

Upper School Curriculum Policy

(Last reviewed May 2023, last revised May 2023)

Introduction

Cardiff Steiner School endeavours to work with Rudolf Steiner's curriculum indications and insights into child and young people's development in a way that remains true to his indications but also meets the needs of today's students. In the Upper School a fully developed curriculum along Waldorf lines is possible because of the implementation of the Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE), an international qualification fully based on the Steiner educational curriculum.

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.

Cardiff Steiner School operates a two-year age group combined class system and includes in this curriculum policy an outline of our understanding and experience of child and young person's development in combined classes through the different ages; and describe how we work with this in a combined class through use of the curriculum.

General Principles of the Education Offered in 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. Upper school students also benefit from visiting and peripatetic teachers who bring

skills, such as surveying, projective geometry and atomic theory, as well as experiencing different teachers for each main lesson block.

In the final year of the Upper School all students undertake a major yearlong independent project and record and present their findings in a fully referenced, published document and formally presented viva voce to a public audience (see more on page 6).

The Main Lesson

A unique feature of Steiner Waldorf education is the Main Lesson, taught throughout the school from Class 1 to Class 12. A wide variety of Curriculum subjects are taken and developed for two hours every day for a period of three or four weeks. This provides an opportunity to explore a subject in depth and allow the students to experience it in a variety of ways. The format and emphasis of the Main Lesson structure will vary depending on the age of the students.

In the Upper School, for instance, the teacher may review the previous day's work and open areas of discussion that will engage the students' thinking; in presenting the new material in an artistic and imaginative manner, the students' feelings will be touched; in the setting of a variety of individual or group assignments arising out of the presentation students' activity is motivated.

Child/Young Person's Development & the Curriculum through Upper School

Class 8/9

The students of class 8/9 are fully into adolescence – they are 'emerging adults'. 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.

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 French Revolution, all of which provide rich ground for exploring different points of view and perspectives. Biographical, and geographical study of the impact European explorers had on indigenous people, allows the students to look at different cultures and different cultural perspectives.

Underlying these studies are themes of how to 'be' without dominating, but instead accepting, others. 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, students go from learning about the human skeleton, muscular system and sense organs, to looking much further into the shape and function of the bones.

Class 9/10

The rich and colourful curriculum of class 9 gradually transforms to incorporate the 'polarities' that form the basis of the class 10 curriculum.

At this age, students are developing their powers of independent judgement but their 'thinking' and 'feeling' worlds continue to be separated. This often results in opinions being formed with no foundation and they tend to see the world in very 'black and white' terms. Students of this age see parents as good or bad, teachers as right or wrong, and make judgments that are often based upon an emotional response or on what they have heard other adults that they look up to say. They may also explore ideas and dreams about possible futures for themselves. Emotionally, the students are also themselves in a place of polarity, being either very 'up' or 'down'.

The educational focus shifts to supporting the development of self-discipline, tenacity, organisation, taking responsibility for one's actions and accepting the consequences of one's

behaviour. Students of this age welcome clarity of explanation, kindness from adults and humour. 9 The curriculum reaches back to the birth of consciousness and the dawning of humanity, to a time before things were written down or recorded. Everything they have 'dreamed through' in lower school right from fairy tales and fables, to the revolutions of modern history, they now go back in time and 'think through'.

In geography for example, the world is looked at in a very solid physical way, by going into the earth's inner core, looking right through at its layers and the movement of the surface layers and the resultant earthquakes and volcanoes.

Class 10/11

Class 10/11 students 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 students 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, students 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.

At this stage in the school, most students in the school will enrol to study for the New Zealand Certificate of Steiner Education (NZCSE), which at Level 1 offers a full and broad learning outcomes based on the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. The NZCSE is structured so that students are expected to engage in the full breadth of the curriculum. The only subject students may opt-out of at level 1, are Modern Foreign Language.

Class 11/12

Students of Class 11/12, as young adults start to develop a deep inner life as well as a maturing intellect. They attempt to synthesise their own insights with what they see in the outside world. They are challenged to find their own way, to make decisions and to consider the full consequences of their actions. In support of this, the underlying themes for class 11 and 12 are about morality and thinking, the development of an understanding that whilst it's all very well to be clever, there has to be a thread of morality coming through in order to be of service to others.

The classic Main Lesson text for this year group is that of Parzifal, whereby the knight learns through a long journey (a search for the Grail) that it's not enough to know what to do, that you have to be informed by feeling and then be prepared to make a decision: "What is the right thing for me to do?"

These themes of morality, decision making and the need for balance in the outer and inner aspects of life, run through many disciplines in the school whether in Bothmer movement, the arts or Language. For example, in Bothmer movement the Walk in Symmetry is a physical expression of how we need to walk through life acknowledging the different points of view, in search of a path that is straight and true.

Educational goals create opportunities for students to:

- Attain objectivity in feelings
- Develop social responsibility
- Increased capacity to form judgements and/or making consequential decisions

• Promote independent enquiry and self-directed tasks.

Class 12/13

Class 12/13 students are poised on a great threshold, between the framework of school and their entrance onto the world stage. They grapple with their ever-strengthening individuality on the one hand, and the wish to live in a community on the other. As their vision broadens and expands, their thinking deepens. They now seek an overview in which they can reconcile and synthesise these two forces.

In their final year of school, everything starts to come together. There is a noticeable integration of the students' learning journey as they start to be able to make independent and objective judgments. They start to ask questions: "What's my task in the world? What is my path?"

Although in the final year of school, students use their developing judgement and make choices about what skills and subjects they wish to specialise in, there are a number of compulsory areas of study. These 'core' subjects help to ensure ongoing social cohesion within the class, as well as bringing a sense of conclusion to their school-based education. Examples of this include main lesson blocks such as a study of Human biological evolution, current political affairs and philosophy.

Students in Class 12/13 undertake a major yearlong independent project demonstrating the ability to plan, organise, research, produce, record and present their findings to meet a high level of public and educational expectation. Final projects can take any form, from producing a music cd, to crafting a musical instrument, or writing an extended research essay on a topic of interest but must include a fully referenced, published document and is formally presented viva voce to a public audience. It is a significant demonstration of self-directed, independent, responsible learning, and the strength of this portfolio can give students a unique and distinctive edge in gaining access to competitive industries or university courses.

Students are given guidance in choosing their topics; they are free to choose whatever they like in project range in depth and breadth according to individual interest, but there needs to be enough scope for in-depth research and development, and interest needs to be sustained for the whole year. Each student then works with a project supervisor who advises and sets regular deadlines for each stage of development to help the student stay on track and to manage the available time.

Curriculum in the Upper School

The Upper School programme is designed to give the students a foundation in a broad range of subjects, to develop practical and study skills and to encourage initiative and independence in learning.

The timetable is largely organised in two-hour periods each day, with the intention that subjects are taught in intensive blocks that change every 3 - 4 weeks. Afternoon blocks are slightly shorter. In Classes 8/9, 9/10 and 10 and 10/11 there is a course of compulsory Main Lessons for all students throughout the year, supported by regular weekly lessons in Spanish, Games/PE, Bothmer, Art, Handwork, Jewellery Making, Music, English and Maths.

Midway through Class 10/11, students are consulted and advised about their hopes and plans for the future. We refer to what they tell us, as well as our own knowledge and experience, in our planning for Classes 11/12 and 12/13. There is an increasing number of elective and supplementary lessons in these years, so that students can begin to focus on their areas of particular interest. A core of compulsory Main Lessons continue. In Class 11/12 the students may choose up to four subjects as electives to study in depth, supplementary to the core areas. In Class 12/13 this focuses to three subjects.

In Classes 10/11, 11/12 and 12/13, we offer assessment and certification through the NZCSE at levels 1, 2 and 3. The programme for each year depends on demand, space, individual students' needs, curriculum development, facilities and availability of staff.

In Science classes including Physics, Chemistry and Biology, students and teachers share their observations and explore questions that arise from these discussions. Theories are developed based on empirical data that posit possible causes and influencing factors. Finally conclusions are reached which are then compared to accepted scientific theory. By engaging in the essential process of scientific inquiry for themselves, students grow confidence in their abilities to observe, question and reason. This experiential approach provides a context for learning, letting students see how inquiry leads effectively to knowledge, and how they can engage in the exploration of the world around them.

As primary research, hands-on experimentation and testing are enhanced through local fieldwork and educational trips to the natural habitats and environments of the phenomena being studied. Biology, botany, marine science, wildlife, ecology, surveying, chemistry,

anatomy, earth science, climatology, zoology, physics and life sciences are all part of the Upper School sciences curriculum.

Steiner Education approaches the study of **Mathematics** as a form of flexible thinking and reasoning. Students don't just learn about maths, they learn the historical contexts of mathematical theories and they learn about the innovative mathematician founders, theoreticians and practitioners who developed the field as we know it today. They study the politics behind the acceptance of those theories and may discuss and analyse competing theories of that mathematician's colleagues and competitors.

As with science, the study of maths is presented as a process of questioning. It invites improvisational, exploratory thinking as well as the memorisation and application of formulas and computational processes. Upper School subjects include general maths skills and the specific disciplines of Geometry, Algebra and Calculus. Through engagement in the exploration of diverse mathematical "problems" or challenges, students embrace the beauty of mathematics, master the concepts of advanced abstract thinking and logical reasoning and learn to apply these processes to practical applications in the physical world.

As they enter Upper School a young person's life is commonly experienced in polarities: love/hate, joy/despair, morality/immorality. Steiner education aims to guide them towards a place of balance, the curriculum meeting students where they stand. English Literature explores Greek comedy and tragedy; in Modern History the ideologies of fascism and the United Nations are investigated; in Art, black and white drawing externalises the inner turmoil, enabling students to work with and ultimately master their turbulent emotions. In this way the stormy seas of adolescence begin to transform into balanced, informed and wise judgement.

Steiner Waldorf education strongly believes that every student has an imagination and an artistic capacity to bring their ideas to life. Developing these abilities also supports the emergence of creative thinking and problem-solving skills in addition to helping students discover confidence and wonder in the inherent beauty of the world. By incorporating the arts into the general curriculum, all learning at a Steiner School is enhanced through multisensory experiences of the subjects. The Steiner Waldorf curriculum offers specialist study in music, fine arts, practical arts and drama.

The Upper School Fine and Practical Arts curriculum includes jewellery making, painting, drawing, colour theory, drawing, clay sculpting, block printing, ceramics and textiles, and

individual LOs can be taken in **photography and film-making**. Students learn the basic principles of each art form while discovering new avenues for their own self-expression–all of which enhance cross-curricular work in the areas of math and science by helping students develop skills such as careful observation and planning, how to design patterns and much more.

Drama and Theatre Arts are studied. This can range from an individual LO in presenting a dramatic monologue; producing a portfolio of original pieces of work such short performances contrasting styles or scripts with directorial decisions annotated; to whole class productions with LOs in set or costume design, directing or acting. There are also visits to local theatres.

Music is an important part of our school life. The aim is that pupils should leave school feeling some relation to the world of music at an experiential level, as something living rather than as a set of abstract critical faculties. A sense of the meaning of music in history and its relation to changing consciousness would be sought by the final year. Classes 8/9 to 10/11 have weekly music lessons and Upper School pupils sing every week in choir. For selected works the Lower and Upper School choirs may be brought together on the day for strong musico-social experience. Some pupils perform regularly on instruments, singly or in groups, and may form a band or ensemble groups. Music performance and Music Production elective LOs are open to students who play an instrument to an adequate standard.

All Upper School students study **Spanish** as a modern language up to Class 12/13. A central place is taken up with verbal communication, aiming at strengthening oral skills and enabling the student to communciate in the foreign language. Students will also be immersed in the spirit of the foreign language through a variety of cultural expressions, ranging from Literature and Film to Music and Art. Students also undertaken written work and translations.

Cardiff Steiner School teachers Bothmer from Class 6/7 up. Bothmer is a movement approach specific to Waldorf schools. It aims to foster the healthy and holistic development, keeping students in relationship to their bodies and joyful in movement throught adolescence. Bothmer was developed by Fritz von Bothmer in 1921 for the very first Waldorf School in Stuttgart. He started from the one question, 'What is true human movement?' and progressed from there - developing a body of exercises, games and specially oriented movement activities that correspond to different periods of a child and young person's development. In the Bothmer movement curriculum for example, the Walk in Symmetry is a

physical expression of how we need to walk through life acknowledging the different points of view, in search of a path that is straight and true.

In the PE/Games lessons, a variety of seasonal sports will be played, including basketball, badminton, cross-country running,. There will also be the possibility for outdoor such as kayaking and archery. Classes attend the Sport Wales National Centre in Sophia Gardens and use local playing fields for Games lessons. There are also regular visits to sporting events and fixtures offering our students wider learning opportunities and experiences. For example getting behind the Wales women's national football team has demonstrated to our students that woman can be represented at all levels of the game, challenging discrimination and encouraging momentum for change in the sport industry, and eliminating negative attitudes towards women working in sport.

Typical themes of courses outline over...

Outline of typical themes of our Upper School Courses

Classes 9/10 and 10/11	Classes 11/12 and 12/13
Sciences: Biology- Anatomy, Physiology, Embryology Chemistry - Organic and Inorganic Chemistry Physics - Thermodynamics, Mechanics	Sciences: Biology- Botany, Cellular Biology Zoology, Evolution Chemistry - Periodic Table and Atomic Theory Biochemistry Physics - Electricity, Magnetism, Nuclear Physics, Optics
Earth Sciences: Geology, Meteorology or Oceanography, Ecology	Earth Sciences: Ecology
Maths: Combinatorics, Algebra 1 or 2, Descriptive Geometry, Trigonometry, Euclidean Geometry	Maths: Algebra 2 or Precalculus, Projective Geometry, Statistics/Financial Math or Calculus
History: Modern World History, Art History Colonial History, Ancient World History, Greco- Roman History	History: Middle Ages, Art History. History of Music, Law, Government, History of Architecture, History of Philosophy Social Sciences: Psychology, Philosophy, Global Issues, Economics
Global Studies: History of the Modern Middle East, Developing Countries	Global Studies: Economic Globalisation Human Rights
English: Tragedy/Comedy, Mythology, The Novel, Grammar and Composition Poetics, Pre 19th Century novels, Grammar and Composition	English: Parzival, The Divine Comedy, Shakespeare, Grammar and Composition Russian Literature, Transcendentalists, Goethe's Faust, Writing Skills, Contemporary Literature
Drama	Drama
Spanish	Spanish
Music: Choir, Band and Ensemble Groups, Music History and Theory, instrument lessons	Music: Choir, Band and Ensemble Groups, Music History and Theory, instrument lessons
Arts and Practical Activities: Mask Making, Black and White Drawing, Colour Theory, Carpentry, Painting, Drawing, Modelling, Sculpture, Textile Arts, Printing, Carpentry, Surveying, First Aid and CPR	Arts and Practical Activities: Painting, Drawing, Modelling, Sculpture, Textile Arts, Printing, Leatherwork, Costume Design, Photography
Bothmer	Bothmer
Games and Physical Education	Games and Physical Education
20th Century History Field Trip Ecology Field Trip Surveying Residential	European Art History Trip Class 12/13 European Tour

Community, Spiritual and Cultural Involvement

One of the core learning goals of Steiner Education is to inspire students to reach out to the world in engaged inquiry and service. Engaging students in service and responsibility to their community fosters a lifelong appreciation and commitment for serving others. Cardiff Steiner School expects Upper School students to engage in community service to the whole-school

community, where students have the opportunity to learn from their participation and see the impact of their volunteerism and collaboration with others. The spiritual and cultural life at Cardiff Steiner School is valued and fostered through the curriculum, through special events and performances, and through the celebration of festivals throughout the year.

The school celebrates the main Christian festivals: Michaelmas, Advent, Easter, and St. John's. At Whitsun, for example, the Upper School holds a special Assembly where pupils, many from foreign countries, read in several different languages. Michaelmas, St. John's, and Advent are celebrated more extensively. In weekly assemblies pupils share music and drama, and teachers speak about topical events. All pupils participate in all curriculum activities because the teachers value these as educational tools in the pupils' development as human beings. Cardiff Steiner School' community, spiritual and cultural life is meant to become a familiar and accepted part of the whole school experience.

Pastoral welfare and academic progress

In the Lower School, the Class Teacher was primarily responsible for the students' learning and well-being. The Upper School students encounter a variety of specialist subject teachers. This external transition mirrors the inner changes that occur at puberty. The students begin to develop a different attitude towards authority and to the adults around them as their sense of individuality and independence grows.

Each Class is assigned a Class Guardian on entry to Upper School, who is also one of their subject teachers. The Guardian is responsible for the overview of their students' pastoral and academic welfare and any social or collective class issues that arise. They register the group each day, and have a 'Guardian Lesson' to discuss with the class any current school issues or raise wider matters of interest, such as current affairs or other social issues in the wider world. The Class Guardian also arranges parents' evenings and provides an overview in termly reports.

An individual student may feel more comfortable speaking to a particular person about personal issues, and so students may approach any member of the Upper School teaching staff for any reason. Class Guardians are responsible for overseeing the class's general wellbeing, but teachers currently teaching the class are often better placed to do this, so are also responsible for this during the time they are teaching the class.

Students identified as vulnerable or struggling, or who request it, may be assigned or choose a specific teacher with whom they meet regularly. Students are aware that there are designated members of staff who can be approached about Safeguarding issues including bullying, abuse and neglect, relating to themselves or someone else. Child Protection issues that arise in meetings with students must be reported straight away to one of the Designated Safeguarding team.

Students' progress and wellbeing are monitored by Upper School staff collectively and students' wellbeing is reported generally at the Upper School meeting each week. The Class Guardian may bring for discussion any student of concern. The meeting includes a 'student slot' where teachers can ask colleagues for insights and ideas into any student they have concerns about. If they wish they can request structured, written feedback from subject teachers, allowing the Class Guardian to get a very good overview of the student and their situation.

Students should meet their Class Guardian about twice a term to discuss how they feel they are getting on at school, and specifically in their learning. From it should spring one or two actions for the student for the coming weeks.

Monitoring of student progress in a routine way is enhanced by the use of the Student Progress Report, which each teacher fills in after each Main Lesson. This asks for a very simple overview of some key aspects of learning such as effort and attitude, understanding and recall, attainment in any tests or core tasks. Findings from these reports are to be shared with the students, so that they may reflect on how they themselves are approaching their learning.

Any concern, once fully explored by any of the means described above, may lead to a number of interventions including:

- A conversation with the student
- A phone call or meeting with parents
- Specific support offered for a particular need

Our aim is to identify problems, whether pastoral or academic, at an early stage, and to intervene early, keeping all relevant parties in the picture.

It is important that students and their parents are kept informed of how they are progressing in their learning. Beyond the records that individual teachers keep of student work and progress, the following formal mechanisms exist in the Upper School:

- Student Progress Report each term
- NZCSE points progress in Classes 10/11, 11/12 and 12/13
- Main Lesson reports, which also include a student self-evaluation, sent home at the end
 of each full term.

Higher Education and Careers

Cardiff Steiner School recognises that our Upper School students are looking over the horizon to the world of further study and of work.

Upon entry to the Upper School (Class 8/9), students are consulted about their hopes and wishes for the future. This is taken into account in curriculum planning. In Classes 8/9, 9/10 and 10/11, the curriculum is broad and comprised of compulsory subjects and courses. In Class 10/11 students are consulted about options for Classes 11/12 and 12/13, with view to the paths they may wish to follow when they leave school. Individual and group guidance is given with regard to elective courses and blocks, personal projects, work experience, cultural exchanges, university and work applications, CVs and interviews

Early in the year Class 12/13 have access to careers conversations about their interests, strengths and hopes for the future helping develop suitable further study and career paths. They also have group and individual guidance through the whole UCAS application process, especially the composition of the personal statement. There is an intensive on-going dialogue with students about their UCAS application as it evolves.

Students can attend a careers fair where numerous educational establishments and employers put on show what they have to offer. This opens up very useful conversations about what they might want to do once they leave school.

Students are provided with information on a range of on-line tools for careers and the world of work planning through Google Classroom. A range of visiting and inspirational speakers are invited to share with the students different pathways that they may chose: these have included a Marine Biologist undertaking a PhD, an IT company founder, a representation from the Civil Service about job opportunities, routes in, progression routes, the myriad of roles and opportunities, a Medical Clinician, a Documentary film maker and Artist, a STEM ambassador in cybersecurity, and a Welsh-Iraqi poet/ film-maker/ scriptwriter/ artist / National Poet of Wales.

One of the aims of the broad-based Waldorf curriculum is to encourage students to continue explorations into a variety of experiences while they are still developing as young adults. Cardiff Steiner School recognises the value of time spent in practical social work before continuing full-time academic studies or choosing a career, and will develop contacts with communities and institutions, which welcome young co-workers if they choose to develop themselves more broadly and do voluntary social work before making longer-term decisions. In Upper School voluntary and outside school activities and interests can, in planning and discussion with the Upper School Coordinator, be used to build LO accreditation towards their Certificate.

Student Exchanges

In Upper School students can undertake international exchanges for those interested, and where the exchange school also offer the Certificate of Steiner Education there may be opportunities for students to build LO accreditation towards their Certificate.

Issue date

This policy was revised in May 2023

Review date

This policy will be reviewed and revised by the Upper School Coordinator as required

Endorsement

Full endorsement to this policy is given by:

Name: Anna Podesta

Position: Chair of College, Cardiff Steiner School

Signed: 14 May 2023