

Norwich Steiner School

Admissions procedure for Kindergarten & School

Reviewed February 2017

School Admissions procedure – February 2017.doc

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in Norwich Steiner School. The following provides a summary of our admissions process and policy. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our administration team and we will be pleased to help.

As the approach to education followed by Steiner Schools differs considerably from that which is offered in the mainstream sector, it is important before applying for a place for a child in this school, that parents understand something of the educational philosophy we follow.

In addition to any research or reading parents may do, we suggest parents attend an Introductory Morning which provides the opportunity to see the school on a normal day and allows an opportunity to look at work done by the children and to talk to some of the teachers.

Admissions procedure

If a parent is interested in sending their child to the school, our policy is as follows:

For the School

1. **Contact** - Phone or email the school and provide some basic details about your child and register your interest in the school. A relevant teacher and/or the school administrator or SENCO may need to speak to you depending upon your child's needs.
2. **Visit & meet** - We usually like to meet the child before they come to the school; this can be quite informal and brief, such as at an introductory morning, but if an introductory morning isn't convenient for you, we may ask you to come in and meet the teacher on another occasion.
3. **Trial** – We offer an initial one-day in the school for your child so they can experience the class they would be joining. This is followed by a 2-week trial, which may be shortened to one week if both parties agree. There is no charge for either trial and if at any point the school or parents wish to end the trial, there is no further obligation by either party to continue. During the trial the school will keep in touch with you as parents to let you know how things are going from the school's perspective.
4. **Reports** - During the trial period, if they haven't already been presented, the school will need a copy of any school or educational reports that are relevant to your child and may need to speak to a teacher from your child's previous school.
5. **Offer of place** – If the school assesses from the trial that it can meet the needs of your child, then he/she will be offered a place.
6. **Application** – At this point you are invited to submit an application form, for which there is a non-refundable administration fee payable of £50.
7. **Start date** - A start date will be agreed and a deposit of £200 (refundable after your child leaves the school) and advance fees are payable.

For the kindergarten

1. **Contact** - Phone or email the school and provide some basic details about your child and register your interest in the kindergarten.
2. **Visit** – we suggest all parents where possible come to both an introductory morning, to see the school, and a kindergarten afternoon, to experience the kindergarten with your child and to speak to the teachers.
3. **Meeting** - Arrange a kindergarten meeting with the teacher.
4. **Trial** - If you and the kindergarten teacher feel your child is ready for the experience, a free trial can then be organised for your child to spend 2 or 3 days or a week in kindergarten (depending upon his or her age). The trial may be extended to a second week if necessary. During this time, the kindergarten teacher may ask the SENCO and a school teacher (if nearly school age) to observe your child. The kindergarten teacher will keep in touch with you about your child's progress and share any relevant observations.
5. **Offer of place** – if the trial is successful for your child and if staff feel this setting can meet his/her educational needs, subject to agreement about a suitable level of attendance, the kindergarten teacher will offer your child a place after you have met the teacher in order to complete a child profile form. At this stage copies of reports from previous settings/schools are required. The minimum attendance is 3 mornings a week and all children age 5 and above are required to attend 5 mornings a week.
6. **Application** – At this point you are invited to submit an application form, for which there is a non-refundable administration fee payable of £50.
7. **Start date** - A start date will be agreed and a deposit of £100 (refundable after your child leaves the school) and advance fees are payable.

Fees

School and Kindergarten fees are payable in advance each term, unless special arrangements with the finance team have been pre-agreed. Once a child is registered as a pupil in the school/kindergarten, a full term's written notice is required if a parent wishes to withdraw the child. This notice period is important to us because it may affect staffing. Fees must be paid in full even if the parent chooses to withdraw the child in advance of this notice period and by applying for a place for your child at this school, you are entering into a contract to pay fees in advance and to provide a term's notice of your intention to take your child out of this school. As a matter of course, Norfolk County Council's attendance team is notified when a pupil leaves the School.

Concessions to full fees

The school is a charity and as such any surplus money each year goes back into improving the education. Currently as the school is young and still developing, it operates more or less on a break-even budget. The school's viability depends upon the majority of parents being able to pay the full fees. To support families on genuinely very low incomes who feel their child/children would really benefit from this education, the school has a concessions policy, and anyone wishing to pay reduced fees must go through an application process. In order to ensure the school remains viable, there are only a certain number of places in each class (including kindergarten) that may be allocated to those paying reduced fees. **Please note that the school is not able process a concessions application until your child has been for a trial in school or kindergarten.**

Decisions about admissions

Decisions to admit children are taken by the relevant teaching group alongside the SENCO and school administrator. Decisions will need to take into account health and safety issues if the child has identified medical needs or behavioural difficulties, and educational, administrative and financial implications if the child has or requires a Statement of Special Educational Needs. If necessary, a risk assessment form will be completed (see Appendix A) to be sure that we can meet the needs of individual children responsibly.

Although we would hope that pupils can enjoy their entire education here, progression from Early Years to Lower School (age 6/7) and from Lower School to Upper School (at age 13/14) is not automatic and an admissions process takes place at each stage.

When considering the application of a pupil, we take into account the following:

- Norwich Steiner School's suitability for her/his age, ability or special educational needs.
- Whether we can make reasonable adjustment to accommodate a particular pupil's needs.
- Whether the acceptance of the applicant is compatible with the efficient education of the children already placed in our school.
- Whether we have the resources to meet his/her needs.

Special Needs

We aim to have a 'healthy constellation' of pupils in each class and not to over-burden any class or teacher with more than a few children needing extra help. Although we especially welcome pupils from other Steiner schools, the normal admission procedure still applies.

In the kindergarten with the emphasis being on play and imitation, the range of learning needs that can be accommodated may be wider than that which is possible in the school; hence the need for a clearly separate admissions procedure for the Lower School; parents should be aware that there is no automatic right of admission to the Lower School from the Kindergarten.

Within the Lower & Upper School, we aim to cater for children who fall within an academic ability range which enables them to benefit from our broad and developing curriculum. Children with mild dyslexia, dyspraxia and related conditions may be accepted, particularly if they attend from a young enough age. Where resources and the curriculum allow, adjustments will be made to accommodate children with medical or Special Educational Needs. In the case of pupils with medical needs, as part of the admissions process a risk assessment will take place as well as consultation with relevant specialists to ensure that an informed decision is made.

Waiting lists

The school (including kindergarten) sometimes has classes which are full and in these cases parents may ask to have their child's name put on a waiting list. The school reserves the right however to take into account the following criteria when filling spaces that may become vacant in any class:

- Whether the child has a sibling already in the school
- Requested level of attendance (if a kindergarten child – higher levels of attendance are better for the kindergarten environment and for the child)
- Any special learning needs
- Whether a parent is able to pay full fees for their child

Appeal against an admissions decision

Parents may be entitled to appeal against a decision made by the School/Kindergarten, if they feel that the decision to decline a place is unfair, in the following situations:

- a) The child already attends Norwich Steiner Kindergarten and has been refused a place in the relevant Lower School class;
- b) The child already has a sibling elsewhere in the school or kindergarten;

In this instance, parents should ask for and follow the Schools Parent's Concerns/Complaints procedure.