



WILD
CHERRY
SCHOOL

For Waldorf/Steiner Education

School Handbook

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OUR STORY

The vision for an independent Waldorf/Steiner School for East Gippsland was seeded almost thirty years ago with the starting of Wild Cherry Playgroup in 1993. A Kindergarten soon followed and in 2002 the Bairnsdale Steiner School opened. Wild Cherry School in its current format opened its doors to the East Gippsland community in 2013.

Today, Wild Cherry School for Waldorf/Steiner education offers a balanced and holistic education based on the pedagogical principles developed by Rudolf Steiner. We are independent, co-educational, non-denominational. Our services and programs include playgroup, kindergarten, and year levels prep through to 6 and embrace the works of Rudolf Steiner in a contemporary context within our local environment and community using the Australian Steiner Curriculum framework.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which Wild Cherry School stands, the Gunaikurnai people, and pay our respect to the Elders, past present and emerging. We honour and respect the histories, cultures and knowledge and perspectives of First National peoples. We value the guidance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as we support and create opportunities for the future custodians, the children. We will always remember that First Nations children played, danced, sang, and learned on this place they called home.

The name Wild Cherry was chosen in reference to the native cherry *exocarpos cupressiformis*, a semi-parasitic tree endemic to Australia and often found in our local forests. It has edible white or red fruit and needs the help of the little antechinus to spread its seed who knows exactly where to plant it at the base of gum trees where the seed latches onto the gum tree's roots. The young tree relies on nutrients from its host tree until it is mature when it can live without its further support. What a wonderful analogy to children and their relationship with parents and teachers. Parents, Grand Parents and Teachers are the support our children need whilst they are young to help them grow into beautiful caring adults.

Welcome to Wild Cherry School!

RUDOLF STEINER

*“Receive the child in reverence,
Educate him in love,
Let him go forth in freedom”*



The philosopher and educator, Dr Rudolf Steiner, was one of the most original thinkers of the twentieth century. His writings cover a wide range of subjects and he made valuable contributions in many fields, including education, science, medicine, agriculture (biodynamics), the arts, and social reform. The basis of his research was the scientific investigation of the spiritual world, which he called Anthroposophy.

Anthroposophy is a holistic view of the human being which is inclusive of body, soul, and spirit. The knowledge of which supports the stages of human development through phases of approximately seven years (from ages 0 to 7, 8 to 14, 15 to 21, and so forth).

In 1919, Dr Steiner was invited to establish a school for the children of the workers of the Waldorf Astoria factory in Stuttgart, Germany. He developed a holistic approach to education that worked towards harmonising the whole human being – thinking, feeling, and willing. Steiner's views underpin the structure of the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework.

Today, Wild Cherry is part of the world-wide educational movement known as *Steiner* or *Waldorf* schools, comprising more than 1,000 schools globally. In Australia, there are close to 50 Steiner schools; in Victoria there are ten, and also several streams in government schools.

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to nurture the whole child through a holistic education that encourages curiosity, creativity, bold questioning, positive social consciousness, and a connection to the natural world.

OUR VISION

Wild Cherry School strives to educate and support the development and potential of each individual child, whilst fostering a creative and ethical community.

OUR VALUES

- Fostering a desire in our students to aim for academic and artistic excellence by providing them with a rich, diverse, and integrated curriculum.
- Inspiring the children with a lifelong love of learning, a morality that strives for goodness, an appreciation of beauty, and a pursuit of truth.
- Developing children's trust and respect for themselves, each other, the broader community, and the earth.

OUR GIFTS TO YOU

As a Waldorf/Steiner School we strive to give your child five gifts:

- 1) The gift of **imagination**, of ideas and ideals. Waldorf/Steiner schools do not provide beliefs of worldviews, we provide a pathway or method of discovering imagination, ideas and ideals the students may later pursue in life. For example, in geometry, the teacher can show the steps that lead to proof, but it is the student who must take that final intuitive leap to understand.
- 2) The gift of **transformation**, of developing as a human being. In nature, a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, and a little seed grows into a big tree. We can see and watch them grow, each stage presenting changes of form. For Steiner, all cats or dogs belong to the same species, but each human being is a species unto himself or herself.
- 3) The gift of **knowing**. Waldorf/Steiner schools introduce students to different ways of knowing, three in particular: knowing with head, heart and hands. Psychologists recognise these with terms like 'cognition', 'affect' and 'behaviour'. We can know by observing, comparing, analysing, or synthesising - a 'cognitive' knowing. These accord most closely with what the world outside Steiner schools mean by knowing. But we can also know by heart, an 'aesthetic' knowing, which awakes to beauty, to an ethical understanding, and even the truth. Playfulness is a true expression of aesthetic knowing. Lastly, we can know through our body and our senses, a 'tactic' knowing. We can read about playing the violin, but we would not know how to do it without actually trying it.
- 4) The gift of **community**. A school can provide profound examples and guidelines for a healthy life with other people. If they chose to, Waldorf/Steiner graduates know how to care for others and respect each other for who they are.
- 5) The gift of **reverence** for life on this planet; a concern for the environment.

Any school may give these gifts, but the sad truth is that in our world today only in very few schools can you regularly find teachers united in common purpose to give their students these gifts as fully and as consistently as those in a Steiner School. The School is indebted to Steve Sagarin who presented these gifts at the SEA GLaM Conference at Shearwater Steiner School in May 2015.

PLAY GROUP

Our playgroup is a place of love, support and reassurance for both children and adults. It is a place where children can play and enjoy all their senses in beautiful surroundings. We use natural materials and soft colours to create an environment that is uplifting, harmonious and creative. Toys are natural and appear simple but stimulate the child's imagination. We focus on the well-being and health of the whole child and support both parent/carer and child to enjoy loving and nurturing experiences. Enquire through the school office for current playgroup sessions.

KINDERGARTEN

Wild Cherry kindergarten provides a loving, learning foundation for your child's journey through their school education.

In Steiner Early Childhood Programs children are welcomed into a nurturing environment where their well-being, relationships with teachers and peers are paramount.

A consistent rhythmic structure to the day fosters confidence and allows the children to confidently explore and act upon their environment. The open-ended, natural resources and environment supports creative, imaginative play. Play is often collaborative and strengthens communication, self-expression, problem solving and negotiating. Concepts of fairness, empathy and respect are embedded in the kindergarten's curriculum and practice. Each child's unique disposition and learning style is observed and planned for.

Planned activities are purposeful and hands on, supporting each child's growing sense of themselves as capable and competent. Cooking, gardening, craft, art, washing dishes, packing away and cleaning are daily activities. Extensive songs, verses, movement, stories, and drama activities support joyful participation and development across all learning areas- identity, well-being, community, learning and communication.

The Steiner Kindergarten curriculum is linked to the seasons and reflects the natural world we thrive in; it is responsive to our growing understanding of families, children, community and culture. Our curriculum and assessments of learning are guided by the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework.

Wild Cherry offers 15 hours of Kindergarten for 3 and 4 year old children from our beautiful location within Wild Cherry School.

Please contact the office for further information.

PREP

The Wild Cherry prep year gently introduces children to the wider world of school.

The program is similar to kindergarten but extends the children's abilities in being attentive for longer periods of time and completing more complex tasks. A day in prep class is full of purposeful activity, play and learning. The children become a community of doers through authentic hands-on tasks that are enveloped in a strong daily, weekly and seasonal rhythm. The rhythm provides children with a sense of security and connection to the natural world.

Literacy and numeracy are consciously developed through the various activities of the day. Learning in this way is meaningful, as there is relevance to the children's lived experience.

Artistic activities such as painting, drawing, modelling and craft are balanced with oral storytelling, singing and movement games. Imaginative creative play remains paramount, and the classroom is adorned with natural materials and toys. Great care is taken to provide a beautiful, welcoming space where the children's physical, social, emotional and spiritual life are nurtured.

CLASSES 1 - 6

The class structure is as follows: Kinder, Prep, Class 1/2, Class 3/4 and Class 5/6 and are kept at a small size. This allows our teachers to deliver a rich and diverse curriculum that spans two year levels and provides the best possible learning experience for each child. Teachers are supported with specialist teachers and aides in delivering the curriculum.

The primary phase of schooling commences around the age of seven. Rudolf Steiner said that between the child's seventh and fourteenth year we endeavour to 'bring about the right relationship between thinking and willing'. Rich imaginative content, which is infused with feeling, is the mediator between these two aspects of the human being.

The child's development moves from one of imitation to one of respect for the authority of the teacher. The relationships are deepening as the class teacher ideally moves with the children from class 1 through their primary years, allowing for greater understanding between individuals and the whole class.

As well as working consistently with literacy and numeracy, each day is rich with movement, speech, music, drawing, painting, modelling, storytelling, writing and singing. Our teachers endeavour to meet the child's developmental phases with appropriate tasks and content within the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework.

THE MAIN LESSON



The Main Lesson starts the day each morning and concentrates on the same subject for a block of approximately three to four weeks allowing for in-depth study of new subject matter.

The class teachers enliven the academic content by working imaginatively and artistically. The curriculum also focuses on the development of fine and gross motor skills, e.g. clapping times tables, recitation, rhythmical movement of geometric shapes, Celtic dances, ball games, sewing, stitching, knitting etc. It is now well-documented how this supports brain development and academic learning. The engagement of thinking comes from a rich story-based curriculum.

DAILY RHYTHM

Rhythm underpins every aspect of the curriculum and plays an essential part of the structure of each day which helps keep the children fresh and receptive. The morning sessions are for Main Lesson work. Between recess and lunch there is practice-based session which build upon the children's basic skills in literacy and numeracy. After lunch, the children have different practical and artistic activities, e.g., art, painting, craft, woodwork, gardening, sports/games etc.

AN ENRICHING CURRICULUM

Stories and legends from past times nourish the children's love of language and strengthen their imagination. Each developmental stage relates to the myths and legends of an epoch. The consciousness of the class connects with and is nourished by the content of the stories.

Examples of the epochs are: Fairy tales and indigenous creation stories, Fables and Celtic Legends and stories of holy people from different cultures around the world; Hebrew, indigenous and native American stories; Norse Myths; Indian, Egyptian and Greek Myths; and the Romans. We also source stories and myths from other cultures to provide a balanced world view.



MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Music plays an important part of our curriculum. Children sing every day with choral work developed throughout the school years. Children also learn to play the recorder from class 1 to class 6. From year level 3 onwards children also learn a string instrument, violin, viola, cello or double bass, reading music and tuned and untuned percussion in both individual and ensemble work. Movement is nurtured through the physical expression of the spoken word, and Bothmer gymnastics as part of our physical education program.

LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

A language other than English is introduced playfully in prep and continues throughout all primary year levels. We present French as language other than English. Learning French means learning a beautiful, rich, melodious language that structures thought and critical thinking. For younger classes this may take the form of songs, games, and the introduction of simple vocabulary through age-appropriate stories. Teaching becomes more complex as the children grow and develop.

HIGH SCHOOL

Wild Cherry School currently offers playgroup, 3yo and 4yo kindergarten and the year levels P-6. It is our dream to grow our school to high school in the future.

Children graduating from Wild Cherry School have the choice to move on to the Bairnsdale Secondary College, Nagle College, Gippsland Grammar, and to Steiner schools in Melbourne or other places. Academic levels reached at the end of the primary years has our graduates on par with other primary schools for this transition.

Waldorf/Steiner education at secondary levels in Victoria is currently offered by Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School (Warranwood), Sophia Mundi Steiner School in Abbotsford, Little Yarra Steiner School in Yarra Junction, Freshwater Creek Steiner School, Dandenong Ranges Steiner School, Mansfield Steiner School. There is also a Steiner stream at Collingwood College in Melbourne.

IMPORTANT DATES

Families are encouraged to keep up to date with current events and school related information throughout the school year by reading our fortnightly school newsletter.

OPEN DAY AND SPRING FAIR - EXHIBITION OF CHILDREN'S WORK

An Open Day in Term 2 and the Spring Fair in Term 4 provide opportunities for the wider community to journey with us through our curriculum, see the school, meet our teachers, and see the children's work displayed. Open classrooms are held two to four times a year and an opportunity for families to share in their children's work.

FESTIVALS

Once a term our school community comes together to celebrate the season with a festival which have become a tradition with our school and kindergarten at Easter/Autumn, Winter, Spring and End-of-year. With these celebrations we acknowledge the significant changes in our natural environment and instil an appreciation of the natural world in our children.

In our very busy modern lives, we feel it is important, not only for children, but for all of us to be aware of the recurring and changing rhythm of the seasons. The festivals are greatly enjoyed and looked forward to by the children and the whole community and we can't imagine celebrating these without you.



The celebrations of seasonal festivals are an essential part of our school calendar. We warmly invite you and your family to join us in all our festivities.

ATTENDANCE

The welcoming of the children and the shared morning verse are important aspects of our school and kindergarten day. We expect families to ensure that **children are at school on time** or up to 15 minutes before starting time. The school timetable is outline below and kindergarten and prep families will receive a copy of the early years program.

8.45am	School STARTS - Morning Circle and Main Lesson start
10.45am	Morning Tea in classroom
11-11.30am	Playtime
11.30am	Practice Lesson
12.45pm	Lunch in the classroom
1-1.45pm	Playtime
1.45pm	Specialist Classes
3pm	Bus children leave
3.15pm	School FINISHES

Our teachers bring continuity to lessons from day to day and from week to week. Therefore, it is considered a priority that families are committed to their child's regular attendance. Main lessons are presented in three to four-week blocks and if a child is away for a period, she/he could potentially miss a very important part of the curriculum.

Children and families are expected to attend after hours school functions such as our seasonal festivals, Spring Fair and open days. These events are an integral part of our school calendar and part of the social fabric of our community.

Unless travelling by bus, children are expected to be picked up at 3.15pm each day. Families are asked to contact the school if pick up is delayed.

ABSENCES

If your child cannot come to school for any reason, it is essential that you call, text, or email the office, giving reasons for the absence by no later than 9am on the day of absence.

AGE OF ENTRY

We recommend children to turn seven the year they start class one. Younger children will be individually assessed for school readiness. Some children with December to April birthdays may need an extra year in kindergarten. This additional year can be of great benefit to your child for subsequent learning, self-esteem, and social and cognitive development.

ILLNESSES AND ACCIDENTS

Families with children with a diagnosed medical condition that requires management at school, e.g., asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, etc, must provide the school with an annually updated management plan from your child's GP and discussion with their child's class teacher.

For your child's wellbeing and your own peace of mind, please ensure that the school is always informed of any relevant health details and notified of any changes to treatment.

If your child is hurt or becomes ill during the day, we will contact you and inform you of the situation. A child who is not well needs to be cared for in the quiet and warmth of their own home. Please keep your child at home when your child is sick.

Medication

The school can only administer medication as per your child's diagnosed medical condition management plan. Medication must be in its original packaging and clearly labelled with the child's name, dosing, and expiry date.

Immunisation

Immunisation History Statements must be provided at the time of enrolment and when requested by the school.

Infectious diseases

Families must immediately inform the school if your child or anyone in your family has contracted an infectious disease, e.g., mumps, measles, rubella, chickenpox, whooping cough, gastro, COVID-19, etc.

EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR AT SCHOOL

The school is committed to providing a safe caring environment for students, staff members and families with each being responsible for ensuring that this occurs.

No form of bullying is tolerated at the school. Being bullied or harassed means that someone is subjected to behaviour which is hurtful, threatening or frightening to an individual or a group.

Incidents of bullying or harassment can occur for many reasons and will be investigated by the class teacher and/or college of teachers. Both, the bullied student, and the bully, can expect support, fairness, and decisive action to remedy the situation.

All students have the right and responsibility to report any incidence of bullying or harassment which they have experienced, or where they have seen it happening, to any member of staff, preferably to the class teacher of the person/persons involved. All children involved in an incident will be spoken to individually and in a group.

Measures to resolve any disputes and remedy the hurt to the victim will be discussed using the practice of restorative justice where a series of questions will be asked in an age-appropriate way to resolve the issue at hand.

Questions asked might include:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

To help those affected:

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Where repeat offences by the same individual occurs, the school will inform the family to request a formal meeting with the parents, student, and class teacher. In some instances, counselling for the victim and/or the perpetrator may be recommended. Families will also be given supportive feedback when there is positive behaviour from a child who has previously been having difficulties.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS CODE

Wild Cherry School does not have a uniform but expects everyone to maintain a neat and well-groomed appearance. What students may wear and what they may not are listed in the dress code. The primary reason for a dress code is to instil in students a feeling for self-worth. It is a wonderful opportunity and a privilege to wear simple, practical clothing that also reflects the individual.

Colour and what we wear has a powerful impact on us every day. While colour nourishes the soul and spirit, logos and jarring colours are distracting. As children are so receptive to their immediate environment, we must become conscious of the effect our clothing has on others. For example, we can be stimulated by the cheeky nature of red, enlivened by the brilliance of orange or calmed by the tranquil shades of green and blue. We also ask that children do not wear fluorescent colours, due to their strident and jarring effect.

Students not complying with dress codes may be asked to turn clothes inside out or will be provided with clothing from our spare clothing basket. We will contact families if children persist in presenting at school with clothing outside our dress code. We kindly ask families to respect our dress code and assist your children where necessary to make appropriate choices.

The following sets out our expectations across all year levels, yes to:

- ✓ Beautiful colourful clothing in plain primary and secondary colours
- ✓ Plain T-shirts, shirts, and shorts
- ✓ Dresses or skirts – no shorter than just above the knee
- ✓ Sun-safe clothes that cover shoulders, back and midriff
- ✓ A broad-brimmed hat
- ✓ Toes-enclosing footwear
- ✓ Stud earrings only
- ✓ Necklaces tucked under top – for safety
- ✓ Long hair neat and tidy, off the face and tied back
- ✓ Warm plain coloured tops in winter

Please:

- × No logos
- × No violent/sharp images on clothing
- × No thongs or floppy sandals
- × No 'short shorts' with or without tights underneath
- × No dyed or bleached hair
- × No nail polish or make-up

Hats

During terms one and four children must wear a hat when outside otherwise they are asked to stay in the shade, e.g., under the veranda roof. Wild Cherry provides each child with one hat at the beginning of the year. Lost hats must be replaced with school issued hats purchased from the school shop. We ask that hats remain at school. Only broad-brimmed hats are permitted.

Sunscreen

We are mindful of the consequences of sun exposure. Sunscreen is optional according to families' wishes. We ask that families provide their children with their preferred sunscreen and wear sun smart clothing.

Winter

In terms two and three, the following winter dress code applies:

- ✓ Warm jumper/jacket
- ✓ Beanie/scarf/gloves
- ✓ Gumboots or other solid shoes
- ✓ Slippers for indoors

Other Requirements

In addition to the above, there may be dress requirements for specific activities or events. Teachers will inform families of any special requirements prior to those activities being held. For example, appropriate shoes are needed for sport.

The following are not acceptable at school:

- × Riding skateboards, rollerblades, scooters, or bikes in the school grounds if it is a non-bike day
- × Putting graffiti on any school property, including furniture (desks and chairs) or textbooks
- × Littering and/or not using bins appropriately
- × Bringing any form of electronic equipment to school (mobile phones, digital cameras, etc)
- × Aerosol products
- × Any toys other than comfort aids
- × Offensive language
- × Chewing gum
- × Spitting

Name Tags

We recommend you label everything your child brings to school - footwear, lunchboxes, bags, jumpers, coats and anything else that comes to school regularly and may become separated from your child. Also, regularly check the lost property basket. We will donate all unclaimed lost property at the end of each term to local op shops.

SCREEN TIME



Regular watching of television or too much screen time is strongly discouraged for children of kindergarten and primary school age. We believe that to benefit fully from a healthy education, children need every opportunity to develop their own creative play, to learn to occupy themselves independently, enjoy interacting with family and friends and learn about the world through active exploration and participation.

Children are very vulnerable to the conditioning effects of screen interaction. Research shows that children who are exposed to excessive screen time at a young age tend to expect to be constantly “entertained”, find it hard to lose themselves in

imaginative play, take a superficial and short-lived interest in creative activities and that their memory is impaired. They also have difficulty settling down to concentrate on stories and songs. Shows and characters seen online often dominate their conversation and games.

This is not to deny the role of information technology in our modern society but to ask you to seriously consider its harmful influence on your child and on family life and to preferably avoid its use during weekdays.

Please consider regulating screen use while your children are young. There are many books and articles available on this subject and if you would like more information, advice, or support, please ask your child’s teacher.

COMPUTERS

The use of information technology is introduced in year levels five and six as part of the Waldorf/Steiner curriculum. At this age students are more psychologically and developmentally ready to use this technology to their advantage.

LUNCHES

Please keep lunches simple, wholesome and single use plastic free.

Children will need to bring morning tea and lunch to school each day. The children eat together in their class and although they do not share their lunches, lunchtime is very much a social and community activity.

We suggest wholemeal or wholegrain sandwiches/rice cakes, pieces of fresh fruit and vegetables, and some nuts or dried fruit for nibbles.

Please NO lollies, packaged, or other highly processed foods.

The school places great importance on environmental awareness, so please use reusable lunch boxes, cloth wraps, or similar wherever possible.

Hot lunches may be brought to school in an unbreakable thermos. Please note teachers cannot heat food in the classroom. Kindergarten and prep children usually cook each day; other classes occasionally.



BIRTHDAYS

Each child's birthday is celebrated with their class. The birthday child's family is usually invited to come along and welcome to bring with them a healthy (dairy free, refined sugar free and gluten free) birthday cake to share. In Kindergarten and prep, the class will make the cake. Have a chat with your child's class teacher for any details.

TOYS AND MOBILE PHONES AND OTHER THINGS

Toys, mobile phones, private books, and other personal items are best not brought to school as these can cause social tensions and be easily lost or damaged. If your child is found to have brought any of these items to school, we expect them to bring them to the school office during school hours. Items can be collected again after school is finished for the day.

MONEY

If, for some reason, you need to send money to school please place and seal it in an envelope marked with your child's name, amount, and purpose. *Please do not send cash for fees to school with your child.*

EXCURSIONS AND CAMPS

Excursions and camps are an important part of the children's social development and are an integral part of our curriculum. The cost for excursions, camps and some incursions are in addition to your child's school fees as the cost may vary from time to time. Generally, families can expect the following:

- Class 1/2: Overnight stay at school and day excursions into local area
- Class 3/4: Day excursions to local areas, farm visit and overnight bush camping
- Class 5/6: Day excursions to local areas and multi-night adventure and city camps

In addition, usually during term one of each school year, Wild Cherry School runs a swimming program for classes 1-6. This program is conducted by qualified AUSWIM instructors.

DROP OFF AND PICK UP

Children can be dropped off in the rose garden loop until 8.45am and picked up from 3.15pm. Gates are kept shut during school hours. Please do not park your car in the rose garden loop. If your child is not yet ready to be collected, please drive around the loop, and re-join the queue. Alternatively, children, particularly kindergarten and prep children, can also be dropped off and brought into the school via the Ross St gate.

PARKING

Ample parking can be found in Ross Street and McKean Street.

BUS TRAVEL

If you live more than 4.8km from the school, your child may be eligible to use the bus service to and from school. This is a supervised service. Information and application forms are available from the office.

Families must inform the school office of any changes to bus travel. **We ask that you do not send any bus travel arrangement messages with your child.** The School is unable to verify with you these messages prior to each travel.

Child safety is very important to us. To be granted a bus travel pass it is essential that children are able to self-manage their behaviour and listen and follow directives when travelling on the bus. This is to keep them and others safe. Wild Cherry provides a rostered supervisor that will take the children to the bus and stay with them at the bus loop to ensure children catch their allocated connections.

CONVEYANCE ALLOWANCE

If the distance between your home and the nearest school bus route is more than 4.8km, then you may be eligible for a conveyance allowance to that bus stop. For further details please see the school office.

BICYCLES

Safe bike riding to school is encouraged and bike racks are provided at the school. Tuesdays and Thursdays are bike days and children can bring their bicycles, scooters, and roller blades to school to use during lunch time break. The wearing of helmets and other safety gear is compulsory.

YOU AND THE SCHOOL

Wild Cherry School is a community school. We warmly welcome new families and encourage positive parent participation in school activities and an understanding of their child's education through open and transparent communication, sharing of children's work during open classrooms, parent talks, discussions, plays, celebrations, and festivals.

WORKSHOPS, TALKS AND ARTISTIC WORK

Various workshops, discussion groups, craft evenings and picnics are offered throughout the year. Make sure you check our school newsletter for upcoming events.

FEES

As an independent non-government school, Wild Cherry receives commonwealth and state funding towards the school's operating costs. However, it is necessary to supplement this funding with tuition fees. Fees are kept as low as possible to enable families from a broad social background to attend.

A current fee schedule is available from the office and our website. Family discounts apply.

Fee assistance is available for families experiencing genuine financial hardship. Please contact the school office for a confidential discussion to see how we can help.

Wild Cherry School recognises that for many of our families, tuition fees can represent a significant proportion of your family budget and many of our families would welcome greater flexibility around the management of these payments.

We are therefore pleased to announce that the school has partnered with a specialist provider, Edstart, to make managing school fee payments easier. Edstart Plus offers an easy, flexible and zero-cost way for you to pay for your child's education in periodic instalments that suit your family budget.

This payment method allows you to spread tuition fees and additional charges such as music instrument hire, camps and excursions evenly over 12 months in weekly, fortnightly or monthly instalments, with increased flexibility to adjust your payments beyond what the school can currently offer. We believe this increased flexibility will give families greater peace of mind when it comes to staying on top of fees. The school will absorb the cost of this service, ensuring that it is free for families to use. Please note that Edstart is required to verify your identity for regulation purposes, however there are no credit enquiries associated with using this service.

While we put our focus into nurturing all children at the school by providing a holistic education, Edstart are experts in their field and are best placed to assist our families with fee payments moving forward. All school fees including annual and periodic payments will be made via Edstart.

We ask that all families register for an Edstart account on enrolment. Please visit <https://edstart.com.au/wildcherry> to set up your account. If you have any queries, please contact the friendly team at Edstart on 1300 139 445 or contact@edstart.com.au.

SMOKING

Wild Cherry School is a smoke free environment. Please respect that all buildings and entire school grounds are smoke free areas.

NEWSLETTER

Our fortnightly newsletter is distributed every second Friday by email. In it parents will find news and notices relating to each class and also to the whole school. It is our most important means of communication, and we encourage families to read our newsletters thoroughly.

If you have information or item for the newsletter, please write briefly and clearly and send it to admin@wildcherry.vic.edu.au by Wednesday before the next publication date.

MONDAY MORNING SHARING

Each Monday morning at 8.45am the whole school gathers either around the rose garden, weather permitting, or in the music room for a welcome to the week and some communal singing and sharing of news. It's a lovely time to spend together and parents are most welcome and encouraged to attend.

OPEN CLASSROOMS AND PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS

Meetings between the class teacher and parents are an essential part of our communication for learning successes. Open classrooms build a strong connection between child, teachers, and families. They also provide a chance for to:

- learn about the work the children are currently doing and will be doing during the term
- share ideas about expectations and needs of your child
- discuss ideas about how home and school can work together on the development of your child
- create a community within the classroom
- discover more about Waldorf/Steiner education and philosophy

Each class teacher holds between two to four class parent meetings per year and will notify you of the dates of these meetings through the newsletter. We do expect at least one member from each family to attend the meetings. Parent Teacher meetings make a vital contribution to the educational wellbeing of your child.

Class teachers are also available throughout the school year by prior appointment.

WILD CHERRY IS ...

- A primary school and early childhood service for Waldorf/Steiner education
- A member of Steiner Education Australia www.steinereducation.edu.au
- A member of Independent Schools Victoria www.is.vic.edu.au
- Governed by an incorporated not-for-profit association (East Gippsland Steiner Education Group Inc)
- Funded by the commonwealth and state governments and through tuition fees
- Registered and accredited with the Victoria Registration & Qualifications Authority for prep to year 6
- A Victorian Government approved kindergarten
- Non-denominational and co-educational
- Non-faith-based celebrating seasonally inspired festivals throughout the year
- Supporting and promoting the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to elected government, the rule of law, equal rights for all before the law, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association, environmental considerations, and the values of openness and tolerance.

A THREEFOLD ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

As a Waldorf/Steiner school we aspire to a threefold organisational structure.

1. Governance Sphere (Board, responsible for legal compliance and financial sustainability)
2. Pedagogical Sphere (College of Teachers, responsible for educational outcomes)
3. Development Sphere (Parents, Friends, Donors, responsible for physical resources and environment)

These three entities are supported by the management group (office team) led by the school leader.

Positive collaboration between all spheres assures the successful day-to-day management of Wild Cherry.

THE BOARD

Wild Cherry School and Wild Cherry Kindergarten are the trading entities of East Gippsland Steiner Education Group Inc., the legal and governance body made up of community representatives with a broad range of expertise in business, legal, and education. The Board is directly responsible for the constitutional function and the viability of the school.

An Annual General Meeting is held each year in early term 2. Families with one or more children enrolled at either school or kindergarten or both are automatically a member of the association, thereby being entitled to vote on and stand for Board membership at the AGM or at special general meetings. A copy of the constitution and a list of current Board members is available upon request from the school office.

COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

The College of Teachers takes care of the School's educational and spiritual needs and meets regularly to discuss educational matters, curriculum planning, and the needs of individual children, as well as review school educational policies and methodology to secure the best educational outcomes for your child.

Our teachers endeavour to provide each child with a solid academic foundation while nourishing their physical, emotional, and intellectual development. This is supported daily by the practice of a precisely structured, methodical, integrated, and broad curriculum program. In the sharing of the children's work, through open classrooms, the arts, plays and festivals, our aim is to foster a culturally rich school community which includes family and friends and extends to encompass the broader community.

SCHOOL POLICIES

School policies reflect the needs of the school, kindergarten and early childhood services and provide the framework for specific circumstances. Policies include:

- Activities, Camps and Excursion Policy
- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Anti Bullying (Students) Policy
- Behaviour management
- Child Safe Standards Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Contractors and Visitors Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Enrolment Policy
- Fees Policy
- Information and Communication Technology Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Restrictive Interventions Policy
- Student welfare Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Whistleblower Policy

And many others.

School policies are available from the school office and a selection of policies is also published on our school website www.wildcherry.vic.edu.au → School → Policies.



CHILD SAFETY

Wild Cherry school is 100% committed to the safety, engagement and empowerment of all children. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns are treated in utmost seriousness within our policies and procedures framework. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety and wellbeing, which we follow rigorously. Our school is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and mitigating these risks. Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Our school is committed to regular training of our staff and volunteers on child safety. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff, and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES

From time to time, you may find that you have questions or concerns regarding your child's individual learning needs, behaviour management, student welfare or other matter. When that happens, we ask you first seek a discussion with your child's class teacher. You can do this quite informally before or after school or making an appointment to meet at a specific time. Some bigger issues may require time and thought, and a formal meeting might be more suitable and can be organised at a mutually convenient time. Formal meetings will have notes taken so that follow up is assured. If your concern is not resolved after talking or meeting with the class teacher, we invite you to take the issue to the School Leader, so the matter can be followed up further.

For any questions relating to fees, please enquiry through the school office to speak with the relevant finance staff.

For issues relating to school enrolment or other administrative matters, please speak with our front office staff first who will direct you in the right direction. Again, this may be done quite informally anytime during office hours, however some matters require time and thought, and in such a case a formal meeting may be organised at a mutually convenient time.

If after formally meeting with the relevant staff member the problem has not been resolved, the grievance procedure should be followed as per Grievance Policy. A copy is available from the school office or from our website.

WHOLE SCHOOL MEETINGS

These are held three to four times a year and are an opportunity to connect with the Board and hear the latest strategic plans of the school and how the school fares with achieving its goals. Your views, feedback and ideas are greatly appreciated and assist the school in developing strategies which reflect the needs of our community.

WORKING BEES

Working bees are the life of our school. Expect about two, maybe three working bees in a calendar year, particularly before the Open Day in term 2 and the Spring Fair in term four. Dates are advertised in the school newsletter. Help is usually needed with a range of small tasks around the school, from cleaning, to gardening to helping set up for events. There is an expectation that all families will make every effort to participate in working bees, class, parent/teacher and whole school meetings, and major events such as the annual Spring Fair and Open Day. Preparing for these special days in our school calendar brings everyone together as a community. It is a wonderful feeling when everyone contributes.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (DC)

Wild Cherry would not be a community school without the Development Committee. The purpose of the DC is to ensure Wild Cherry has the physical resources and environmental needs to operate and function as a school and early learning centre for Waldorf/Steiner education. Its goals are set in the current Strategic Plan. For example, goals include adding high school years to the education offering or finding our forever home. Parents interested in the long-term presence of Wild Cherry in East Gippsland are encouraged to join the DC. Enquiries are welcome through the School office.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT GROUP (PEG)

Wild Cherry School has an active parent engagement group. Parent involvement is most welcome and contributes to the community spirit of the school. There are many ways you can become involved. Activities nourish the needs of parents for support, knowledge, and development of a range of skills including:

- Weekly craft group
- Anthroposophy study circle
- Guest speakers
- Workshops
- Fundraising
- Event organisation (Spring Fair and Open Day)

Enquiries through the school office welcome. From time to time, we also run workshops and invite speakers on various topics. Keep an eye out in the school newsletter for upcoming events.

PARENT RESOURCES

Wild Cherry School has small resource library. Parents are welcome to borrow books on Waldorf/Steiner education or other subjects. Please enquire at the office if you would like to use this service.

RECOMMENDED READING

Waldorf Education – A Family Guide, Edited by Pamela Johnson and Karen L Rivers, 1995

You Are Your Child's First Teacher by Rahima Baldwin, Berkley California, Celestial Arts, 1989

Lifeways by Gudrun Davey & Bons Voors, UK, Hawthorn Press, 1983

The Incarnating Child by Joan Salter, UK, Hawthorn Press, 1987

Festivals with Children by Brigitte Barz, Edinburgh, Floris Books, 1972

Children at Play by Heidi Brits-Crecelius, Edinburgh, Floris Books, 1972

Festivals, Family & Food by Diana Carey & Judy Harpe, UK, Hawthorn Press, 1982

Conception, Birth and Early Childhood by Norbert Glass, Spring Valley, NY, Anthroposophical Press, 1973

Phases of Childhood by B. Lievegoed, Edinburgh, Floris Books 1987

Who's Bringing Them Up? - Television and Child Development by Martin Large, UK, M Lape for the TV Action Group 1980

A Guide to Child Health by M. Glockler & W. Goebel, Edinburgh, Floris Books, 1990

The First Three Years of the Child by Karl Konig, Anthroposophic Press, NY, 1969

Natural Childhood: a practical guide to the first seven years by John B Thomson, ed. Chapters 4 & 5 NSW, Hodder Headline Press, 1994

Waldorf Schools - Kindergarten and Early Grades Volume 1, edited by Ruth Pusch, Mercury Press, Spring Valley, NY, 1993

Happy Children by R. Dreikus, Australian Council for Educational Research Ltd, 1995

Steiner Education by Gilbert Childs, Edinburgh Floris Books, 1991

Many of these titles are available from the School library or can be purchased from:

RUDOLF STEINER BOOK CENTRE 307 Sussex Street Sydney NSW 2000 02 9264 5169

ENROLMENT PROCESS

1. Contact and Enquiry

- Call or email the school with your enquiry.
- Make an appointment for a tour to see the school and meet with class teacher and school leader.
- Receive information pack.

2. Registration

- Read detailed information supplied to parents.
- Return completed application for enrolment form to the school together with enrolment application fee as per current fee schedule.
- Await notification from the school regarding acceptance of enrolment.
- Make an appointment for an interview with the class teacher (parents and child where applicable).

3. Enrolment

- Book a trial day for your child (where applicable).
- Return completed enrolment form with confidential child information and signed enrolment agreement.
- Make an appointment with the school office to arrange fee payment plan and to go through school handbook.
- Plan your child's first day at our school or kindergarten.

WILD CHERRY SCHOOL

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www.facebook.com/WildCherrySchool