POLICY: WHOLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

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INTRODUCTION

Norwich Steiner School follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum, as outlined in the publication edited by Avison & Rawson: "The Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum". Norwich Steiner School requires all teachers to use this text as a standard reference for lesson planning.

The Steiner-Waldorf curriculum puts a priority on the relationship of the learning material to the human being, subjects being purposely set in inter-disciplinary contexts wherever possible. In addition, the school aims to teach subject matter through a phenomenological or experiential methodology – that is, from observation of, and personal involvement with, phenomena leading to concept (inductive), rather than from presentation or description of the concept to confirmation of examples of that concept (deductive). This educational approach, whilst generally more time-consuming for teachers, is also a great source of inspiration for them in working to facilitate the emergence of healthy young humans who are conscious of their own uniqueness, their own skills and abilities and who have a healthy orientation to the world that they are moving into.

Norwich Steiner School operates a two-year age group combined class system and has used this curriculum policy to:

- Outline our understanding and experience of child development in combined classes through the different ages; and
- Describe how we work with child development in a combined class through use of the curriculum.

General Principles of the Education Offered

Kindergarten

In the Steiner Early Years approach, we provide time and space for the natural, unforced development of key skills as a basis for literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional competence; and a warm and secure learning environment is created where the qualities of childhood are nurtured.

Children enter the kindergarten between the ages of approximately 3¼- 6½ years. **The Framework of Kindergarten Education policy** provides a description of the curriculum for this entire age group.

Lower School

Once children join Lower school they have a class teacher who will generally stay with them right through to the end of class 7/8. The first part of each day is spent in 'main lesson', weaving together physical, rhythmic, musical, practical and artistic activities with oral and written work. Main lessons are taught in three-to-four-week subject blocks around a curriculum topic, such as literacy, numeracy, geography or history.

Lower school pupils also have subject lessons: French, Spanish and/or German (taught initially through games, songs and poems), music, drama, art, painting, handwork, modelling (with clay or beeswax), or form drawing, and later gardening, woodwork, games, religion and science.

Games and movement – Lower School

Games and movement form a regular part of the Lower School curriculum and develop progressively in response to the age and developmental stage of the pupils. Through imaginative games, rhythmic movement, physical challenges and increasingly structured individual and team activities, pupils develop coordination, balance, agility, spatial awareness, stamina and physical confidence.

Games also provide important opportunities to learn with others. Pupils practise cooperation, communication, fair play and respect for rules, while learning to manage success and disappointment and to take increasing responsibility for their own and others' safety.

As pupils progress through the Lower School, activities become more complex and may include running, athletics, cross-country, racket activities, orienteering and a range of team and large-group games. Teaching takes account of pupils' differing experience, confidence and physical development, enabling each child to participate meaningfully and experience appropriate challenge.

Upper school

The Main Lesson structure continues, but in upper school the single teacher holding the class, is replaced by a group of specialist teachers and the structure of some subject lessons change. So instead of having, for example, one afternoon of handwork a week for the whole year and one of woodwork, classes may have textiles lessons two afternoons a week for one term and woodwork in the next term, thus allowing a sense of immersion.

Upper school pupils also benefit from visiting and peripatetic teachers who bring skills such as basket-making, surveying and projective geometry, as well as experiencing different teachers for each main lesson block.

In the final year of the upper school, all pupils engage in the process of completing a substantial project and choose a minimum of three subject specialisms to study in depth.

Games and movement – Upper School

Games and movement continue throughout the Upper School, supporting physical fitness, coordination, confidence and wellbeing. Through individual challenges, team games and outdoor activities, pupils develop cooperation, tactical awareness, perseverance, fair play and responsibility for their own and others' safety. Activities are adapted to the age, capabilities and needs of each group and may include athletics, cross-country running, orienteering, racket sports and a range of team games.

Leadership is developed progressively through practical activity, group work and opportunities to plan and lead activities for others. Pupils learn to communicate clearly, organise resources, make decisions, respond to problems and support the safe and inclusive participation of a group. In the later Upper School, leadership activities may contribute evidence towards relevant NZCSE learning outcomes and the credits available within a pupil's individual programme

CHILD DEVELOPMENT & THE CURRICULUM THROUGH THE SCHOOL

Kindergarten 3-5 year-olds

We also follow the **Early Years Foundation Stage Framework** delivering the learning and development requirements for our 3–5-year-olds though our Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Curriculum. We deliver the 7 areas of learning and development in order that children may attain all their early learning goals (ELGs). We have been granted exemptions and modifications in some areas of the educational programs and the assessment arrangements, in order to preserve the integrity of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum and practice. (SEE SEPARATE LIST OF EXEMPTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS).

Kindergarten 5 -6-year-olds

During their final year in kindergarten the 5- and 6-year-olds start to have more responsibility and each works on longer handwork projects in preparation for class one. By the time they are 5 they are attending five mornings a week and on Fridays, activities include more challenging activities such as movement games and skipping.

The curriculum for the 5- and 6-year-olds in kindergarten is differentiated, with planned, structured activities designed to continue to support their development and to extend their learning and skills, taking into account their individual needs and interests (including those with an EHCP or who are identified as having SEN).

We work with physical co-ordination and integration, social and emotional relationships, imagination and what ifs (scientific enquiry) and creativity.

Tasks and focus are extended, independence, confidence and resilience continue to be developed as the children become physically aware and grounded, extend their own learning through exploration and discovery, become more articulate and self-regulating, empathetic and resilient.

As they reach this age their play changes and becomes more language based. This is taken into account in planning and is supported with appropriate activities and stories.

Transition to class 1 demands certain skills and readiness for a curriculum of formal learning. In order to ascertain the readiness of a child we assess maturity of movement, speech, drawing skills, social and emotional development, physical health and development. We consider what a child needs to be able to do in order to fully access the curriculum in class 1.

We use the class one readiness checklist throughout the sun child year to assess school readiness (see separate document), assess physical maturity through movement games, and provide a more challenging range of project work suitable for the 5- and 6-year-old child throughout their final year. We also increasingly work on letter/word recognition and numbers. On Fridays, when the children aged 5+ join us, we also ask them to do a recall ring time and a recall story based upon what they have learnt over the previous week.

We also hold a dedicated transition group afternoon once a week in the summer term where children moving into Class 1 stretch and consolidate their practical and social skills, and form a distinctive group within the kindergarten.

The graduation to class 1 child at the end of the summer term is marked by a special ceremony.

Class 1 (Juniper)

Building on the good habits inherited from kindergarten, the Class 1 curriculum forms a framework for the children to find their place within lower school, working with their new teacher and their peers, preparing to begin a new journey of learning, and paving the way for combining class one and two the following year.

Learning across all subjects continues to be brought artistically, as well as through many and varied rhythmic activities. However, in Class 1, and throughout lower school, subjects such as Science and

Geography are worked with in some depth, through an experiential rather than a didactic approach.

The Class 1 curriculum derives much of its content from fairy tales and nature stories, drawing on, as well as developing the children's imagination as the class begins to approach the exciting new challenges of reading and writing.

Main lesson blocks of numeracy, literacy, form drawing and home surrounds, which run through the whole of the first year, are taught in alternation with one another, allowing the child to 'sleep' on what they have learnt and embed it in extra main lessons, before coming back to continue to deepen their learning. Other subjects such as art, music, nature, PSHE, RE and handwork are taught mainly by the class teacher at this stage, though the class may also have the benefit of a specialist handwork teacher, for instance, as well as native speakers for foreign languages.

The breathing rhythm of the main lesson (which commences in class 1) supports the continuing development of good habits, gross and fine motor skills plus practical skills such as how to hold a pencil. Life skills and social skills are enhanced through fables and saint stories.

During the autumn term the teacher revisits the class 1 curriculum, bringing it for the first time to the younger children while at the same time ensuring that the older children, through recall, are deepening and consolidating their learning and skills as well as introducing new stories and activities.

For example, in a literacy main lesson, the younger, Class 1 children might work on the assimilation of the written alphabet as they move towards an understanding of basic phonics, while the older children may concurrently be engaged in some alliterative writing activities based on the particular letters that their younger peers are learning about. There is much scope here for useful partner work, as well as opportunities for the Class 2 children to revisit aspects of literacy that they may still find difficult.

Similarly, in a numeracy main lesson, the older children might teach the younger ones a card game such as clock patience, and in doing so consolidate their own skills, as well as developing an increased sense of responsibility.

Combined class adjustments - Throughout the year, teachers gently prepare the class to share a new journey of learning in paving the way for welcoming the younger children who combine with this group the following year. There is an emphasis on this in the last term, when the kindergarten children who will form the new class 1 join the existing class 1 for activities including stories, skipping and counting, so preparing for the inter-weaving of the two ages in September. The existing class 1 look forward to welcoming their new peers and have responsibility with the teacher for absorbing and assisting the younger group.

Summary of typical themes for Class 1 main lesson blocks: Form drawing, numeracy (counting, number bonds), literacy (Russian fairy stories, fables and saint stories) and nature stories.

Class 2/3 (Cedar)

The class 2 curriculum is generally introduced in the spring term (this timing of bringing the older class's content is usually employed throughout lower school) though Class 1 content continues to be blended with the class 2 curriculum. In this term the fables of the class 2 curriculum begin to replace

the fairy tales of the class 1 and kindergarten curricula. Class 1 content, e.g. learning new letters, continues to be taught to the younger children through the use of stories, but after Christmas, using fables to do so rather than fairy tales.

Children also continue to learn the quality of numbers through counting games and activities. This provides a solid foundation on which to build deeper numeracy skills. Through this approach to literacy and numeracy the class 1/2 children will continue to develop an enthusiasm and love for learning as well as ensuring that academic learning goals are well established.

Class 2/3 starts the year with the comedy of fables and the moral aspiration shown by the stories of the saints, and ends by drawing on various tales from Hebrew Scriptures, particularly the Book of Genesis, that meet the child's growing sense of leaving behind the relative innocence that they have so far known through kindergarten up until now, as they begin to ask more searching questions of their teachers and parents. For example, the story of Adam and Eve, and their expulsion from Eden, or the story of Abraham and Isaac and his near sacrifice by his father address moral questions – right and wrong, justice, etc. that are becoming more pressing for the children at this stage of their development. Such narratives also provide rich content for imaginative work in literacy.

Class 2/3 children have more capacity for larger quantities and longer periods of work. Children of this age are developing an emergent strong memory which teachers develop and work with by the recitation and memorizing of longer poems, stories with more challenging moral content, consciously thought through rhythmic movement and regular practices, in various forms, of the 4 processes of numeracy.

Wider perspectives are introduced through a local Geography main lesson block, encouraging the children to look at the world beyond school and the home environment. Insight into the human condition is also gained through the Man & Animal main lesson block, where by studying the archetypal characteristics of animals, the students can look to see how they correspond to different aspects of the human being, while studying how specialized animals can be – in contrast to humanity's more generalized skills and practices.

At this age, classes will begin their games education, including imaginative and cooperative games, rhythm, coordination, spatial awareness and enjoyment of movement.

Summary of typical themes for Class 2/3 main lesson blocks: Alternating numeracy (four processes, complex sums, long division and multiplication) and literacy, with the themes of time, farming, measurement, old testament, building, trades & occupations.

Class 4/5 (Apple)

The narratives central to this stage of the curriculum move from the external power of the one God of the Hebrew scriptures, through the earthly authorities of the Prophet and the King, right through to the competing gods of Norse mythology. This movement within the curriculum entails departing from the certainty of what is right and wrong towards the questioning of authority exemplified by the trickster god Loki, for example. This conflict and questioning of authority supports the inner development of the child, who is at this stage starting, perhaps for the first time, to question the authority of those around him/her. Working through the rich, vibrant and opulent content of curriculum allows for a multi-faceted look at the world that the child is living in, with the underlying principle being that there are many different ways to make sense of it.

In numeracy, with the introduction of fractions, there is a related continuation of the theme of breaking apart the whole into parts (the one God to many gods) while across the curriculum there is plenty of rigour to balance this new multiplicity; form drawing is no longer free, but becomes rule-based and more formal, based on Hiberno-Saxon knotwork and interweave.

Class 4/5 sees the movement of the class toward the relatively harmonious heart of childhood, as the challenges of adolescence approach in the coming years.

The class 4 curriculum continues with the study and enacting of Norse myths, ending with the Twilight of the gods at the final battle of Ragnarök, while the beginning of Class 5 content inaugurates a new beginning with creation stories drawn from middle-eastern mythology, such as the voyage of Manu, the sinking of Atlantis as well as working with stories drawn from Indian mythology.

Class 5 can be seen as the middle of childhood, with a strong emphasis on narratives of journey and transformational encounter (Orpheus and Eurydice, The 12 Labours of Herakles). Such stories help to address the changes that the class will soon be going through, if not already experiencing. Literacy moves from the stories of not to be trusted, trickster type gods and characters, through to the heroes and heroines of Greek mythology and, in the summer term, the celebration of the beauty and striving of humanity through participation with other Steiner schools in a re-enactment of the original Greek Olympics.

By this time, the class will be working in much greater detail with the stories that the teacher brings. Their creative retelling of the various narratives will incorporate a greater awareness of grammar, more descriptive and colourful use of language, and a deeper identification between the tribulations of the characters in the stories with the children's own experience.

Coinciding with the various changes that are imminent in the children during this time, and providing a different, scientific perspective on them, is the beginning of the study of Botany – beginning by the collecting and artistic analysis of locally found mushroom and fungi in the autumn, through to studies of the flower in the summer. Metamorphosis of the caterpillar to the cocoon to the butterfly are all studied in Class 4/5.

In Games lessons, they are ready for activities which require increasing control, confidence and cooperation; following shared rules and participating as part of a group.

Summary of typical themes for Class 4/5 main lesson blocks: Botany, Norse myths, Geometry, numeracy, Indian mythology, UK geography, Persia, Greek mythology

Class 6/7 (Linden)

At around this age, pupils increasingly seek to understand causes and consequences and to experience the world as ordered by comprehensible laws and relationships. They are becoming more firmly grounded in the physical world and increasingly aware that their own actions have effects. Socially, this can be accompanied by a testing of boundaries, authority and one another, alongside a growing need for clear structures, fairness and consistency.

The Class 6 curriculum meets these developments in a number of complementary ways. In history, the curriculum moves from the world of Ancient Greece into Roman history and the transition from

mythic narrative towards increasingly documented historical events. The growth of Rome introduces pupils to a civilisation characterised by law, engineering, administration, military organisation and an exceptionally strong sense of structure. The rise of Christianity, the transformation and eventual fall of the Western Roman Empire, and the emergence of medieval Europe then lead into studies of Islam, feudal society, monasteries and religious life, chivalry and the Crusades. These studies allow pupils to encounter contrasting forms of authority, belief, social order and cultural exchange, while beginning to recognise more clearly the causal relationships between historical events.

This increasing interest in causality is also met through the introduction of Physics, where pupils carefully observe phenomena before seeking explanations for what they have experienced. Acoustics, optics, heat, magnetism and electricity may all be explored phenomenologically. In Geology and Mineralogy, attention turns towards the solidity and structure of the earth itself.

Mathematics similarly develops greater precision and practical application. Business mathematics introduces percentages and their use in everyday economic life, while work with number patterns and introductory algebraic thinking prepares the ground for later algebra. Geometry moves from freehand drawing towards accurate constructions made with compass and straightedge, requiring care, accuracy and an understanding of geometrical law.

Geography expands the pupils' awareness of Europe and the wider world, exploring the relationship between landscape, climate, natural resources and human activity. English work increasingly develops pupils' ability to write accurately and objectively, alongside continued imaginative and narrative writing. Debate, discussion and the presentation of differing points of view can provide constructive forms through which pupils learn to express and substantiate their increasingly independent opinions.

At this age, Games lessons begin to bring greater physical challenge and require more stamina. They begin to practice skill development and the introduction of more structured team and individual activities. Lessons also start to bring in more tactical understanding in team games. There is a focus on perseverance, responsibility, self-management and there will be more independent outdoor activities.

Summary of typical themes for Class 6/7 main lesson blocks: Roman foundation narratives and the transition from myth to history; Roman history; the rise of Christianity and the transformation and fall of the Western Roman Empire; Islam and medieval history, including the Crusades; European and world geography; Geology and Mineralogy; Physics (including acoustics, optics, heat, magnetism and electricity); Mathematics (business maths and percentages, number patterns and introductory algebraic thinking, Pythagorean theorem and precise geometric construction).

Class 8/9 (Ash)

The pupils of class 8/9 are fully into adolescence – they are taking their first steps into adulthood. They often seem to be in the midst of psychological upheaval, which is disorientating and somehow off-balance. Their inner life becomes increasingly introspective and self-centred, needing refocusing or objective orientation from the adults around them. During adolescence children are developing powers of independent judgement, striving towards truth, becoming more analytical and starting to take a more self-determined approach to learning.

In summary they are:

- Finding their own voice
- Beginning to see how knowledge makes one capable of forming appropriate judgements
- Learning how forming judgements leads to new questions.

To support these developmental and educational needs, teachers create opportunities through the curriculum for observing from contrasting angles and different perspectives. For example, in English, different styles e.g., epic, descriptive, lyric, dramatic can be used to create different perspectives and to 'try on' different emotions. Recordings of news, podcasts and real world examples may also be brought.

The history curriculum, with studies of revolutions, usually with emphasis on the Industrial revolution and the wider consequences of it – poverty, pollution and the era of capitalism for example. This leads on to further studies of the Russian revolution, communism and the events that led up to the First World War, all of which provide rich ground for exploring different points of view and perspectives.

In geography, a study of the rhythm and order of weather systems, and yet their inherent unpredictability, finds a resonance with the inner chaos of their own emotions.

Geometry in the maths curriculum includes "Patterns in number" which helps the students develop their own insights into geometry and geometrical proofs. Quadratic equations and measurements and calculations of surface and volumes provide good practice in formal, logical thinking.

In Biology, pupils go from learning about the human skeleton, muscular system and sense organs, to looking much further into the shape and function of the bones.

Summary of typical themes for Class 8/9 main lesson blocks: English (poetry, short story, civil rights movement), textiles, science, drama, maths (pattern in number), history of art, history (utopian thinking), inventions in physics (steam, calculator, electricity) and photography.

Class 10/11 (Rowan)

Class 10/11 pupils come into the year seeking insight – they want to know how we know what we know, and how facts relate to them personally. They experience their ego strongly, often applying harsh judgements of sympathy or antipathy, and they continue to question adults. There is often a sense of imprisonment or of a deep pain to be endured, setting in place a threshold to be negotiated and crossed. If done so successfully it can be truly transformative. Finding balance between their inner and outer life is key.

By the end of class 10 and moving into class 11, whilst still quite subjective and not able to make independent judgments, the emerging adults are not so reactionary as previously and are less emotive. They are starting to develop intellect and the ability to reason; their inner life is beginning to develop as they are becoming increasingly able to look at themselves and move towards a greater level of objectivity and self-knowledge.

Key learning objectives for this age group includes pupils beginning to develop the following skills:

- Achieve objectivity and clarity in thinking
- Draw conclusions logically and causally
- Be able to form common sense judgements
- Formulate concepts (e.g., trigonometry)
- Work with accuracy and apply what they have learned (e.g., Surveying)
- Take increasing responsibility for their own work and behaviour
- Form opinions, explain and justify them (e.g., point of view essays in English)

To support these objectives, pupils in class 10/11 typically study modern history and develop an understanding of the forces that have shaped (and continue to shape) Europe and the world that we live in. This includes aspects such as nationalism, industrialisation, capitalism, communism, socialism…and how these can and have manifested in war. From exploring the experiences of both the perpetrators and the victims, helps students to work with understanding (and sympathy) and in the development of an ability to empathise with those caught in war.

Art History covers Early Twentieth Century art, specifically how the first World War and the rise of Communism and Fascism influenced European artists and led to Modernism. Also covered: Art Analysis, looking at different depictions of war through the centuries from the Thirty Years War in the Seventeenth century, to the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s

Summary of typical themes for Class 10/11 main lesson blocks: Algebra, projective geometry, the story of Parzival, embryology, atomic theory, chemical elements, art history

The Duke of Edinburgh Award

During the 2026–27 academic year, eligible Upper School pupils may have the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award while Norwich Steiner School remains a licensed centre. The programme complements the wider curriculum through volunteering, physical activity, skills development and expedition work, encouraging independence, resilience, teamwork and service to others. Availability is subject to the school's current licence, staffing and programme arrangements.

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.