POLICY: ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

Policy Owner:	School Management
Approved / Last Reviewed:	July 2026
Approved / Last Reviewed by:	Rob Brown
Next Review:	July 2027
Policy basis	Independent School Standards, Equality Act

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Author	Notes
1.0			Historic
2.0	July 2026	Rob Brown	Reviewed / Revised - Compliance

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Introduction

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 have an understanding of the educational philosophy we follow. In addition to any research or reading parents may do, we encourage parents to attend an introductory morning (School) or open afternoon (Kindergarten). The dates are available on our website.

Range of Educational Need

Norwich Steiner School is able to accept children with a range of learning needs, which may include children with special educational needs and/ or disabilities.

The funding received from school fees is on the basis of each pupil being educated within a combined class of approximately 20 pupils, within a 2-year age range, with one teacher and no classroom assistant. Parents must be aware that if their child joins a class when it is small, that it may grow and change over the months and years that follow, and Steiner strives to be an inclusive school, when accepting new pupils, the context of the class and any additional needs of pupils will be taken into account in any decision making.

The school does not have a special educational needs department or a dedicated nurture/ sensory space available. Therefore, the school is unable to provide a guaranteed quiet supervised space for children who may regularly need time out to re-regulate if/ when they become overwhelmed.

Children who may need regular one-to-one learning support can only be considered for acceptance if they already have a funded EHCP in place and if that support can mostly take place in the context of the classroom. Without an EHCP, parents would need to commit to funding specialist tuition outside of school.

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

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

Reduced Fees/ Concessions to Full Fees

The school is a charity, a social enterprise. Any surplus funds go back into improving the education.

However, to support social diversity and families on genuinely very low incomes who feel their child/ children would really benefit from this education, the school has a concessions policy. Anyone who is

experiencing financial hardship and feels they need a reduced fee, must go through a concessions application process.

The number of pupils the school is able to offer a concession to is limited, as the school's viability depends upon the majority of parents being able to pay the full fees. In classes that are full or nearly full, any remaining places are only offered to those able to pay full fees.

Please see the concessions policy before applying for a reduced fee.

APPEAL AGAINST AN ADMISSIONS DECISION

Decisions to refuse a place to a child are not taken lightly. The teachers must take into account the existing class cohort and the resources of the school. Therefore, the appeal process is not for mere disagreement with the decision made. The aim of the appeal process is to rectify any genuine errors and ensure that children are not unfairly or unnecessarily denied admission.

Those wishing to appeal may do so only in the following circumstances:

a) New information has become available that has significant bearing on concerns raised by the school about accepting the child.

b) Concerns by the parents that there may be misinterpretation of information already provided.

An appeal must be lodged by the parents/ guardians within 7 days of the school communicating its decision not to accept. Appeals should be in writing and include any supporting documentation.

Where possible those considering the appeal will include a member of staff who was not involved in the initial decision. This may not always be possible, as decisions about accepting or refusing children are made by the faculty of teachers.

The school will aim to respond in writing within 7 school/ working days of receiving the appeal. The appeal decision is final and binding. There are no avenues for appeal beyond this point.

The following Appendices outline the Admissions Procedures within the different age groups of the School:

Appendix 1 – Admissions to the kindergarten (age 3-6)

Appendix 2 – Admission to the School (age 6-14)

Appendix 3 – Admissions to the 'Sixth Form' (age 14-19) & NZCSE pathway

Appendix 4 – Related policies

Appendix 1 – Admissions to the kindergarten (age 3-6)

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. Parents should be aware however, that special educational needs that can be met in kindergarten with the higher staff: child ratio, may not be able to be met in school. If there are concerns that this may apply to your child, either during the trial for kindergarten, or in later months if special educational needs become apparent, the kindergarten staff and the Inclusion Coordinator will raise this with you as early as possible so that you can be supported to find an alternative educational setting.

1. **Contact** – We ask that you phone or email the school and provide some basic details about your child and register your interest in the kindergarten.

2. **Visit & Meet -** We usually like to meet the child before they come to the school; this can be quite informal and brief, during a tour. If this is not convenient for you, we may ask you to come in and meet the teacher on another occasion.

3. **Free 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. The number of sessions they are expected to attend over a 2-week period, will depend upon their age. During this time, the kindergarten teacher may ask the Inclusion Coordinator 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.

4. **Provisional Offer of Place** – If the trial is successful and staff conclude this setting can you're your child's educational needs, the kindergarten teacher will make a provisional offer of a place. This is subject to:

    a. Agreement about a suitable level of attendance; the minimum attendance is 3 mornings a week and all children aged 5 and above are required to attend 5 mornings a week.

    b. Receipt of copies of reports from previous settings/ schools.

    c. Submission of a fully completed application form, with declarations completed and signed.

    d. Parents must be aware that new information from reports or the application form may result in a delay or withdrawal of the provisional offer.

    e. For children with a funded EHCP, confirmation of the place will also depend upon Norwich Steiner School being formally named on the child's EHCP.

    f. Payment of a non-refundable administration fee of £50.

5. **Confirmation and Start date** – Once all the above paperwork and checks have been completed, a start date will be agreed. A deposit of £200 and advance fees are required.

Appendix 2 – Admission to the School (age 6-14)

Within the 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 additional needs 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 and we may need to consult, with your permission, relevant external professionals and/ or specialists, to ensure that an informed decision can be made that is in the best interests of your child and ensures their safety and welfare.

1. Contact – We ask that you phone or email the school, providing some basic details about your child and to register your interest in the school. A relevant teacher and/ or the school administrator or Inclusion Coordinator 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, during an Introductory morning or tour, but if this is not convenient for you, we may ask you to come in and meet the teacher on another occasion.

3. Free Trial – For any pupil interested in joining the school we offer an initial one-day in the school for your child so they can experience the class they would be joining. All children will attend a 2-week free trial in the school, which can either continue on from the taster day, or be arranged for a time that is more suitable for your family. 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. If at any point the school or parents wish to end the trial, there is no further obligation by either party to continue. It may be that if there is a high level of interest or a waiting list, that the school proposes a one week trial instead. This will be at the discretion of the Class Teacher/Guardian and would need to be agreed upon by the family as well.

4. Reports - During the trial period, if they haven't already been presented, the parents will submit a copy of any school or educational or psychological/ medical reports that are relevant to the child. The school will arrange a telephone conversation with a teacher/Inclusion Coordinator from the child's previous school.

5. Provisional Offer of place – If the school decides to accept the child, then they will be provisionally offered a place. Confirmation of this offer is subject to:

    a. Receipt of copies of reports from previous settings/ schools and any educational report from specialists that may be available.

    b. Submission of a fully completed application form, with declarations completed and signed.

    c. Parents must be aware that new information from reports or the application form may result in a delay or withdrawal of the provisional offer.

    d. For children with a funded EHCP, confirmation of the place will also depend upon Norwich Steiner School being formally named on the child's EHCP.

    e. Payment of a non-refundable administration fee of £50.

6. **Confirmation and Start date** – Once all the above paperwork and checks have been completed, a start date will be agreed. A deposit of £200 and advance fees are required.

Appendix 3 – Admissions to the 'Sixth Form' & NZCSE pathway (age 14-19)

All pupils, including those already in the school, are required to formally apply for the final 3-4 years of school. As our classes are combined, the school may decide that it is in the best interests of the class to start the certificate earlier (ages 14-16) or later (ages 15-17). The decision, taken by the school, is based on a number of factors including what proportion of the class are in the older/ younger age group.

The first three points of the admissions process (Contact, Visit, Free trial) as outlined for the school (age 6-14) on page 4 above apply to new applicants, as well as the additional requirements expected of existing students.

The rationale for the application process and how it differs for existing pupils and those not currently enrolled in the school, is explained below.

a) About the NZCSE pathway & why existing pupils must reapply

The New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE) is a broad-based curriculum. This means that pupils need to be able and willing to engage in subjects across the curriculum, including academic, creative and physical. It is important that the school only accepts pupils into the final 3/ 4 years of school if it is confident the pupils embarking on the NZCSE are likely to succeed.

There is also a requirement within both the NZCSE and the ethos of the school, that pupils on the NZCSE pathway are expected to participate in all aspects of school life. This includes the festivals, all subject lessons, helping younger children, as well as adhering to standards of behaviour appropriate to them as the role models of the younger children in the school.

Existing pupils wishing to stay in the school must make an active choice and apply if they wish to be considered for the NZCSE programme.

The school understands there may occasionally be pupils who are willing and able to fully participate, and who contribute to the life of the school positively, but who may struggle to meet the standards of the certificate across the subjects, perhaps due to health limitations or a learning disability. In these circumstances, school, working closely with parents and the pupil themselves will provide differentiated work.

In certain circumstances, and through separate understanding and agreement, these pupils may remain in or join the school.

b) Application/ re-application) process

1. Portfolio of work

For existing pupils:

During the second half of the Spring term, leading up to Easter (when a class is a combined class 8/9, age 13-15), all pupils will be expected to demonstrate they are able to make the effort to work with commitment when in school and to be willing to self-motivate, regardless of their individual personal challenges.

Each pupil, as part of the application process, will be required to submit three pieces of work across the breadth of the curriculum. These are all to be produced in lesson time within the context of the classroom. We can only accept pupils who demonstrate they are able to learn within the context of their class, and who have behaviour that allows others to learn.

The minimum work to be submitted will include:

- A piece of Mathematics or Science related work that demonstrates numerical skills
- A demonstration of literacy competency/ effort
- A third area of work such as arts/ crafts.

For pupils wishing to join at age 14 or older:

However, with regards to the expectations, the quantity and quality will be appropriate to the 2-week trial, plus evidence of engagement across all subject areas during the trial.

2. Statement of application by the pupil

For existing pupils:

Each pupil will also be asked to complete a handwritten statement of application, **which outlines why they wish to continue their education at Norwich Steiner School.** Points they may wish to consider are:

- Areas of strength
- Areas for continued development
- How they will contribute to the life of the school

For pupils wishing to join at age 14 or older:

The above process applies, but the written statement of application should only be written and submitted at the end of, or in the weeks following the trial. Any application letter written or submitted before or in the early part of the trial, will not be accepted. This is because the school wishes for any letter of application to be written based on a lived experience of what the school is.

3. Statement of application from the parent/s

For existing pupils & those wishing to join at age 14 or older:

We also ask that parents write a letter outlining their reasons for their child's education in the school. You may wish to include:

- How you will support your child during the Certificate years
- Ways in which you uphold the Steiner ethos for your child outside of school time
- Your understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of this method of assessment and certification.
- How you will support the teachers of your child

For pupils wishing to join at age 14 or older:

As above.

However, parents of children who are trialling should wait until the end of their child's trial to ensure their letter of application is informed by their child's experience in the school.

New parents must also complete a formal Application Form at the end of the two-week trial.

4. A review of behaviour and attendance.

For existing pupils:

We will review the behaviour log for each pupil for evidence of a willingness and ability to demonstrate excellent behaviour in response to feedback from teachers and support put in place by the school.

Where there is concern that behaviour is impacting on the education of the class and/ or the individual, ***if*** it has not already been raised with parents and pupils, this will be done by the start of the summer term. The pupil will be given 6 weeks to demonstrate consistently improved behaviour.

A pupil with poor behaviour that improves in this period, may be provisionally accepted into upper school (subject to 1, 2 & 3 above being satisfactory), but if improved behaviour is not sustained, their place will be withdrawn.

For pupils wishing to join at age 14 or older:

If the school has concerns about behaviour, pupils wishing to join the school at this age are likely not to be accepted.

If there are likely to be attendance issues due to an existing/ known condition or SEND, the school requires parents to disclose this in advance.

Failure to disclose any relevant information at the application stage may lead to the school ceasing a placement after the pupil has started.

5. How a decision will be made

A pupil **is likely to be** accepted into the school and for the NZCSE programme if the standards of the school, as listed below are satisfactorily met:

- Portfolio of work
- Pupil letter of application
- Parent letter of application
- Behaviour and attendance

A pupil **may not be accepted** if any of the above are not satisfactory.

The decision will be made within the upper school faculty.

Appendix 4 – Related policies

- Attendance policy
- Behaviour & Code of Conduct policy
- SEND policy
- Concessions/Reduced fees policy

MONITORING, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE

This policy belongs to Norwich Steiner School, which is the operational name for the Charity the Norfolk Initiative Steiner School, registered charity number 1099377, company number 4815492

Compliance is monitored through internal audits, policy review as part of self-evaluation, and annual reporting to Trustees on concessions awarded, value, and any compliance issues.