

Steiner Education at Greenwich Steiner School

Ethos of the School

At Greenwich Steiner School, we are offering an alternative, socially inclusive education in South East London, enabling our community's children to develop a love of learning, the courage to question, and the ability to express their individuality and to make an active contribution to society.

The Greenwich Steiner School welcomes children of all cultural, racial, social and religious backgrounds. We strive to provide an education imbued with a fundamental respect for the individuality of each human being.

The Spiritual Aspect of Steiner Education

The Greenwich Steiner School is affiliated with the international association of Steiner schools, one of the largest school movements in the world. Waldorf Steiner education was founded by Rudolf Steiner in Germany in 1919 as an impulse for cultural renewal after the upheavals of First World War.

The identity of every Steiner school is affected by the spiritual values at the core of Steiner pedagogy. The faculty draws on Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy for its insight into human development and its grounding in the spiritual core of Christianity, without having an ideological or denominational character. There is no wish to impart any particular religion to the students, nor are there devotional services of any kind offered.

Greenwich Steiner School is open to children of all backgrounds, and the curriculum is rich in the teachings of the many great religious traditions in the world. Through their experiences in the classrooms and in the celebration of the seasonal festivals of the year, pupils are enabled to develop understanding and respect for the diverse cultures of the world. Drawing primarily, but not exclusively, on Christian traditions, the festivals endeavor to celebrate our common humanity. Children from many religious and cultural backgrounds have been educated at Greenwich Steiner School, finding their essential spiritual nature uniquely recognized and honored, with their private beliefs respected.

Media Policy

Greenwich Steiner School is dedicated to nurturing children's capacities for imagination, healthy feeling, independent thinking, and active willing. Because we recognize the debilitating effects that media, including television, movies, video games and computers, can have on the development of those capacities, we ask that parents of GSS children withdraw media exposure from the daily experience of the young child. The teachers cannot emphasize more strongly how important this is and will provide recommendations about how to implement changes in this direction.

Computers, the Internet, and email: The foundations of Steiner education rely on the richness of direct experience. The Internet is developing a reality of its own within our culture, but one which is founded on abstraction and isolation. In all the classes, handwriting and personal exposition are emphasized in the curriculum. Using a keyboard consists of mechanical activity which undermines the skills and abilities being developed and nurtured in the primary school. The abstract, rapid, and cursory nature of email also works against the fostering of grammar and composition skills so valued in the classroom. Chat rooms and Instant Messaging simulate true human connection, remove the child from direct experience, and build a false social context, weakening our efforts to promote real, meaningful social relationships. It is therefore strongly recommended that parental guidance and careful vigilance be exercised in monitoring your child's activity on the Internet.

We urge parents to discuss these issues with the child's teacher, especially if the child's experience is at variance with these recommendations. That will allow the parents and teacher to work out a viable approach.

Suggested Reading List for Parents

Family Life

You Are Your Child's First Teacher Rahima Baldwin Dancy
 The Incarnating Child Joan Salter
 Brothers and Sisters..... Karl Konig, MD
 Lifeways: Working with Family Questions Gundrun Davy & Bon Voors

Family Activities

Festivals, Family and Food Diana Carey & Judy Large
 Festivals Together: A Guide to
 Multi-Cultural Celebration Sue Fitzjohn, Judy & Melinda Watson
 All Year Round..... Druitt, Rowling, Fynes-Clinton
 Toymaking with Children..... Freya Jaffke
 The Children's Year Cooper, Fynes-Clinton, and Rowling

Education and Child Development

The Recovery of Man in Childhood A.C. Harwood
 School as a Journey (Class 1 through Class 8) Torin Finser
 Waldorf Education Christopher Clouder & Martyn Rawson
 Work and Play in Early Childhood Freya Jaffke
 The Genius of Play Sally Jenkinson

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