

## Admissions Policy and Procedure

Prepared with reference to:

- The Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024
- Welsh Government Independent schools registration and operational guidance 2024
- Equality Act 2010, Section 88, Schedule 10

*Please note that references to parents includes parents, carers and those with parental responsibility*

### Introduction

As the approach to education in Steiner Schools differs from the mainstream sector, it is important, before applying for a place, that parents understand something of the educational philosophy we follow. In addition to any research or reading parents may do, parents should complete a visit to the School before submitting an application. Visit options and dates are available on the School [website](#). For international applicants we are able to do virtual visits.

### General Information

**Kindergarten** is a mixed age group setting with children from age 3 to 6. Kindergarten may be part-time or full-time (including afternoon sessions) with a minimum of 3 mornings per week. We recommend a minimum of three mornings at age 3, four at age 4 and five at age 5 and 6. All children of statutory school age (the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday) must attend the full-time Kindergarten programme of 5 mornings a week.

**From Class 1** (starting the September after a child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday) we have combined Classes across two year groups. Children joining Cardiff Steiner School are allocated to Classes according to their age. It is only in very exceptional circumstances that the School will place a pupil in a Class that is 'inconsistent' with their age.

### Admissions Criteria

The School wishes to treat all applicants fairly and openly, and to be timely and effective in its communication with them. The criteria for admission are as follows:

- the availability of a place in the class appropriate to the applicant's age

- Cardiff Steiner School's suitability for an applicant's ability, additional learning needs or other needs
- The willingness and ability of parents to pay fees

Decisions to admit children are taken by the relevant Admissions Panel which comprises the Admissions Manager and the Education Coordinator of the faculty being applied to, in discussion with the relevant Class Teacher/Guardian, Additional Learning Needs Coordinator and the wider teaching group as required.

## **1. The availability of places**

Cardiff Steiner School accepts applications at any time (from birth upwards) and operates an 'all year' admissions policy, admitting children throughout the year where spaces are available. Where places are limited they will usually be given to applicants who meet the other criteria for admission in the following order:

- In Kindergarten - children who currently attend and need to increase days in line with our recommended attendance (three days at age 3, five days at age 4 and 5)
- In Class 1 children coming up from our Kindergartens
- Children of staff coming to or already working in the School
- **Children who aim to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18**
  - Siblings of existing pupils who aim to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
  - Children from other Steiner schools who aim to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
  - Children with siblings who are also applying for admission to the School who aim to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
  - Children who have previously attended our Kindergarten or Classes who aim to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
  - Children who aim to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
- **Children who do not intend to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18**
  - Siblings of existing pupils who do not intend to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
  - Children from other Steiner schools who do not intend to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
  - Children with siblings who are also applying for admission to the School who do not intend to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18

- Children who have previously attended our Kindergarten or Classes who do not intend to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
- In Kindergarten - children who have attended our Parent & Toddler Groups regularly who aim to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
- Children from other Steiner schools
- In Kindergarten - children who have attended our Parent & Toddler Groups regularly (to Kindergarten) who do not aim to continue at Cardiff Steiner School up to age 18
- On a first come first served basis

If a place is offered but not taken up, the applicant will be placed at the bottom of the waiting list if the place is still wanted. At the end of each academic year the School will contact all those on the waiting list to ask if they wish to remain on it. Decisions will be taken on an individual basis and may take into account the ease with which applicants are expected to adjust to the class and the curriculum, and the balance of the class group agewise. In some cases this may result in an applicant being offered a place before another, earlier applicant.

## **2. Cardiff Steiner School's suitability for an applicant's ability, additional learning needs or other needs**

Cardiff Steiner School considers all children as having individual needs, and aims to meet these needs, as well as possible taking into consideration the child's age, development stage and other circumstances.

The School aims so far as possible to create balanced, mixed-ability class groups and decisions on admission of a child, and assignment to a particular class, is based on an assessment made as follows:

- **Application form** including (if applicable) a review of reports from previous schools/settings and any medical or other assessment reports (e.g. for dyslexia, speech therapy), including any Individual Education Plan or Behaviour Plans from any existing or previous school, any Statement of Special Educational Needs and Educational Psychologist's report. The School has expectations of positive behaviour and attitudes to learning, and will consider an applicant's previous records of these in its assessment.
- **Taster Days/Weeks** at the School - in **Kindergarten** a visit of between one and three mornings for children age 3 and 4, and three to five mornings for children age 5 and 6. In the **Classes** a visit of two full weeks which may be extended if necessary. This provides an opportunity for the child to explore our provision, and for parents to see whether they feel that the setting suits their child. It also allows the School the chance to get to know the

child, and observe how he or she responds to staff and peers, and the School environment. Our Additional Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) may assess the child during the Taster Days/Weeks if there is evidence of a need for support.

- **Parent/Teacher Meeting (Classes)** - with the Class Teacher/Guardian for a discussion around the child and the Steiner school environment. The meeting provides the opportunity to further discuss any aspects of our educational approach as well as the child's particular needs. The child may be invited to attend part of this meeting also. It is very important that we work in partnership with parents to best support each child, and therefore that parents discuss with us any issues or concerns regarding their child, or regarding our educational provision.
- **Verbal contact with a child's previous teacher** (if required) to gain as full an understanding of the child as possible.

Each Class is able to accept some children with additional learning needs and we welcome children where we believe we are able to make reasonable adjustment to enable them to flourish and make good progress, taking into account the distinctive nature of the curriculum.

The School is committed to social inclusivity and therefore keeps fees as low as possible. As a result of this policy, and the size of the School, there are some constraints on the resources available to support pupils requiring additional learning support and/or having additional learning needs. For example, the School does not have 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 one-to-one support in place and if that support can mostly take place in the context of the classroom. Without funded one-to-one support, parents would need to commit to funding specialist tuition outside of the School.

Consideration will take into account the needs of the individual child, the likely impact on other children in the Class, the balance of the Class group and whether we can make reasonable adjustment to meet a child's needs.

Children with additional learning needs will not be accepted, when following detailed assessment, in terms of the school's determination to make reasonable adjustment, the admission of the child would prevent the school from fulfilling its duty to provide effective education, including to those children already placed in the School. For example, we may not

admit a child whose admission would mean the introduction of a second Learning Support Assistant into the classroom.

If, following the assessment, the School considers that it cannot meet the applicant's needs, it will explain the reasons for this conclusion. In some cases, places may be offered subject to conditions requiring, for example, extra support funded by the parent or external body, outside support such as G.P, education psychologist. Any such conditions will be clearly set out when offering a place.

A basic level of learning support is provided throughout the School to those pupils who need it and the cost of this is included in the standard School fees. However where a pupil needs more substantial or ongoing support there will be an extra charge. Our ALNCo may also recommend a full individual assessment for a pupil. This needs to be instructed externally by the parent/guardian at their cost. There will be an extra charge for additional tuition required on admission to make a pupil ready for the School.

## **Transitions**

We anticipate that all children who join our School will continue to progress through the School until they leave at the age of 18. However in the Kindergarten, with the emphasis on play and imitation, the range of learning needs that can be accommodated may be wider than that which is possible in the Lower School. The progression from Kindergarten to Class 1 is therefore subject to an individual assessment of the School's capacity to meet the child's continuing educational needs. There is also an individual admissions process from Lower School to Upper School (Class 9)

It is also recognised that this is an ongoing process, as a child's needs may change over time. We therefore continue to assess a child's needs throughout their time with us, and discuss any concerns with parents (and other relevant professionals) as appropriate.

At the transition from Kindergarten to Lower School (Class 1) and from Lower School to Upper School (Class 9), we ask parents to confirm in writing that they wish their child to continue at the School. For those wishing to leave the School at a point of transition, the usual notice period is required (see Fees and Payment Policy). Following confirmation of a wish to continue, the School may meet with parents to discuss the child's progress, the transition process, and whether both the School and parents are happy that the child's needs can continue to be met. On rare occasions it may be considered (either by parents or the

School) that the child's needs cannot be met in the next phase. In these exceptional circumstances, the School will discuss the alternative options with parents.

### **3. School Fees**

The School charges fees (see Fees and Payment Policy) which are increased annually. There is an Admissions Administration fee once an offer of a place has been made, and a deposit to secure the child's place at the School. A Registration Meeting is part of the Admissions process which includes a finance discussion to ensure parents are aware of the notice periods and the requirement to maintain timely fee payments. Applicants are required to sign a Registration Contract agreeing to our fees and payment terms and to provide proof of identity and address. A place may not be offered if there is evidence of an inability to pay fees or non-payment of fees / significant debts at another educational setting.

Cardiff Steiner School is committed to being socially inclusive and accessible to families from a wide range of financial backgrounds, whilst remaining self-funded. Therefore we keep fees as low as possible in order to minimise the financial barrier to attending, and offer a Bursary Scheme where families on low incomes, or in financial difficulty, can apply for a reduction in their fees. The Bursary Policy and Application Form is available on request during the Admissions Process. Before you apply for a Bursary you will need to have completed the School's Admissions Process and be in receipt of an offer of a place (there is no charge to get to this stage in the Admissions process).

### **Complaints**

If you are not satisfied with the School's Admissions Process you should put your complaint in writing to the School Business Manager within five days of the date of our admissions decision. You should include any supporting documentation. The complaint will then be dealt with in accordance with the School's Complaints Procedure, which is available on our website.

Decisions to refuse a place to a child are not taken lightly, and take into account the existing class cohort and the resources of the School. Therefore, the complaints process is not for mere disagreement with the decision made. The aim of the complaint process around admissions is to rectify any genuine errors and ensure that applicants are not unfairly or unnecessarily denied admission, such as the following:

- 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.

The complaint decision is final and binding. There are no avenues for appeal beyond this point.

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**Issue date**

This policy takes effect from January 2025

**Review date**

This policy will be reviewed and revised by the School Business Manager at least every two years. Last reviewed January 2025. Last revised January 2025

**Endorsement**

Full endorsement to this policy is given by:

Name: Kate Attfield

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Position: Trustee, Cardiff Steiner School

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Signed: *KAttfield*

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Date: January 2025

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**Related policies**

This policy should be cross-referenced to related School policies including:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Fees and Payment Policy
- Bursary Policy and Application Form
- ALN Policy