* Soft-soled shoes for inside wear  
(we place an order early in the year for "Sunshadow soft slippers")
- \* Wide-brimmed hat (no caps please and plain, no logos)
- \* Raincoat and gumboots

These items are best left at Kindergarten

Children who stay all day require in addition to the above:

- \* a nutritious packed lunch
- \* a toothbrush and tube of toothpaste
- \* a small pillow or cushion (30cmx30cm)
- \* a small cotton blanket (90cmx120cm)

Please label all items with your child's name.

### Food

In keeping with a wholesome atmosphere, environment and activities for the children, we make sure that the morning teas we provide are of the highest quality. Where possible organic/biodynamic foods are used. If your child has allergies or special needs with regard to food, please speak to the teacher. Each morning we offer fresh fruit plus a cooked wholegrain. A levy is included on your fee invoice to contribute towards the cost of fruit (which is grown organically on a local farm).

Our wholegrain meals are arranged in a weekly rhythm and changed seasonally. Recipes are included in the Kindergarten newsletters which go home regularly, as many parents like to try them at home.

If your child stays for lunch, please send a nutritious lunch along,, avoiding very sweet or party foods (chips, cakes, sweet biscuits etc). In a group setting young children often become envious of other children's lunches so these foods and brightly coloured packaging are best avoided. A simple lunch could include a sandwich, salad, dried or fresh fruit and nuts.

Rainwater is offered with morning tea and is available for the children at all times. Each Tuesday and on birthdays, children are allowed to share their lunches with each other.

### Arrivals and departures

By arriving on time each morning at 8.50am you will assist your child to settle in with ease to the Kindergarten day.

Children who stay for the morning need to be collected at 12.30pm, and again please be on time. As we create a quiet atmosphere for story, we appreciate parents waiting outside until the session is finished. After story the assistant opens the door for parents who may then come inside to collect their little ones. Children who stay for the afternoon can be collected at the Kindergarten at 2.45pm. Again, please wait outside the Kindergarten door for us to complete our verse and goodbyes. Bus children and any who haven't yet been picked up will be taken to the bus line. Please inform us in writing if anyone other than a parent will be collecting your child from school. There is a book in the foyer for this purpose and any other messages you need to convey.

### Communication

Brief messages can be given to the teacher when you arrive in the morning, if I am not too busy. Please be aware though that my attention will be on the children and I may not remember what you have said. For this reason, a message book is provided (located in the foyer) If you wish to give me a note or letter, it may be placed in the basket which can also be found in the foyer. I encourage open communication.

If there are any changes or difficulties which may affect your child please discuss these with the teacher (eg moving house, illness in the family, house guests) and this will help me understand any changes in the child's behaviour. I am also available to discuss Kindergarten philosophy, as well as any concerns you may have and for home visits.

Please make an appointment to meet with me outside of school hours.

My home telephone number is 9848 3380-if you get the machine please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as I am able.

### Toys

Please ensure toys and other precious items do not make their way to school. They can all too easily be broken, lost or misused by other children, upsetting the child.

Thanks for your help with this

### Illness

If your child is feverish, irritable or otherwise unwell the best place is quiet rest at home. Should your child become ill during school time we will contact you to collect him/her from Kindergarten. Please inform the school if your child is diagnosed with any infectious disease. Immunisation in WA is not compulsory and is regarded by the school as a parental decision.

Headlice are a part of school life everywhere. Please check your child's hair regularly and treat any lice or nits which are found.

## Dress

In keeping with the environment we are creating in the Kindergarten we ask that you please dress your child appropriately in plain, rainbow-coloured clothing (Please no black clothing) Natural fibres such as cotton or wool are most beneficial for children, and a spare set of clothing including socks and a jumper for cool changes is required. Spare clothes, a hat, raincoat and indoor shoes can all be kept in a calico bag which is provided for your child and stays at Kindergarten. If your child changes into his/her spare clothing, please ensure you send items to replace them, especially in winter.

## Resources

A small parent library is available in the Kindergarten for use by Kindergarten parents. Please write the details in the borrowing book before taking any of the books home. We hope to build up our library so any donations or ideas for fund-raising are warmly welcomed.

There is also a more extensive library in the playgroup room "Peppermint Cottage" which is open during playgroup hours.

Parents are encouraged to read further about Steiner Education.

Parent/teacher meetings are held each term, so please let the teacher know if there are any topics you would like to have covered.

## Teaching and learning Together in our Kindergarten

Teaching is not just the task of teachers within a school environment, but the task of everyone within the community....especially parents, other family members, as well as teachers. It is therefore essential that parents and teachers form a partnership to ensure there is a flow between the two worlds of home and school. I welcome questions, suggestions, input and discussion at times when we are able to focus on the conversation. Home visits are beneficial and enable a link between home and Kindergarten to be strengthened. They also give the teacher a picture of the child's home life which can be helpful in understanding the child more deeply. I endeavour to visit each child's home during the year. Parents are also welcome in our Kindergarten to join our "community of workers and doers"(please check first to ensure the time is suitable)There are many tasks that ensure the smooth running of the Kindergarten, and parents with special interests and gifts to bring and share. It is beneficial for our children to see a variety of adult work from window washing to woodcarving or spinning. Please refrain from conversing with other adults while Kindergarten is in progress. This includes the teacher, assistant and other parents. By keeping adult talk to a minimum, we help to create a space that is meeting the children's needs and is conducive to self-directed imaginative play. Please also be aware that some children react negatively to having their own, or other parents in the Kindergarten. Parents who can't come in to Kindergarten may be able to do some needed sewing or repairs at home.

I look forward to working with all of you as we journey through the Kindergarten years together with the children.

Denise Bullen  
Kindergarten Teacher