

Ysgol Nant-y-Cwm Steiner Waldorf School



Parents' Handbook

**Revised Edition
May 2013**

Parents' Handbook

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SECTION ONE - GENERAL

Background and Welcome

Each Steiner Waldorf School is independent. The curriculum corresponds to the inner development of the child as he or she journeys from the imaginative world of early childhood to the adult world of clear intellectual thought. The teachers work out of the educational methods developed by Rudolf Steiner, founder of the first Steiner Waldorf School, the Free Waldorf School in Stuttgart in 1919.

In choosing this school, parents have made a statement of support for the goals and methods of our school. Understanding and referring to the information in this handbook will help your children find success and happiness at Nant-y-Cwm.

History of Nant-y-Cwm

Nant-y-Cwm started with a small group of parents who wanted to provide a Waldorf Education for their children. For sometime there was a 'Saturday' school until an opportunity arose to buy a derelict Victorian School building. Over the years this was renovated to provide the accommodation which we enjoy today. With increasing numbers of pupils, a separate Kindergarten building was needed. In 1990 we were able to move into the beautiful Kindergarten, designed by Christopher Day and built by parents and friends. It has attracted many visitors, much publicity and has won architectural awards.

The school has been founded on the dedication and courage of many parents and teachers who recognised through their children, a need for a sensitive and enlightened education. Through their struggles and joys a creative and educational community has flourished.

A brief Introduction to the Education

A Steiner Waldorf school aims to offer a comprehensive education in a learning community where children root themselves in their humanity as they live and grow through childhood.

Children are taught in chronological age groups of mixed ability. Teachers and parents join a continuous learning process inspired by Steiner's ideas of human development. This helps to create the very best educational environment and climate for the growth of the child.

The curriculum has been carefully developed to meet the requirements of children at different ages. The teacher of the class strives to meet the emotional, academic, physical, and spiritual needs of each child. There is a strong sense of rhythm working in the daily, weekly and seasonal activities throughout the year,

The three faculties of thinking, feeling and doing are a fundamental part of the curriculum. These are addressed at every level, from the structuring of each lesson to the shaping of the weekly timetable. Whilst these three faculties are always interacting, there is a particular emphasis on the development of the will during the first seven years (home and Early Childhood Education); the children learn by imitation and through activity. Between the ages 7 - 14 (Class 1-8) the education of the feeling life is nurtured through the guiding authority of the teacher, integrating artistic, imaginative elements into the learning process. Steiner pointed strongly to the negative effects on children if we encourage their intellectual and analytical capacities too early (before puberty). Children need to fulfill their childhood during each phase without being hurried into the intellectual, materialistic world conception of our times. The sum total of the main lessons over the eight years in the main school forms one continuous organic and artistic whole.

Between the ages 14 - 21 years the faculty of thinking is emphasised by challenging the adolescent to individual judgment; and to more conscious participation in their education.

SECTION TWO – PRACTICAL INFORMATION

School Hours

Punctuality is essential for the rhythm of the school day. Children should be in their classrooms ready to begin the school day at 8:50am. Punctuality and attendance are necessary to the smooth running of school life. Each class begins the day with a greeting and a morning verse; this helps to create a positive mood so that attention and concentration are enhanced. This harmony can be disturbed if pupils arrive late. If the children are late they must be accompanied by a parent to the classroom; lateness will be recorded in the register.

Arrival

8:50

Children should be in their classrooms ready to begin the school day at 8:50 am. Punctuality and attendance are necessary to smooth running of school life. Each class begins the day with a greeting and a morning verse; this helps to create a positive mood so that attention and concentration are enhanced. This harmony can be disturbed if pupils arrive late.

Registration / Lessons

9.00

If a child is late they must be accompanied by a parent to the Classroom; lateness will be recorded in the register.

Morning Break

11.00 – 11.40

Lunch Break

13.10 – 14.00

Kindergarten

End of Afternoon Session

15.15

KG Children in afternoon session need to be collected from Kindergarten, and children from class1&2 need to be collected From Class 1&2 classroom.

End of School

15.30

Children must be collected from their classrooms.
The pick-up timetable will be in the porch.
School children must have left by 15.45

All parents must fill in a Pick-up consent form with details of the adults that may pick up their children from school. At 15:45 any children left will be taken to the office and the parents will be contacted.

The Office Hours

Term Time

Monday 09:00 – 15.30

Tuesday and Wednesday 09.00 – 15.30

Thursday 09.00 – 13.00

Attendance

The law requires that **parents** ensure that:

- All children of compulsory school age receive “an efficient education, suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude”.
- All children of compulsory school age receive a full-time education.
- All children of compulsory school age attend regularly.

If parents do not ensure that this takes place they are liable to prosecution.

The law requires that the **school**:

- Takes an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning and at the start of the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent.
- Provides a broad and balanced curriculum.

At Nant-y-Cwm we:

- Regard any unnecessary absence as educationally detrimental. Our teaching methods make it almost impossible to catch up with work or for it to be done at home.
- Regard punctuality and attendance as necessary and essential to the running of the school life and consider avoidable lateness as hampering the pupil's development.

1. Registration

In accordance with legislation the teacher taking the first lesson of the morning and the first lesson of the afternoon marks the attendance register using the marks as indicated inside the register. The register will show whether any absence was authorised or unauthorised. The attendance register will be taken to the office in the morning by a designated pupil to be checked. Attendance records are checked by the WGSC (Welsh Government School Census).

2. Absence

Parents are required to telephone the school daily before registration time if their child will be late or absent, giving reasons which will be noted as authorised or unauthorised absences.

If a pupil is absent without prior notice the office staff will telephone the parents to ensure

- a) that the pupil is safe and
- b) to establish the reason for their absence and then complete the register accordingly. The class teacher will then be informed of the situation.

2.1 Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

Parents may not authorise absences, **only** class teachers can do this on behalf of the school. The absence of pupils taking part in supervised educational activities outside the school is recorded as “approved educational activity”. The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- Field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas.
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities.
- Interviews for a place at a further or higher educational establishment.

In no case do private activities (i.e. music or drama lessons) fall into these categories.

2.2 Unauthorised Absence

All other absences must be regarded as unauthorised. In schools that are open for instruction for 38 weeks per year, it is possible, though not advisable, for unauthorised absence to be given for brief term-time family holidays.

At Nant-y-Cwm the school year is less than 38 weeks, therefore the option of authorising such an absence is not available and pupils will therefore be recorded as unauthorised.

Schools, including independent schools, must notify the LEA if a pupil attends irregularly or is absent continuously without authorisation for ten or more school days.

3. Punctuality

Punctuality is essential for the rhythm of the school day and parents are required to ensure that their children arrive on time. The doors open at 8.30 am and pupils are expected to go immediately to their classrooms upon arrival. School's responsibility starts the moment the child enters the classroom, before that the child is his/her parent's responsibility. Children must be ready to begin the school day at **8.50am** for a prompt start of lesson at 9.00am.

If children arrive late, parents must first register in the office before coming to the classroom. If the class is in the middle of a song or poem or some kind of activity, they are asked to wait until the activity is finished, then to knock at the door. Wait for a "come in" and give reason and apology for absence (verbal or written). Parents are asked to not let the child come in on his/her own and take responsibility for being late, it's not his/her fault!

In the **Kindergarten** teachers are available from 10 minutes before the start of the school day. Parents are responsible for their children until then unless **prior** arrangements have been made.

4. Action

If a pupil's attendance or punctuality becomes irregular (less than 89%), Nant-y-Cwm Steiner School will initially contact the parents by letter to bring the situation to their attention prior to reporting it to the relevant authority.

If a child is absent please inform the School before registration time in the morning with the reason for the absence. A message can be left on the answer machine.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance of a pupil being away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards (verbally for unavoidable lateness and in writing for medical or other reasons). Contact your class teacher in writing for advance approval of absence.

The law requires that parents ensure that:

- All children of compulsory school age receive "an efficient education, suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude".
- All children of compulsory school age receive full-time education – 5 days per week during term time.
- All children attend regularly

The law requires that the school:

- Takes an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, absent, or has arrived late.

Punctuality and attendance are essential to the running of school life.

Emergency and Extreme Weather Procedure

Important Information

In case we need to contact you: Please advise the school office of any changes of address or telephone numbers as soon as they occur. It is imperative that the school is able to contact you immediately should the need arise.

In case of accidents: Minor cuts and scrapes are dealt with by the school's trained first aiders. All other cases are referred to Withybush Hospital, Haverforwest (01437 764546).

In case of fire: If you are helping in the school please make yourself familiar with the fire drill. Briefly you should know where the fire extinguishers are, and be prepared to help teachers walk the children from the classroom to the assembly point – playground to the front of the school; Kindergarten assembly point in the woodland car park.

Emergencies and extreme weather conditions may result in the closure of the school.

- **STEP 1** – 07.00 Collegiate Chair and Trustee to consult.
- **STEP 2** – If the school is to be closed notification is passed by telephone to the Nant-y-Cwm emergency telephone tree and all parents will be contacted using this system.

Accidents, Illnesses and Emergencies

If any pupil or staff member needs first aid or is taken ill, help is available from the office. There is also first aid cover in the Kindergarten. Should anyone need hospital treatment, parents/carers guardians or other emergency contacts will be informed and, where possible, asked to escort them. In the case of minor injuries the casualty will go to Withybush Hospital in Haverfordwest.

If a pupil is feeling unwell before reaching school they should remain at home as there are limited facilities available to deal with sick children. Should anyone be taken ill at school then the parents/carers or other emergency contact will be asked to collect the pupil as soon as possible. It is therefore essential that the school have up to date emergency contact numbers.

On entering the School a medical form is required to be completed, and we ask that if any details change the school office is informed as soon as possible.

The school endorses the use of homeopathic and some anthroposophic medicines for minor ailments and injuries. You will on admission be asked to verify your permission on an agreed form. No other medicines will be administered by First Aiders unless the correct information and instructions for their administration have been given to the school in writing.

Childhood Illnesses

The table below sets out the statutory times for excluding a child from school, ie the period of being infectious. However in having one of these illnesses a child's body needs time to rest and recuperate and we would therefore ask parents to allow for this.

CHILDHOOD ILLNESS	INCUBATION AND INFECTIOUS PERIOD	AFTER CARE
MEASLES	Incubation - 8-15 days. Infectious - 9 days before rash; 4 days after rash.	2 weeks rest.
CHICKEN POX	Incubation - 7-21 days. Infectious - 2 days before rash; 7 days after rash, until last blister has scabbed.	2 weeks rest
MUMPS	Incubation - 12-26 days Infectious 9 days from onset of swelling.	2 weeks. This is an infection of the glands and therefore reproductive organs may be affected. Bland food is recommended.
WHOOPING COUGH	Incubation period 7-15 days Infectious for 2-4 weeks	2-4 weeks. The child may feel peaky for some time with a recurring cough.
SCARLET FEVER	1-3 days incubation 21 days infectious. Unwell for 4-7 days.	3 weeks convalescence. Should be checked by Doctor before return.
GERMAN MEASLES (Rubella)	14-21 days incubation. Infectious 4 days after	1 weeks rest. NB Keep away from Expectant mothers at onset of rash.

After Care

The symptoms of childhood diseases may disappear long before the child has fully recovered. The aftercare suggested allows the child to restore his/herself to full health.

For Prevention of Lice - Please check hair once a week.

The School Office

The school office is currently staffed part time; however telephone messages can be left at any time and will be checked regularly. Contact can also be made via e-mail or writing.

In the office there are pigeon holes for teachers' correspondence; as well as for support teams such as finance, personnel, teaching team and premises plus the School Management Team and School Governance Team. Further information about these areas can be found in Section Seven of this handbook.

Within the first three weeks of a new academic term up-to-date telephone lists with the names and telephone numbers of all school families are prepared and distributed.

If you are unsure where to direct your enquiry, please contact the school office.

Financial Questions

The Financial Administrator is responsible for financial matters including school fees and payments. If you have any queries appointments can be arranged or messages left through the school office. Queries regarding pupil's fee accounts should be directed to the Financial Administrator.

Tuition fees: are established annually during the summer term for the following academic year, when the school's yearly operational budget is adopted by the Trustees. The fees are published in the annual fee schedule, if there are any annual amendments a copy will be sent to all parents; additional copies can be obtained from the school office.

Fees should be paid by one of the following methods:

1. One year's fees payable in the first week of term.
2. One term's fees payable in the first week of each term.
3. 12 equal instalments 1st September to 1st August either by standing order or post dated cheque.

The school is totally reliant on parents to pay fees on time for its day to day overheads. If a parent feels there may be a problem paying fees at the correct time they must speak with the Financial Administrator in the first instance. The Finance Team reserves the right to request an interview with any parent who is not paying the fees at the acceptable rate. Parents may request an interview at any time to discuss their situation.

Withdrawing a pupil from the school:

A full term's notice must be given in writing to the school if a pupil is to be withdrawn from the school. If a pupil is withdrawn from the school without giving the required notice the following term's fees will be charged. Where the fees are paid monthly and a pupil is withdrawn from the school at the end of the summer term, the August monthly installment is still due; as the pupil has received an education for the whole school year, and monthly payments are spread from September to the following August.

Parent-Teacher Support

Parents' Evenings: Each class has regular parents' evenings. It is a good opportunity for parents to find out about the curriculum and the teacher's personal approach to it. Time is set for questions and discussion, and the atmosphere is sociable.

Home Visits: A home visit can be very helpful in fostering a supportive connection between parent, teacher and children. Parents or teachers can initiate this.

Class Co-ordinators: Each class has a parent representative. His or her role varies according to the need of the class.

School Property and Grounds

- Dogs are not allowed anywhere on the school grounds.
- Pupils must not misuse or damage school property. Parents will be responsible for any willful damage.
- Pupils must observe the boundaries set within the school grounds. These may change with the seasons, for repair work and other activities.
- The school is out of bounds outside of school hours except for authorised activities.

General information

Newsletter: There is a regular Wednesday newsletter containing school news, messages from teachers, notice of events,

Notice-boards: There are two in the entrance porch – one contains school information and the other is a community noticeboard. Anything you would like to display please hand in at the office.

Notes: Remember that your child is sometimes given notes to bring home from class teachers or the School Office. These may be discovered at the bottom of bags and pockets a week later, but if found on time are usually informative! Please check those bags and pockets regularly.

Trips and Outings: Consent forms will be required to be signed and returned to the school whenever a pupil is engaged in activities outside of school hours or beyond the school premises.

Lost and Found: All items of clothing such as coats and wellington boots should be clearly marked. Any clothing found left around will be put in the lost property bin in the porch. Unclaimed items will be recycled.

Parking: There is limited parking in front of the school, please do not park in front of our neighbours property or turn around in the entrance to their garden. We would like to maintain good relations with our neighbours. There is further parking in the school car park or the woodland car park further up the road.

SECTION THREE - WHAT MAKES OUR SCHOOL A WALDORF SCHOOL

Home Rhythms

Giving our children a strong feeling of rhythm at home reinforces what we do at school and strengthens every aspect of their development. We sleep and wake, we breathe in and out, and we pass through the seasons again and again. We soon feel the detrimental effect of any disturbance of these natural rhythms.

For both children and adults modern life can lack rhythm. Gone are many of the jobs which involve repeated rhythmical activity, so that children may not have the opportunity to watch cows being milked, butter being churned or wool being spun.

For us as parents it is therefore an important challenge to try to rebuild a sense of rhythm into our children's lives wherever we can. Regular mealtimes and story times can help them develop a strong feeling for the days of the week and the weekend; we can do seasonal things with them, such as decorating eggs at Easter, going for walks, planting bulbs in the Autumn etc.

Having a special corner at home for treasures found on walks, twigs and flowers, shells and stones or seasonal pictures can be enriching and fun. Lighting a candle before a meal or at bedtime, saying a simple grace or a bedtime prayer helps children to find their place in the day.

With older children it is helpful to do their music practice at the same time each day, to have a regular homework or reading time, a set bedtime and a particular job or task to carry out daily at a certain time. In this way a real feeling of security is built up in the children, so that they can move through the complex world in which we live, feeling more confident and secure. In bringing a creative rhythm into daily living, children receive a gift which will be of value to them throughout their lives.

Television and Child Development

The Steiner Waldorf school movement does not encourage television.

Though much emotion surrounds the whole issue of television, and the role of television is a central one in modern life, there are some very sound reasons for believing that this powerful medium does fundamentally affect our children. That those effects are generally adverse, no matter how good or educational the programme material itself, soon reveals itself in the classroom, even if it is not so easily evident at home. Children who become used to 'zapping' from one programme to another lose their awareness of the importance of listening to the spoken word, and unconsciously undermine the authority of the teacher. These observations, so commonly made in the classroom, are now widely backed up by research.

Broadly similar thoughts apply to other media such as video games, the internet, the radio, the cinema; and even recorded music and taped stories.

Some families hold very strong opinions in this area, so in order to avoid misunderstandings with the parents of children visiting your home, it would be advisable to check with those parents in advance if your children are likely to be watching television.

Your child's Class teacher will be happy to discuss any questions relating to the modern media world. Together you can work out how you as a parent can best support the aims of the school and thus help your child's development.

Many interesting books and pamphlets have been published on children and the media. Do ask your child's teacher or contact the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

Festivals and Assemblies

The festivals are the heartbeat of school life. They are celebrated from Playgroup to Class 8, bringing children, teachers and parents together at the cardinal points of the year.

Children of Family Group and Kindergarten age are very close to nature; life in the Kindergarten has even been described as one long festival – one season giving over to another as Michaelmas, St. Martin's, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and St. John's-tide follow each other round the year. In the Lower and Upper schools we also try to let the cycle of the school year echo the processes in nature.

Michaelmas is the first festival of the school year at the beginning of autumn. Through the legends of St. Michael, conqueror of the dragon, we celebrate courage and strength of will. In our school we combine this festival with a celebration of thanks for the year's harvest, which culminates in a harvest feast for the whole school.

Martinmas is celebrated in November. The children make and carry their lanterns in a procession, celebrating with songs their bringing of light into the darkness of winter.

The Advent Spiral at the beginning of advent the children walk around the moss spiral to light their candles. It is a festival of quiet reverence, of darkness slowly turning to light.

St. Nicholas visits the children on December 6th, bringing a gift for each child and a special message to help them on their way through the coming year.

Candlemas is celebrated in February.

St. David's Day on March 1st is celebrated by all the children who are encouraged to dress in traditional Welsh costume to celebrate the day. We enjoy the story of St. David, sing and dance together.

Easter is the festival celebrating death and resurrection, a process we see all around us in nature at this time of year. The Easter hare brings eggs and hides them for the children in Kindergarten. Classes in the main school will also have a special event such as the blowing and decorating of eggs.

May Day is celebrated by all the children with May pole dancing and activities.

Whitsun Celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit to the earth, we encourage the children to dress in white for this festival.

St. John's Midsummer Festival on June 24th is a festival celebrated with stories, singing and games; culminating in the lighting of the St. John's fire with flaming torches.

End of Term Festival there is an end of term festival at the end of each term at which the children present plays, poems and songs to parents and friends. This reflects the work of the children and teachers during each term.

School Fairs There is a summer and Christmas fair. Much help with the planning and organization of these events is always needed and appreciated. They are enjoyable social occasions, and strengthen the whole school community.

Assemblies At the beginning and of each term the School meet together to look forward. It is a moving moment when, in September, the little Class 1 children are welcomed into the school; often the older class give the little ones a lily. In July, the leaving Class pupils step forward on to the

stage individually as the children and their teachers wish them well – Class 1 often give the older pupils a red rose.

Birthdays receive special attention in the Kindergarten, and in the main school many children like to bring a cake to school during the Class teacher years. Any parents wishing to deepen their understanding of the Christian festivals and to find new ways of celebrating them together will find the book *Families, Festivals and Food* a great help.

SECTION FOUR – THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (BIRTH – SIX)

Parent and Child Group

The parent and child group aims to provide a place where parents and children under three and half can communicate through play, songs, artistic and practical activities. It seeks to provide a peaceful environment free of pressures, where children can find the time, space and equipment for creative play. This strengthens their imagination and gives them the ability to unfold themselves. Parents might also find some stillness, support and inspiration from each other for everyday parenting. This group is based on the observation that young children learn through imitation and repetition, so use is made of imitation and example, rather than instruction and direction. There are no expectations that you oblige your child to join in but that you do so yourself. Sessions have a rhythmic structure and the seasonal songs and stories are repeated for each half term, so that children and parents may learn them by heart.

We begin each morning with bread making, encouraging the children to shape and create their own piece of bread, which is then baked in the oven, after this we clear the table ready for the seasonal craft. Play and craft activities run alongside each other during the morning for about 40 minutes. The idea is that if working parents/adults are present, children relax and are stimulated in their play. They become active and learn independently through play and imitation of the adults and join in the craft activity if they are ready. There will be a different craft activity each week, making something for the children or home. Natural materials found on walks are used, such as conkers, pine cones, leaves etc. You are welcome to bring your own craft project and share it with the group, if you wish. A tidy up song will mark the transition to snack time. Where we take time to lay the table and bless the food and eat the delicious bread we made earlier, children are encouraged to stay at the table during snack time but not expected to. After about 40 minutes at the table we say thank you for the meal and tidy away. Once the space is cleared we are ready for ring time; where we gather to listen to a story of a child, each week following their journey from home to the countryside and hearing about their encounters with the animals and nature along their path. We will sing seasonal songs and nursery rhymes mixed in with the story and then end the morning session with a goodbye song.

Kindergarten (3-6/7 years)

We create a beautiful space where children can feel the love and security of an extended family. Natural toys made from wool, wood, cotton and silk to feed the imagination and nourish the senses. The children learn through imitation, the teachers who prepare snack and take on domestic and artistic tasks which the children can take part in. The mixed age group allows the youngest children to watch and learn from the older ones, whilst the older children learn to help the younger ones. Drawing is a special time, with books ready to record their artistic impressions, whilst painting is a flow of colour escaping from the children's hearts. The children are in movement: inside they are busy building, playing, organising whilst outside they run, climb, skip, dig, hide, walk and splash. Ring time is a coming together, breathing in, with songs, rhymes and gestures suited to the season. Snack time is an important social occasion and a time for the children to experience and appreciate the natural world with blessings to begin and end the meal. Story time is a time of reverence when the children settle down to listen to a story told to them from the teacher's heart or to watch a simple puppet show. The concentration they show during all these activities is the beginning of a life-long love for learning.

From Home to Kindergarten

The journey to Kindergarten starts with a home visit to find out about your child, his/her experiences, needs, and family, it is a time for sharing thoughts and ideas and establishing links between home and Kindergarten. As a part of our settling in procedure the child's first days at Kindergarten are usually shared with a parent, during these early days the child may stay for the first part of the morning, going home after snack, until he/she is ready to stay for the whole morning, each child and family have different needs therefore the length of time it takes for a child to settle in varies. Although some young children may attend just 2 mornings per week for up to one term, most children start by attending Kindergarten 3 mornings per week, this helps the children to feel safe and secure in the rhythm of Kindergarten day and in their week. By the age of 4½ children attend Kindergarten 4 mornings per week.

Rhythm

Because the activity and learning processes of the young child are largely unconscious, it is essential that we give a strong framework of rhythm, routine and repetition both at home and in the Kindergarten. At home, regular bedtimes, shared meals, restful moments and enjoyable walks help bring about peace and harmony for the whole family. Beyond this there are the rhythms of the week, the seasons and the year. In the Kindergarten the weekly rhythm brings its day for baking and other activities, so that each day has its own character. The seasonal rhythms are closely connected to the celebration of festivals.

Imitation

Young children are intimately linked with the way in which other people think, feel and act. Their capacity for imitation is one of the keys to the work within the Kindergarten. It is therefore important for the Kindergarten and all that are in it to be worthy of imitation. The children copy the teacher with the poems, songs, stories, singing games and play rather than being 'taught' them, and recreate them in their own play.

Discipline

Because of the often unconscious, dreamy quality of children under seven, the use of authority is generally best avoided in these years. This does not mean the children may do as they like! For instance, where there has been a mishap such as a broken cup, the breaking is in itself shock enough to prevent recurrence and it is more helpful to the child to clean it up nicely than to face extra remonstrance. Discipline is more effective where the adults' ingenuity and imagination have been called into play. The strong, structured rhythm helps to create a disciplined atmosphere.

Stories

Simple fairy and folk tales and those from the animal and elemental worlds are told, speaking to children in pictures they can understand. These stories are told, not read, for in this way the teacher can enter into the tale with the children in a deeper way.

Birthdays

These are celebrated as individual festivals, helping to create for the child a picture of his/her own life. There will be cards and a gift, a crown, candles and a special story.

The Media and Toys

Because the development of the senses is so important at this age we recommend that the time that children are allowed to watch television is minimised, e.g. once a week and as a family activity. Television is particularly damaging to children under seven, as the images are absorbed unconsciously and may interfere with their play. Children's underworked imaginations make it

difficult for them to picture the stories in their heads. Equally unsatisfying to the child's soul are other media and the seemingly fascinating mechanical and electronic toys. Teachers are happy to discuss alternatives and gladly help with suggestions for play.

Parent Involvement

Parents can prepare their child/children for Kindergarten in practical ways by arriving punctually, providing them with the right clothing and food each day, by attending monthly workdays whenever possible and Parents' afternoons which are held 5 times a year. Parents are encouraged to join the Kindergarten for many of the festivals and other social events.

What your child needs everyday

A piece of fruit or a vegetable

Slippers

Waterproofs

Wellington boots

Warm/sun hat

Scarf and Gloves, if cold

A change of clothes (just in case)

If possible it is best to leave a pair of slippers and a set of waterproofs and wellington boots at Kindergarten.

Afternoons

Kindergarten runs from 9am until 1pm. In order to support families we provide a space for children in the afternoons, where the ethos of the Kindergarten is held. The children eat a healthy lunch together, rest then play whilst the teachers work in and clean the Kindergarten. Sessions can be booked by the term or as one off's by agreement with Kg teacher.

SECTION FIVE – MAIN SCHOOL (AGE 7-14)

The Main Lesson

The timetable structure is imbued with both a pedagogical and an artistic quality. This allows for rhythms of learning where remembering and forgetting in their deeper connection to awakening and sleeping alternate to create a natural and deep assimilation and digestion of the material. The main lesson occupies the first two hours of each school day. It is designed to immerse the children in a subject theme over a period of about three weeks. These themes call for the three soul forces – thinking, feeling and willing – to be exercised and developed in a balanced way. A three week block of, say, history will become an artistic and imaginative learning process supported by activities such as the recitation of poetry, singing, drama, drawing and writing – all integrated with the theme – as well as the daily recalling and discussing of the content given by the teacher the day before.

While the history can then rest and mature by sinking into the deeper levels of consciousness (to be taken up again later that year or certainly the following year), another main lesson subject is taken up, and then another, and another through the years as the curriculum unfolds over time. The Class teacher, who is the main teacher accompanying a class for the first eight years, takes all the main lessons for the class.

She/he is also responsible for regular weekly practice in the development of the skills of English and mathematics during this main lesson time.

The main lesson ‘block’ teaching and learning are contrasted in the daily timetable by lessons which need a continuous weekly rhythm through the year. Often taken by specialist teachers, even in the younger classes, these lessons include foreign languages, movement lessons (Eurythmy, Gym and Games), arts and crafts and music.

Class Assessments

It is extremely important that children are developing well and making good progress. It is equally important for the Class teacher to be assured that the teaching methods being used are effective. To this aim every area of the child’s learning development is assessed and documented half termly.

We know that assessments (SATs) take place in state schools but as our curriculum differs in so many ways we cannot use the tests set down by the National Curriculum. Also, Class Teachers have a closer and longer-lasting relationship with the children; they carry their class with them at all times. This is, in itself, an extremely effective form of assessment.

However, in certain cases it can be difficult for a Class Teacher to ascertain whether a child has a specific difficulty or is simply a slow learner and just needs more time. To ensure that a child’s confidence is not lost, it is vital that any difficulties are spotted early.

Learning Support

If a teacher is concerned about the progress or behaviour of a child whom they teach they would share their concerns with the collegiate and the parents. If deemed necessary an Initial Referral Form would be completed with the SENCO. Currently we have a volunteer specialist teacher who helps support the child and the teacher. Please refer to the SEN Policy for further details.

Languages

We currently offer French and are developing Welsh teaching in the curriculum.

Art and Crafts

Art is a fundamental part of the education and brings a special harmony to the whole child. Throughout the school, aims and techniques vary to meet the changing needs of the child, supporting individual development.

Form Drawing On the first school day in Class 1, each child draws a straight line and a curved line, beginning an exploration of pure form. This work begins with movement - through walking the forms on the floor; drawing them in the air; noticing the forms in the human being and the world; tracing them with the fingers on the page; and finally on paper as a line drawing.

The development of curves, straight lines, rhythms, symmetry and relationships leads directly into the writing of letters and numbers. On through the School form drawing leads naturally into such disciplines as geometry, natural science (plant forms/metamorphosis) and physics (study of water and sound etc.).

Form drawing works strongly on the inner development of the child. For example, in symmetry exercises, when only half of the form is given by the teacher, the children have to complete and perfect that which is incomplete. Moral forces are awakened by such an exercise; a living, flexible quality of thinking is nurtured.

Drawing The very young child is a most natural and exquisite drawer of pictures. In Class 1 such a 'genius' still prevails and with care a comfortable relationship to drawing can be maintained throughout the Middle School years. A teacher will foster the development of drawing skills, sometimes giving guidance as to the content or composition, but always allowing each child to explore its individual relationship to life. This gives the teacher an insight into the child's development.

The children start to draw with beeswax crayons, which encourage them to vary shades and blend colours (impossible with felt tips!). The teacher can guide them into finding and developing a natural means of self-expression by drawing with, or in front of, the children. Later they move to coloured pencils.

Modelling The teacher encourages modelling with beeswax, plasticine and clay, primarily as a means to deepen and extend the children's experience of the subject matter.

Painting *"Colour is the soul of nature and of the whole universe, and we partake of this soul when we experience colour".* (Rudolf Steiner)

One of the ways the world reveals itself to our perception is through colour. Each colour calls for a different soul-mood within us, and living in them can be a gateway to the inner quality of everything that surrounds us.

Once a week, or in occasional main lesson blocks, painting accompanies the children all through the Lower School. Step by step they are led to explore the realm of qualities, moods and movement that lie within this world of colour. Beginning with the three primary colours, they can see how they relate to each other, not with a line or depicting of an object, but out of the interacting of colours.

Painting with watercolours on wet paper (wet on wet) and using thick brushes, the children are guided into how to work with the colours, letting them become lighter or darker, meet gently or overlap and mix so that new colours appear.

When this foundation has been laid over the first two years, the children are ready to express the quality of objects and beings of the world, or of their imagination. They are often amazed how easily they can create a beautiful, expressive picture. The problem of 'not being able' to paint simply does not arise. The 'themes' for their paintings will mostly come out of their main lesson work, and objects to which they have already formed an inner connection.

In this way their technical skills and capacity for observation can develop further until from about Class 6 other techniques will be introduced – like painting on dry paper or 'veil' painting. This requires a lot of observation and patience as layer after layer of thin paint (which is allowed to dry) begins to bring the picture to life. The experience of the relation and light quality of the different colours is intensified and a new dimension of depth and translucency appears.

The painting is intimately linked with the whole pedagogical main lesson work of the Class teacher, and can give him/her a deeper insight into the needs, temperament and development of each child and the means to guide them.

Handwork There are weekly handwork lessons, where children learn to knit, crochet, do cross-stitch, embroider and sew.

Drama and Music

Drama and music are an intrinsic part of the curriculum.

Gym and Games

We do not teach sport as an end in itself, but rather use movement to assist the development of the whole child. We seek to provide an education through movement, using a wide range of carefully chosen activities, which will facilitate the gradual and harmonious development of the child both physically and spiritually.

Gym and games begin in Class 1. During the Early Childhood Education the children concentrate on guided play; various imaginative stories are combined with physical movements and exciting games evolve.

In Class 5 the approach changes and the energy becomes more controlled, with explicit rules and rhythms and precise aims. The children play games such as 'Dead and Alive' and 'Wall Ball' and learn simple vaulting and floor work. Each activity is introduced into the class at the appropriate time to challenge the child's growing skills and capacities. All the activities we engage in, and the manner in which we teach them take into account the whole significance of human movement, involves a series of exercises introduced year by year which allow the pupils to experience themselves properly in relation to the space around them at their successive stages of development. In Class 6, for instance, the children meet geometry and learn to bring precision into movement. In Class 5 the pupils take part in the annual Olympic Games held at Michael Hall involving 20 schools and approximately 400 children, which is in accordance with the Class 5 curriculum that studies Ancient Greece.

Gardening, Coppice Crafts and Woodwork

As with other practical work the children's thinking and understanding are developed through movement, as well as gaining practical skills. In the garden, children undertake tasks involved in growing food. They gain a practical understanding of nature and the seasons, and increasingly use their judgment in taking responsibility for the garden. This is extended in coppice-crafts and woodwork, to include nature, in particular woodlands, as the provider of raw materials for many uses. A theme running throughout is our responsibility in caring for the land and respect for the earth's resources.

Spiritual, Moral and Social and Cultural Development

The seasons and the festivals are the pillars that support the teaching at Nant-y-Cwm. In Classes 1-4 the teaching is based on the principle of being, for it is a time when the child feels at one with the world. Nature is seen as the hub of the creative world. Teaching centres on the child's intimate relationship with nature. The effectiveness of the stories that are told depends on the teacher's connection with those stories and with the world of nature and morality; it is the feeling that counts. For example the transformation of the caterpillar into a butterfly can be used as an image of immortality. Nature stories are used, such as the *Lily and the Rose*, legends with a moral, such as *Mother Holle* or *The Golden House*.

Class 3:	Stories from the Old Testament
Class 4:	Norse Myths
Class 5:	Ancient Civilizations. India, Persia, Egypt and Greece.
Class 6:	Rome. Mythology and Medieval History.
Class 7:	Renaissance and Discoverers.
Class 8:	Revolution – French and Industrial.

Homework

This is up to each class teacher.

Break and Lunch

As school starts early and the morning is long, it is advisable that the children have a good, nourishing breakfast before they leave home.

Break 11.00 – 11.40 Classes bring their own snacks but parents are asked to keep these very simple. Crisps, other highly processed snacks, whether savory or sweet, are not allowed; nor are sugary drinks. We also ask parents to be conscious of the huge amount of rubbish that is created by the over packaging of many snacks. The snacks should be nutritious, simple, wholesome and easy to manage for the children. Please make sure your child brings a bottle of water.

NB. No glass containers or cans. Chocolates, sweets and crisps are strongly discouraged.

Lunch 1.10 pm Children have a packed lunch in their classroom

Additional Activities

Regular class expeditions and outings are part of the educational experience at the school and may include such activities as trips abroad and outward bound activities. The school also organises theatre and concert visits. Plays are frequently performed at the school, and swimming is sometimes offered.

Pastoral Care and Pupil Support

Individual Class Teachers take responsibility to provide Pastoral Care meeting the varying needs of individual pupils at all times. For example it may be that a pupil is experiencing a bereavement, an unhappy relationship with others in the class, a difficulty in relationship with the adult world, or worries about the many challenges that confront young people and the associated peer pressure. It is during these times that the Teacher may be able to give support and work toward resolving the problem.

Reports

At Nant-Y-Cwm reports aim to provide a deeper insight into the personal development of the child: they do not give bare percentage grades or scores, nor is there any competitive ranking of pupils within a class or year. Reports are issued at the end of the summer term. The reports (written by

the Class teacher and the subject teachers) are not simply a progress report but give positive suggestions for things to work towards in the coming year.

SECTION SIX – PUPIL BEHAVIOUR & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Behaviour Policy & Discipline Procedure (including bullying)

Purpose of this policy & procedure

Nant-y-Cwm Steiner School aims to promote and acknowledge positive behaviour and conduct amongst both staff and pupils. The environment should be safe and secure with an emphasis on positive, respectful relationships. Any sanctions will be fair, just, consistent and 'age appropriate'.

School Rules

The following are some of the school rules and policies that have evolved for pedagogic, educational or safety reasons. It is not a definitive list, but it should help reduce misunderstandings between parents, pupils and teachers. These rules also apply to school functions such as outings, open days, fairs etc.

To ensure that the school is safe and comfortable for everyone, please remember:

**Every member of the school is worthy of respect.
Please use positive and friendly language with children and staff.**

- Pupils must remain in school until 3.30pm when the school bell is rung.
- At the end of school all children must wait in the playground until collected by parents. All other areas are out of bounds at this time.
- Under normal conditions, all pupils should have left the school premises within 15 minutes of the last lesson.
- During break time children must go straight to a member of staff if any situation arises.
- Bicycles, skateboards, scooters and roller skates are not to be ridden in the school grounds.
- Pupils are not allowed to climb on any walls.
- Do not throw anything out of windows or over walls.
- Always walk in the building and corridors.
- No kicking anything or anyone.
- Respect school property. Any wilful damage including writing on the walls or furniture, will be taken very seriously
- Dispose of your litter in the bins provided and pick up litter if you see it.
- Items which are not allowed in school are: war toys, radios or other music players, knives, matches, fireworks, or comic books. Personal stereos, computer games and other battery toys and games should not be brought to school. Mobile phones may **not** be brought to school. **Also**, no chewing gum, sweets, chocolate, or fizzy drinks.
- Tobacco, alcohol, and other illegal substances are not allowed at school under any circumstances.
- NO water fights.
- **Clothing:** There is no school uniform, but dress should be neat, clean and appropriate for school; logos or images are discouraged. Types of clothes worn should reflect time of year and weather conditions. There should be no bare midriffs or shoulders and shorts should be appropriate for school (i.e. 4" max above the knee). Bare feet are not allowed at school and shoes should be suitable for school activities.
- **Jewellery:** a small stud in each ear is allowed. 1 or 2 finger rings are acceptable from class 4 upwards, as is one discreet chain or necklace. All other body piercing and jewellery may be worn outside school hours only.
- Persistent bad behaviour, refusal to work, rudeness and defiance will result in detention.
- Appropriate language to be used.
- Pupils are expected to abide by a Code of Conduct, which appears in every classroom from

class 3 upwards, and deals with matters of good behavioural practice.

- Hair cuts and styles should be conservative, as this avoids attention being prematurely drawn towards the children's physical appearance.
- No dyeing of hair in classes 1 – 7 and only natural hair colour dyes allowed in 8.
- No make-up to be worn in classes 1 – 7 and only discreetly in 8.

Pupils' Classroom Code of Practice

The school has a Pupils' Classroom Code of Practice which follows below. Parents can support their child and the school by familiarising themselves with the code and reminding their child of its content if such reminding should seem necessary or appropriate.

Pupils Classroom Code of Practice:

1. Be on time – knock and wait for an answer, then enter the room quietly.
2. Respect other pupils' right to work.
3. Do not wear outdoor clothes in class.
4. Listen carefully to the teacher - do not interrupt. Put up your hand if you need to ask a question or to reply to a question put to the class.
5. Do not eat during lessons.
6. Do not verbally or physically abuse others (this includes bullying – see section on bullying).
7. Stand quietly before and at the close of each lesson.
8. Only leave your seat with the teacher's permission.
9. Do not leave the room unless given permission.
10. Make sure you have the right equipment before the start of each lesson.
11. Pupils are expected to show respect for teachers, staff and other pupils and property. When a pupil behaves in an unacceptable manner, the teacher dealing with the pupil at the time will decide what action is appropriate and incidents will be recorded in the Incident Book. Where there is a serious breach of school rules, the school has a clear policy for dealing with such a situation.

Incident Book

If a pupil's behaviour flouts school rules or the classroom Code of Conduct excessively, it will be recorded in the Incident Book, and brought to the attention of staff at the weekly Teaching Team meeting. Appropriate actions will be taken at the time of the incident; and any follow up will be decided at the Teaching Team meeting. If a child's name appears in the Incident Book regularly, teachers will usually want to meet with parent/s to discuss the situation.

This procedure is intended for use when a child displays disruptive or unacceptable behaviour, causing problems for themselves, other children and staff. All sanctions will be age appropriate, detentions will not be given to children below Class 3.

This is essentially a three step procedure:

- Step one:** **Verbal warning.** Following an incident as described, an informal discussion will take place. As this is a verbal warning a full written record will be kept. The child may receive a detention during playtime. The procedure will be:
1. Verbal warning
 2. 3 marks on the board will mean a detention, with 15-30 minutes of lunch playtime lost.
 3. Brought to the Teaching Team meeting & parents are informed.
- Step two:** **Formal meeting with parents.** If the problem continues, parents will be invited to a formal meeting. A possible outcome of this meeting could be temporary exclusion (suspension). The length of time of this suspension will depend on the child's age and the circumstances.

Step three: Second formal meeting. A second formal meeting will take place to monitor levels and intentions of improvement. If there has been no improvement then those who have been involved in the process will discuss the exclusion of the child.

NB: Other situations may arise which leave the school no alternative but to ask the parents to immediately withdraw the child from the school.

Detentions

1. Homework detentions:

If a pupil does not complete work at home set by teachers, the homework detention is seen as a way of supporting the pupil to be able to complete what is expected of them. If a pupil repeatedly fails to do homework, teachers, parents and the pupil may meet to discuss the situation.

2. Discipline detentions:

These detentions are given when a pupil's behaviour strongly contradicts the school rules, or the Pupils' Classroom Code of Practice. Where possible, the detention will help the pupil come into a more conscious relationship with what they have done; this could mean cleaning, repairing, making an apology card or writing an essay.

Bullying

There are a number of different forms of anti-social behaviour carried out between people who learn, work, play or live together and not all of these are bullying. Some for example involve situations of short-term conflict; others are incidents of random, or non-directed aggression. All forms of anti-social behaviour are taken seriously at Nant-y-Cwm. We are committed to fostering a friendly atmosphere of respect and empathy for others throughout the school.

A definition of bullying: Bullying is a subjective experience and can assume different guises, such as physical aggression, persistent verbal abuse, intimidation, interfering with others' property, the prolonged exclusion of others from a group activity, the spreading of rumours, or the posting of hurtful messages via the internet or by text ('cyber' bullying) etc. We define bullying as anti-social behaviour, carried out by an individual or a group that:-

- Causes hurt or harm, *and*
- Is repetitive, wilful or persistent, *and*
- Involves an imbalance of power, leaving the person being bullied feeling defenceless.

Exclusion Policy

DEFINITION: *Exclusion will mean the removal of a student from the school premises either temporarily or permanently.*

The decision to exclude a pupil from school is a very serious one and will not be taken lightly. In most cases of exclusion there will have been previous discussions and/or correspondence between the parents and the school about the pupil's behaviour.

Purpose of this policy

1. To ensure the safety and well being of all members of the school community, and to maintain an appropriate educational environment in which all can learn and succeed.
2. To exclude a pupil only in exceptional circumstances.

Introduction

The decision to exclude a student will be taken in the following circumstances:-

- a) In response to a serious breach of the School's Behaviour Policy.
- b) If allowing the student to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the student or others in the school.

The decision to exclude a student will be taken by the Teaching Team. The decision to permanently exclude a child can only be made by agreement of the Teaching Team and the School Governance Team.

Exclusion whether fixed term or permanent may be used for any of the following, all of which constitute examples of unacceptable behaviour.

- Verbal abuse.
- Physical abuse actual or threatened.
- Indecent behaviour
- Damage to property
- Use/possession/supply of illegal drugs
- Misuse of other substances
- Theft
- Sexual abuse or assault.
- Carrying an offensive weapon.
- Arson.
- Unacceptable behaviour which has previously been reported and for which School sanctions and other interventions have not been successful in modifying the student's behaviour.

This is not an exhaustive list; and there may be other situations where the Teaching Team makes the judgement that exclusion is an appropriate sanction.

Exclusion procedure

- Most exclusions are of a fixed term nature and are of short duration (usually between one and three days).
- Following the decision to exclude parents will be contacted immediately. A letter will be sent by post giving details of the exclusion and the date the exclusion ends.
- A 'return to School meeting' will be held following the expiry of the fixed term exclusion and this will involve the Class Teacher and a member of the Teaching Team.
- If the fixed term exclusion is greater than five days, or an accumulation of exclusions exceed five days, a support plan will be drawn up. This needs to be agreed with the School, student and parents.
- During the course of a fixed term exclusion where the student is to be at home, parents are advised that the student is not allowed on the School premises, and that daytime supervision is their responsibility, as parents/guardians.
- Parents have the right to put their point of view using the Parental Concerns and Complaints Procedure.

Permanent Exclusion

The decision to exclude a student permanently is a serious one. There are two main types of situation in which permanent exclusion may be considered.

1. The first is a final, formal step in a concerted process for dealing with disciplinary offences following the use of a wide range of other strategies, which have been used without success. It is an acknowledgement that all available strategies have been exhausted, and is used as a last resort. This would include persistent and defiant misbehaviour including bullying (which would

include racist or homophobic bullying) or repeated possession and or use of an illegal drug on School premises.

2. The second is where there are exceptional circumstances and it is not appropriate to implement other strategies and where it could be appropriate to permanently exclude a student for a first or 'one off' offence. These might include:

- Serious actual or threatened violence against another student or a member of staff.
- Sexual abuse or assault.
- Supplying an illegal drug.
- Carrying an offensive weapon *.
- Arson.

The School will consider police involvement for any of the above offences.

** Offensive weapons are defined in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 as "any article made or adapted for causing injury to the person; or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him."*

These instances are not exhaustive but indicate the severity of such offences and the fact that such behaviour seriously affects the discipline and well being of the School.

General factors the School considers before making a decision to exclude:-

Exclusion will not be imposed instantly unless there is an immediate threat to the safety of others in the School or the student concerned. Before deciding whether to exclude a student either permanently or for a fixed period the Class Teacher will:

- a) Ensure appropriate investigations have been carried out.
- b) Consider all the evidence available to support the allegations taking into account the Behaviour Policy.
- c) Allow the student to give her/his version of events.
- d) Check whether the incident may have been provoked for example by bullying or by racial or sexual harassment.
- e) In the case of permanent exclusion, the Teaching Team and the School Governance Team will be responsible for the final decision.

SECTION SEVEN - School Constitution

By reading the constitution for Nant-y-Cwm School it can be seen how support teams are crucial to maintaining a functioning, happy and beautiful school.

All parents are urged to consider the time and skills they have available and contact the School Management Team who will provide information regarding specific areas of work available.

Work on premises, particularly building maintenance; and involvement in internal fundraising events, is especially required. Remember not everyone needs to be working on a weekly basis; your role within the group could be a commitment to raking up leaves twice a year, or agreeing to ensure posts are put up in a particular area. All contributions offered are of enormous support to the well being of the school – whatever their size!

Contents:

1. Overall organisational structure
2. School Association
3. School Governance Team
4. Collegiate
5. School Management Team
6. School Support Teams
7. Decision-making
8. Planning
9. Handling concerns

1. Overall organisational structure

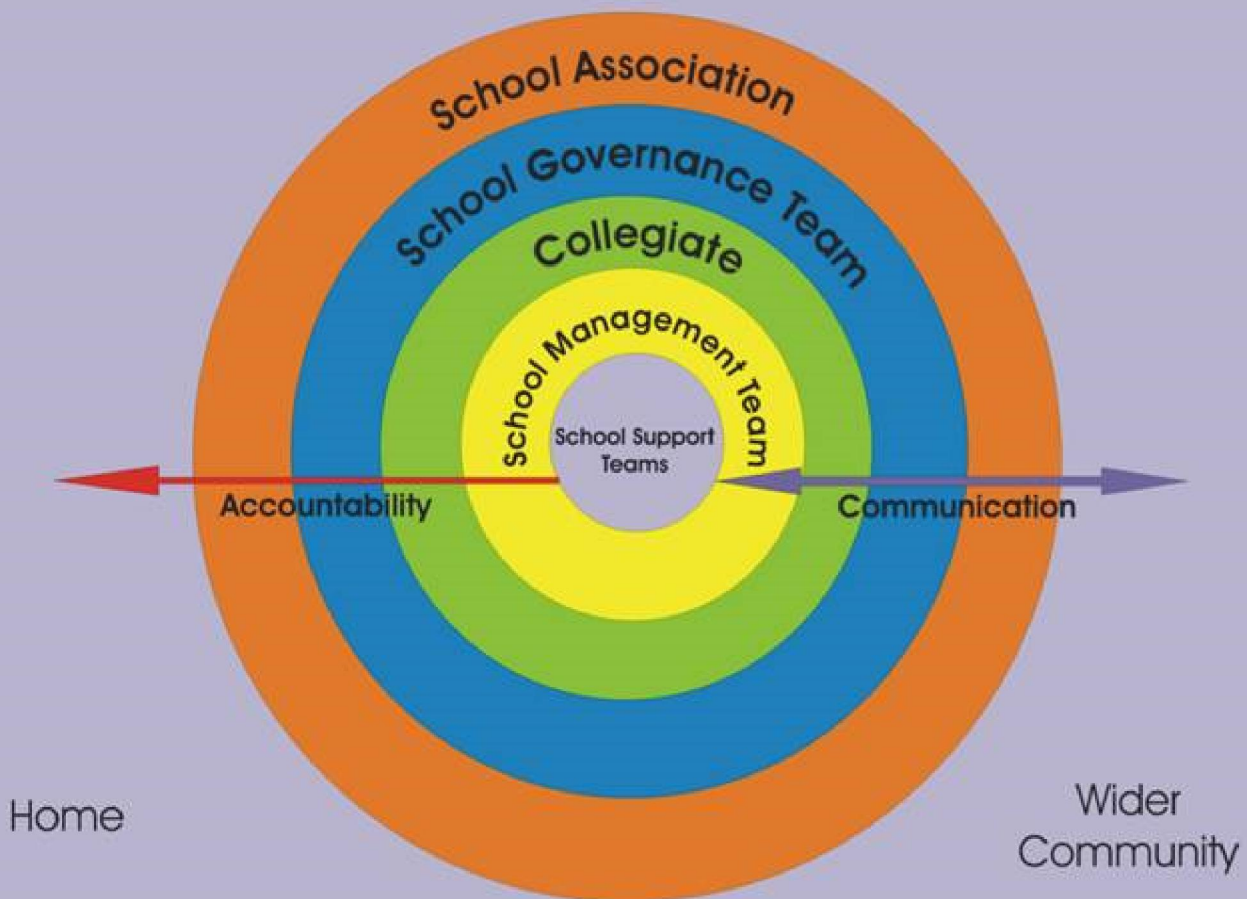
Rudolf Steiner's vision was that Steiner-Waldorf schools should be run as

modern self-governing learning communities

based on **shared leadership** and **consensus decision-making**;

with **self-development based on reflective practice at the heart of professional development.**

Therefore, the overall structure of the school is as follows:



2. School Association

Job specification

The School Association is a heterarchical (i.e. non-hierarchical) *Community of Interest*, and a legal reflection of all those currently involved with the school.

The purpose of the association is to

represent the interests of its members

It does this by hosting¹ an Annual General Meeting once a year to do the following:

- Appoint members of the School Governance Team;
- Hold them accountable for the effective governance of the school through a review of last year and a preview of the coming year;
- Pass the accounts and appoint external auditors.

Meetings

Under normal circumstances, the Association should only meet once a year at its AGM.

The 'School Association' (a legal entity) that meets once a year, should not be confused with the 'School Community' (a non-legal entity), which can gather together at any time (e.g. a festival, a fundraising event or a consultation meeting called by one of the teams in the school).

Person Specification

Everyone currently involved with the school.

Membership is automatic when someone joins the school as a parent or member of staff. Others (including students of the school) should apply in writing to the School Management Team

It is possible to opt out of membership at any time.

¹ The practical aspects of 'hosting' (e.g. setting a date, preparing and distributing an agenda, facilitating the event) is either undertaken by the School Governance Team or delegated by them to someone else.

3. School Governance Team

Job Specification

The School Governance Team (Board of Trustees) is responsible for the effective governance of the school.

It appoints (employs) all members of staff.

It delegates responsibility for the effective management of the school to the Collegiate.

The purpose of the School Governance Team is:

To hold an awareness of and make decisions about
what is in the best long-term interests of the whole school,
guided by the school's **Constitution** and **Statement of ethos**.

This involves keeping an appropriate distance from the day-to-day (implementation) and management activities of the school, whilst remaining aware of what is going on.

This is achieved by ensuring that there is good documentation (e.g. team plans, meeting agendas/minutes or reports, policies and procedures), and an effective School Management Team.

Meetings

The School Governance Team should meet six times a year, at the beginning and end of each term.

Person Specification

To avoid any possible conflicts of interest, all members of this team should be as independent and external as possible. Ideally, they should be people who have no current financial, professional, social, family or other vested interest in the school.

4. Collegiate

Job specification

The Collegiate is responsible for the effective management of the school. It has chosen to delegate this task to the School Management Team, which it appoints each year.

Purpose of the Weekly Meeting of the Collegiate:

To maintain an awareness (individually and collectively) of the overall expectations and underlying principles of Steiner-Waldorf pedagogy through:

- **Shared meditative work** (e.g. artistic work)
- **Shared study** (e.g. Child study, Class study, child development, anthroposophy)
- **Co-mentoring** (e.g. Reflection on professional practice, self-evaluation)
- **Responding to consultations** (e.g. is a particular proposal aligned to the school's ethos)

Person specification

The Collegiate comprises staff (pedagogical or non-pedagogical), who are committed and able to help carry responsibility for the inner aspects of developing the education.

Members of the Collegiate should have the skills and qualities needed for the Collegiate's work; or the willingness, ability, and the support of colleagues to develop such skills and qualities.

There should be a clear written process for members joining or leaving the Collegiate.

A member of the Collegiate cannot also be a member of the School Governance Team.

Membership of the Collegiate is confirmed by the School Governance Team.

5. School Management Team

Job Specification

The School Management Team is responsible for monitoring and supporting the work of all the School Support Teams. It is directly accountable to the Collegiate.

The purpose of the team is:

To hold an awareness of and make decisions about

what is in the best medium-term interests of the whole school,

guided by the school's **Development Plan**.

The work of the team involves keeping an appropriate distance from both the School Support Teams as well as from the School Governance Team.

This is because the School Management Team needs to act as a kind of 'bridge', remaining aware of what is important to the school over the long-term, while at the same time also being aware (but not be closely involved in) what is going on in the school day-to-day.

It does this by ensuring that there is good documentation (e.g. team plans, meeting agendas/minutes, policies and procedures), and that the School Support Teams are working effectively and efficiently.

The clearer people involved in implementation can be about their plans, agendas, decisions and minutes, the more autonomous they can be.

Person Specification

Teaching or non-teaching staff or others, appointed each year by the Collegiate using a formal recruitment process.

Meetings

The School Management Team meets once a week.

The School Management Team can arrange to meet with the School Governance Team as and when necessary, although this should not be more than once a term.

6. School Support Teams

Job Specification

Keeping the Team Plan up to date by taking part in the overall school development planning process once a year;

Putting the Team Plan into practice by doing planned tasks and activities;

Doing unplanned tasks and activities as they come up;

Holding meetings and making decisions (keeping written records of agendas and minutes) and/or **writing and distributing updates**.

Person Specification

Any member of the School Association can apply to become a member of one or more School Support Teams (except current members of the School Governance Team).

The School Support Team can itself decide to invite others (from inside or outside the school) to attend all or part of a meeting or several meetings as a guest, as and when necessary.

Recruitment and development of Support Team members

All paid full-time and paid part-time employees:

- i) are **recruited** using a *Recruitment Procedure*,
- ii) are **trained** in how the school is organised and run,
- iii) are **held to account** using an *Evaluation Procedure*, and
- iv) have **their concerns/concerns about them** dealt with using a *Concerns Procedure*.

All volunteer facilitators/chairs of teams are treated in the same way.

Where possible and appropriate, all volunteer members of teams should be treated in the same way.

Key areas of activity for Support Teams ²

At any one time, there needs to be one or more teams covering at least the following areas:

Pedagogical

- Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- Safeguarding Children
- Induction and co-mentoring of teaching staff
- Curriculum development
- Admissions
- Events (e.g. festivals)

Non-pedagogical

- Administration
- Personnel
- Finance
- Legal
- Public Relations
- Health and safety
- Maintenance of existing buildings
- Capital fundraising
- Projects (i.e specifically defined projects with limited duration, e.g. craft-making for an up coming event)

For a current list of teams and facilitators, please contact School Management Team

² For more information on key areas in a Steiner-Waldorf setting, please see *SWSF Code of Practice*.

7. Decision-making

Decision-making methods

The school uses a variety of decision-making methods depending on the particular situation.

<p>Amendments to Memorandum and articles of association</p> <p>A short legal document, summarising the rights of members of the School Association.</p> <hr/> <p>Amendments to the <u>Constitution</u></p> <p>A more detailed non-legal document, summarising how the School Governance Team intends to govern</p>	<p><u>Who?</u> School Association (based on proposals from School Governance Team).</p> <p><u>Method</u> Group decision Qualified (two-thirds) majority voting</p> <hr/> <p><u>Who?</u> School Governance Team (consulting/asking for advice as and when necessary).</p> <p><u>Method</u> Group decision Consensus</p>
<p><u>Long-term decisions</u></p> <p>Beyond current school year</p>	<p><u>Who?</u> School Governance Team (consulting/asking for advice as and when necessary).</p> <p><u>Method</u> Group decision Consensus</p>
<p><u>Medium-term decisions</u></p> <p>During current school year</p>	<p><u>Who?</u> School Management Team (consulting/asking for advice as and when necessary).</p> <p><u>Method</u> Group decision Consensus</p>
<p><u>Short-term decisions</u></p> <p>Day-to-day</p>	<p><u>Who?</u> Individuals/Teams (consulting/asking for advice as and when necessary)</p>

	<u>Method</u> As specified in Individual/Team plans
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Decisions as part of policies

Policies can be made at any level in the organisation.

Policies can be applied to any level in the organisation.

Policies can cover just part of the organisation (e.g. the day-to-day work of an individual or team) and/or cover the whole organisation (e.g. long-term development).

Decisions arising from policy should be made by the appropriate part of the organisation, depending on the time-scale (see table on previous page).

Decisions about proposals

Sometimes, decisions need to be made that are neither part of day-to-day work nor part of a policy or an agreed plan (for example, a proposal for a new policy or an amendment to an existing one).

Any member or group of members of the Association

who have a proposal or a suggestion for a new or amended policy or activity,

should initially submit it in writing to the relevant Support Team

(sending a copy to the School Management Team). 3

If the proposal is accepted by the Support Team and only has day-to-day implications, the team can make this short-term decision itself, guided by their Team Plan.

If the proposal is accepted by the Support Team and has implications for the current school year, the Support Team should pass the proposal to the Management Team (with its recommendations and comments). The Management Team will then make this medium-term decision, guided by the school's Development Plan and Ethos Statement.

If the proposal is accepted by the Support Team and has implications beyond the current school year or affects the reputation of the whole school, the Management Team should pass the proposal to the Governance Team (with its recommendations and comments). The Governance Team will then make this long-term decision, guided by the school's constitution.

3 If the person or group of people bringing the idea to a Support Team believes that they have not been dealt with satisfactorily, they should use the school's Concern Procedure in the normal way.

8. Planning

<i>Name and description of document</i>	<i>Who is ultimately responsible for producing and updating it?</i>	<i>When?</i>
<p>Constitution</p> <p>Overall accountability structure</p> <p>Context, structure, planning, decision-making, handling concerns</p>	<p>School Governance Team</p> <p>(in consultation with Collegiate, School Management Team and the School Association; plus external advisors as and when necessary).</p>	<p>Update about every 7 years</p>
<p>Ethos Statement</p> <p>Overall long-term development</p> <p>Biography of school, core relationships, core task, core values, long-term vision</p>	<p>Collegiate</p> <p>(in consultation with School Management Team, School Governance Team, School Support Teams and the School Association; plus external advisors as and when necessary).</p>	<p>Update about every 3 years</p>
<p>Development Plan</p> <p>Overall medium-term development</p> <p>All Individual/Team Plans</p>	<p>School Management Team</p> <p>(in consultation with Individuals/School Support Teams; plus external advisors as and when necessary).</p>	<p>Update every year (summer term)</p>

9. Handling concerns

The Steiner-Waldorf movement was inspired by the ideals expressed by Rudolf Steiner and others in the early part of the 20th century. These ideals were based on recognising that each human being is an individual to be valued, and still guide and inspire those working in Steiner-Waldorf settings.

As employers, the trustees (Governance Team) of Steiner-Waldorf settings have many legal duties and responsibilities as well as a responsibility to uphold the founding ideals of Steiner-Waldorf education.

The following concerns procedure enables the School Governance Team to fulfill its legal responsibilities, while at the same time seeking to uphold the dignity of the human being as indicated by Rudolf Steiner.

Employee concerns - if an employee in a school is worried about anything to do with their work.

Employer concerns - if the employer (normally the school's trustees) become concerned about the work of an employee.

Dignity at work - if an employee is experiencing behaviour that is unacceptable to them.

Parental concerns - if a parent has a concern.

Pupil concerns - if a pupil has a concern.

SECTION EIGHT – COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy and Procedure

General Principles:

Nant-y-Cwm Kindergarten was inspired by the ideals expressed by Rudolf Steiner and others in the early part of the 20th century. These ideals were based on recognizing freedom and intrinsic value of each human being. Our respect for the spiritual uniqueness of each human being means that we endeavour to respect the dignity of all those in our communities.

Trustees of Steiner Waldorf schools have many legal duties and responsibilities alongside upholding our founding ideals. We wish to encourage all members of a school community to strive to fulfill their role and responsibilities diligently and capably while upholding the dignity of the human being in all their encounters. Our Concerns and Complaint's Procedure is intended to support our core ideals and to contribute to the continual improvement of the education we provide.

Principles in practice:

Independent schools in Wales are required by regulation to offer a procedure for complaint.

This procedure meets the regulatory requirements in full. In addition, this procedure is intended to help sustain a positive ethos within our school so that problems can be listened to appropriately and resolved wherever possible. Our core purpose is to offer high quality Waldorf education for all our children and in order to improve our work, we seek to learn from our mistakes and correct them whenever possible.

- a) We believe that the education of our children can be most effective when there is close co-operation, mutual trust and respect between all those involved in their upbringing and education.
- b) We offer the following opportunities for communication: newsletter, parents afternoons, daily face to face contact email and telephone contact details, and encourage all members of the community to contribute to the life of the school through these channels. We also welcome practical suggestions that can help us improve our communication and the way we work.
- c) Our Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure aims to deal with issues in a fair and open manner. We intend to respond to questions and criticisms promptly and to do all we can reasonably do to resolve any problems amicably.
- d) The Procedure may be supplemented where the issue involves allegations of professional misconduct, criminal offences, including matters covered by our safeguarding children procedure or others that might result in a member of staff facing disciplinary action. In cases of this sort, an urgent investigation will take place and evidence will be gathered as appropriate from all parties. We are obliged in such matters to maintain confidentiality and report them to the regulatory bodies.
- e) We endeavor to take all reasonable steps to resolve concerns and complaints via the procedure. There may be circumstances where resolution proves to be impossible. On those rare occasions, once all stages of our procedure have been exhausted, the Trustees

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Llanycefn, Clynderwen, Pems, SA66 7QJ, Tel: 01437 563640, info@nant-y-cwm.co.uk

reserve the right to treat the matter as closed subject only to further steps that may be open to the complainants indicated at the end of the document.

There are 3 stages to the complaints procedure:

Stage 1 Informal Concerns

We hope that this procedure will help us to listen to and acknowledge your concerns and treat you fairly and consistently. We are committed to treating your concerns seriously and to finding solutions that work for you and others involved.

a) If you have a concern about any aspect of the school, please speak to the person directly responsible for the subject of your concern. Normally this would be:

- Concerns about teaching or aspects of the education – your child's teacher.
- If you are unsure of who to contact please go to the school office.

b) Members of staff will record the reason for any concern as well as any actions arising. Where it is agreed that no further action should be taken the note will state the nature of the concern and "no further action required". You will be asked to sign the note, this will be filed by the Administrator.

c) If concerns remain, the Collegiate at your request, will arrange a facilitated meeting to explore your concern informally.

It is our aim to deal with any issues that arise through our Concerns Procedure, however, if the matter cannot be resolved informally you should raise it as a Formal Complaint by putting it in writing, on the Complaints Form, to the School Governance Team (SGT), also known as the Trustees. You should also use this procedure immediately if the issue is of grave seriousness.

Stage 2 Formal Complaints

The SGT will administer the formal stage of the procedure. They will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days and arrange a Complaint Investigation Meeting.

For the Complaint Investigation Meeting, the SGT will gather all information surrounding the complaint; the Complaints Form; details of the Informal Stage; what was carried out; and any other relevant evidence and information. These will form the basis of a meeting with the defendant or body for them to give their evidence and agreed actions, outcomes and timetables of implementation will be set out.

A nominated administration person will attend the Complaints Investigation Meeting and the meeting with the defendant or body to record discussions and agreed actions, outcomes and timetables of implementation.

Following the investigation, the agreed results will be communicated verbally to the complainant by the nominated member of SGT and confirmed in writing. The letter will be issued within 4 weeks of the Formal Complaints Form being received. If for some reason because of holidays or complexity of the complaint there is a delay, a letter will be sent by the administrator explaining the reason for the delay and giving a revised date.

The verbal and written response will include full reasons for the conclusions reached at the Complaints Meeting and what action, if any, will be taken to address the matter.

The complainant will be advised that if they remain dissatisfied, in order to progress the complaint further, they must notify the administrator in writing within 2 weeks. The complainant will be offered the opportunity of taking the complaint to a Complaints Panel.

Stage 3 Review by Complaints Panel

We hope that Complaints rarely reach this level, if the need arises, an objective and professional Complaints Panel will consider a review hearing.

The role of the panel is to act with and on behalf of the SGT to ensure and verify that the school has acted appropriately, and to judge whether or not there is any need for changes to procedures or policies governing the school. The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship will generally carry this out.

Once a signed request to be referred to the Complaints Panel has been submitted, the administrator will issue a written acknowledgement. This letter will also confirm to the complainant that the Review Panel will hear the complaint within 4 weeks of receiving the complaint. It will also inform the complainant of the right to submit any further documents other than the Formal Complaints Form. Any further information supplied by the complainant must be submitted to the nominated administration person within 1 week of the receipt of this acknowledgement letter. The right to call witnesses to the meeting (which is subject to the approval of the Chair of the review hearing), and the right of the complainant to be accompanied by a companion of his/her choice, will also be explained in this initial letter.

The Review Hearing will look at all the information from both the informal and formal stages of the procedure so far, and any additional information submitted by the complainant or person / body.

The date, time and venue for the meeting of the Review Panel will be confirmed, at least 1 week in advance, to the complainant and all relevant persons who may need to attend. At this time, any additional information submitted by either the complainant or the person/body against whom the complaint is made will be copied to all parties.

Any new information submitted at the Review Panel may result in the deferment of any final decision and the need for the Review Panel to reconvene at a later date.

The Chair of the Review Panel will send a written decision within two weeks of the meeting, to all relevant persons and the SGT.

This letter will explain that this decision is final.

Other Routes of Complaint

Parents of children of school age and above can contact ESTYN direct, quoting our school number 6696008. ESTYN cannot consider complaints about independent schools in the first instance. However, once the School's own Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Procedure has been followed, a parent can send their complaint in writing.

ESTYN
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW
Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW)

CSSIW are keen to hear from users of services about their experiences and any concerns about the services they regulate. When CSSIW receive a concern or complaint about a provider CSSIW look to see whether they are providing a safe service or if they are failing to meet the requirements and conditions of their registration. If CSSIW think they are not doing these things, CSSIW will arrange to carry out an inspection or ensure this aspect is checked at the next scheduled

inspection. CSSIW is not a complaints agency, and cannot deal with complaints linked to individual circumstances. If CSSIW are not able to deal with your particular complaint, CSSIW can direct you to the organisation best placed to help you.

CSSIW
Government Buildings
Picton Terrace
Carmarthen
Sa31 3BT

BOOK LIST

Some recommended reading

Books on Steiner Waldorf Education

- Waldorf Education - C Clouder & M Rawson, Floris
- Education Towards Freedom - F Carlgren, Lanthorn Press
- Educating Through Art - A Nobel, Floris Books
- Waldorf Education in Theory & Practice - R. Blunt, Novalis Press
- The Way of a Child - A C Harwood, R Steiner Press
- The Recovery of Man in Childhood - A C Harwood, R Steiner Press
- School as a Journey - Torin Finser, Anthroposophic Press
- Understanding Waldorf Education – J.Petrash, Floris books

Early Childhood

- You are your Child's First Teacher - Rahima Baldwin,
- Work and Play in Early Childhood - F Jaffke, Floris Books
- The Incarnating Child - J Salter, Hawthorn Press
- The First Three Years of the Child - K König, Floris Books
- A guide to Child Health - M Glöckler & W Goebel, Floris Books

Practical Activities & Festivals

- Birthdays - Celebrations for Everyone - A Druitt, C Fynes-Clinton & M Rowling, Hawthorn Press
- All year Round - A Druitt, C Fynes-Clinton & M Rowling, Hawthorn Press
- Families, Festivals & Food -D Carey & J Large, Hawthorn Press
- Festivals Together - A guide to multicultural celebration, S Fitzjohn, M Weston & J Large, Hawthorn Press
- The Children's Year - S Cooper, C Fynes-Clinton & M Rowling, Hawthorn Press
- Earthwise -C Petrash, Floris Books
- The Christmas Craft Book -T Berger, Floris Books
- The Easter Craft Book -T Berger, Floris Books
- The Harvest Craft Book -T Berger, Floris Books
- Making Dolls –S. Reinckens, Floris Books
- Painting with Children-B Muller, Floris Books

Lifestyle and Child Development

- Lifeways -B Voors, Ed., Hawthorn Press
- Phases of Child Development -Lievegoed, Floris Books
- Who's bringing them up? -M Large, Hawthorn Press
- Free your Child's True Potential- M Rawson, Hodder & Stoughton

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