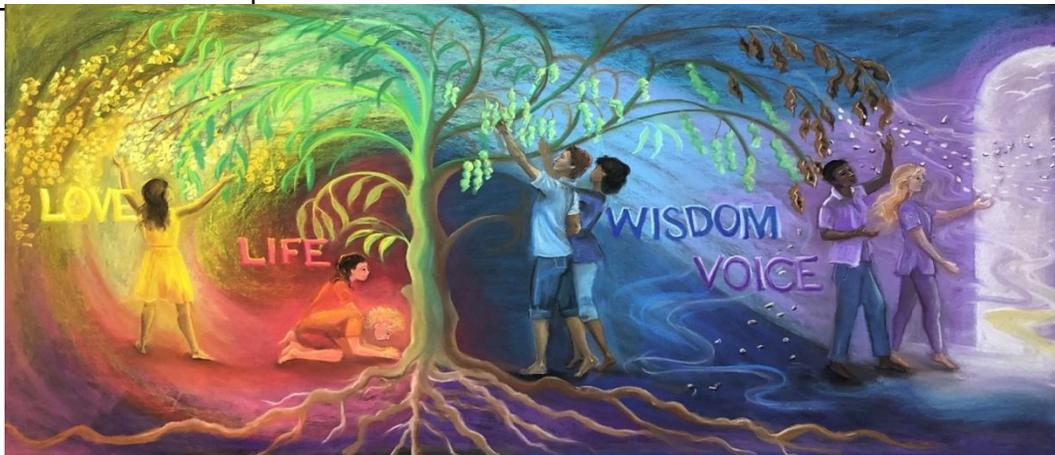




Newcastle Waldorf School

Whole School Wellbeing Policy

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| Related Documents | School Prospectus School Handbook Parent Code of Conduct Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures Supporting Positive Behaviour Policy Child Protection Policy |



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Policy Aim

Newcastle Waldorf School Whole School Wellbeing Policy aims to provide information on the wide range of ways that students and families can engage fully in the healthy life of school. It provides an outline for how our community can communicate and collaborate to support the growing wellbeing of the children in our care.

Newcastle Waldorf School Core Principles

(based on Steiner Education Australia Core Principles - Reviewed by College February 2024)

1. EDUCATIONAL INSIGHTS

Steiner education seeks to enliven the physical, social, artistic, conceptual, and spiritual capacities of our young people. Our school engages with contemporary insights emerging from Rudolf Steiner's indications about the unfolding human individuality.

2. EDUCATION FOR AN ETHICAL AND INCLUSIVE WORLD FUTURE

Steiner education is a world movement which promotes a spirit of universal endeavour and cooperation among diverse cultures and identity groups. We strive to develop each individual's potential as a resilient, ethical, inclusive human being who cares for the people and environment with a reverence for all life.

3. ASPECTS OF WALDORF METHODOLOGY

Our staff creatively strive towards ongoing deepening of Steiner pedagogy

- Our kindergarten enacts play-based learning
- Our primary class teachers extend learning artistically and imaginatively through storytelling, music, and the arts. Each new topic begins with a holistic overview which gives a context for the various details.
- Our specialist secondary teachers cultivate aesthetic and ethical discernment and have a commitment to introducing experiential learning, intellectual focus, and technologies in an age-appropriate manner with an understanding for the creative impulse that guides teachers.
- Throughout the curriculum images of Goodness, Beauty, and Truth nurture and support the development of individual potential, imagination, resilience, inner moral strength, and respect for diversity.
- The rhythm created by focusing on subjects over three-weeks facilitates deep learning and supports healthy life habits.
- We foster positive interactions between the students and the natural world through encouraging the use of natural and sustainable materials, regular explorations of the surrounding environment on excursions, and engaging with the wisdom of Indigenous cultures.

- We encourage learning for its own sake rather than as a form of competition.

4. TEACHING CREATIVELY

Our college of teachers works collaboratively, perceptively and creatively with the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment to meet the needs of each student and each class.

5. COMMUNITY

Waldorf education prioritises building relationships between students and teachers and among the students themselves. The teachers encourage inclusivity and foster fresh perspectives with each student and school community member.

6. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Our staff are supported to cultivate their professional learning (truthful integrity), inner development (warm compassion), and responsibility (to the mutual future) as Waldorf teachers.

7. SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Our educational program meets NESA outcomes and is adapted from the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework (and other Waldorf sources) by the college of teachers to meet the needs of our school community. Our auxiliary staff assist in the quality resourcing of our school. Our Board of Directors has a guardianship role to support the mission and vision of the school to enable the school's legal and financial health. The teachers co-create the emergent future as revealed in their classes.

Curriculum To Support and Teach Wellbeing

The curriculum has a role to play in healing and balancing the child's and young person's experience of life. Using the guidance of The Australian Steiner Curriculum framework we aim to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop a healthy body, soul and spirit. Key focus areas include;

Students:

- Develop the physical foundation for their future health and have had a rich experience of a health-giving or salutogenic daily life at school through immersion in nature-based activity, rich experience of the arts, engagement in authentic activities such as building, cooking and gardening and a rhythmic daily program that has a balance between cognition, feeling, aesthetic engagement and will-based activity.
- Develop a sense of connection to their inner being and an ability to mediate between their inner insights and reflections, soul impulses and actions through an authentic sense of self-identity.

- Have the ability and communication skills to build, maintain and enrich respectful relationships and the insight to discern and respond to imbalanced relationship paradigms on a personal, community or professional level.
- Know and apply understanding of the effects of different levels of nutrition, physical activity, rest and sleep on the health of the human body..
- Access, evaluate and use the applied knowledge to develop good habits and practices that promote and support their own and others' safety, health and wellbeing throughout their lives.
- Reflect on how varied and changing personal and contextual factors shape understanding of, and opportunities for, health and physical activity locally, regionally and globally and are committed to the future health of their own and others' communities.

The Arts and Technology

The arts take a central position in Waldorf education, studied both as discrete disciplines and most importantly as a vital part of pedagogy. In broad terms, Steiner Education aims to harmonise the physical and spiritual aspects of the child through connection to the arts, offering a way of understanding the dynamic and cosmic connections between the growing human being and their stage in the development of consciousness.

An important underpinning philosophy of Steiner education is that young children need to communicate and learn deeply without the mediation of complex technology. This 'unplugged' experience is seen as crucial for children to develop an uncluttered self-image as well as the most valuable form of self-efficacy – one they completely own. On the basis of their rich communication skills and ability to produce a wide range of original creative work, students are well placed to master later mechanised and digital technologies.

Steiner high school students have an empathetic and deep interest in the world and its humanity. They enthusiastically embrace a wide range of complex technologies, including digital technologies after a unit of study in Stage 4.

Camps and Excursions

Camps and excursions are an integral part of our curriculum, enriching the educational and social experience of the students. Our program ensures that students encounter physically and socially challenging situations through which they develop resourcefulness and confidence in themselves as individuals and their class as a learning community.

Engagement In Purposeful Activity

Students will engage in activities that develop capabilities in purposeful daily work. To *know* about health and safety is not sufficient preparation to embody an active, balanced and healthy life. To be able to follow the principles learnt into daily life, requires a strong and balanced sense of self in relation to the world and a harmonised inner life which can choose wisely and engage with enthusiasm in a healthy lifestyle. An additional way that students can enact their learning at school is through involvement in purposeful activity. This includes cooking experiences, gardening, preparation for festivals, woodwork from class 1 flowing into school projects in an age appropriate way that involve design and building. It also extends to cleaning the indoor spaces and outdoor spaces.

Wellbeing and Learning Support

Pastoral care offered to students of the School is facilitated by the system of Class Teacher and Class Guardian and access to specialist support services, such as an affiliated counsellor and the Association of Independent Schools NSW.

Class teacher/Guardian Role

In the primary years, we find a core feature of Steiner education, the ongoing relationship with the class teacher who travels with their class ideally for several years; students in the class form a very close and trusting relationship with the teacher. Around the class teacher a vibrant class community is built and sustained through the primary years. Students trust in their teacher as a guide and mentor as they grow in their interactions with their peers and in their understanding of themselves. In high school this is continued through the role of the Class Guardian. One or two high school teachers will take over the role of the class teacher to guide and mentor the class, knowing more intimately the needs of individuals and supporting these in the whole school context.

The College of Teachers plays an integral role in supporting the school student community and staff. Regular meetings allow for teachers to share the students and their needs with colleagues to plan and implement appropriate wellbeing support across the school for individuals and for cohorts.

Individual Plans

Some students require a higher level of pastoral care due to special needs, or for a specific period of time. Through consultation and agreement with all stakeholders involved in the welfare of the student, an Individual Plan, in areas including behaviour, medical or additional needs may be developed and used.

Additional Support

Newcastle Waldorf School has a team of support staff that function across the school to assist students and families who require or would benefit from individualised support.

Primary: In the primary school we have a learning support staff member (Connie@newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au) and a wellbeing support member (Conor@newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au). They work individually and in small groups with students.

High School: Learning support continues to support individual students where needed with Connie. Class assistants are available to assist individuals to be fully engaged with their learning, supported both in the classroom and for remedial work outside of the classroom.

School Psychologist: Once a week our school counsellor, Lisa Devine, attends school, meeting with students and parents of the high school. Families can speak with the principal (HoA@newcastlewaldorfschool.nsw.edu.au) to book appointments. We are also able to access psychologists in the community as needed. Please speak with Peter to organise this.

If a student is receiving support from an external specialist or therapist, such as occupational therapist we encourage communication between school and the therapist.

Parental support

Where there is concern for the wellbeing of a student, parents can seek support from the school. We will collaborate to develop a plan to support the student and the family where appropriate. We will direct families to appropriate services including our internal support team. To begin this process please contact your class teacher or a member of the leadership team.

Additional Services

- School Counsellor, Lisa Devine
- Youth Liaison Officer.
- Local Counselling Services. Currently: Belinda Muldoon, belmuldoon@gmail.com,
- Hunter Child Protection and Family Counselling Service. Ph. 49246294

A student's plan of support may include engagement with specialists outside of school and we will collaborate with these professionals as a part of this plan.

Student Leadership

Upper school students have mechanisms for sharing their voice with teachers. They participate in circle discussions and share ideas and feedback with their guardians. In the younger years

class teachers listen and where appropriate facilitate discussions that allow students to express thoughts, suggestions and ideas. This is conducted in regular circle times with the class and their guardians. Artistic engagement in the school environment and architecture provides a feeling of connection to space and purposeful expression of their ideas.

Wellbeing In Our Community

Our community strives to find harmony in our interactions and communication to foster healthy relationships. We look to the gifts of each member of the community and through these we collaborate.

The Newcastle Waldorf School welcomes students, parents, carers, staff and visitors from all races, religions, cultural backgrounds, levels of ability and neurodiversity. We welcome people of all genders and sexualities, and we model and teach inclusivity in age-appropriate ways across the school. We highly value the richness that comes from diversity and the opportunities for learning and understanding that diversity brings to us. Above all, we strive to create a loving space that allows each and every child to grow and flourish unimpeded by discrimination of any kind. We make adjustments to be inclusive while respecting the privacy of the individual, fostering a safe environment where each individual has the opportunity to learn and grow towards their potential.

Communication and Interactions

Family Involvement

We host regular activities where our school community can gather. These include: working bees, activity groups; singing, gardening, parent teacher circles, coffee mornings, plays, concerts and festivals. The College of Teachers and experts from the community will often hold talks, meetings and discussions on a range of topics. We advertise these in notes home and newsletters.

Communicating With Teachers

Teachers endeavour to be available to families to discuss the progress of students outside of teaching commitments. Please contact the class teacher or guardian to plan to meet. Each teacher can outline their availability, however on the whole teachers are available to meet after school between 3.30pm and 4.30pm. We encourage parents to communicate with teachers to

build relationships that assist in our care and education of the children. The tone of our meetings is supportive and meetings focus on developing plans that support students. We require parent grievances to follow the school grievance procedures. Occasionally a Co-Principal or fellow teacher will attend these meetings to take minutes.

Before school, teachers are focused on greeting the children, dealing with their needs and establishing the mood for the day. Please only pass on urgent information to teachers at this time; other messages can be left with the Office or addressed via other forms of communication.

Electronic and Telephone Communication

Ethical and respectful communication should be the highest endeavour for the adults in our community. Written and verbal communications between the school and members of the school community will be respectful. We encourage families to share in this responsibility.

Teachers will respond to emails and telephone messages as soon as they can give it their full attention, within school business hours.

At times teachers will have shared their personal contact details. Please ensure that communication with teachers is conducted during school hours or through a prior arrangement with the teacher. Please maintain the privacy of these details if they are shared with you.

Social Media

In working as a healthy community we endeavour to recognise the potential for damage to be caused, directly or indirectly, to the School and members of the school community as a result of the use of social media. When using social media, Staff, Parents and Guardians should therefore:

- be respectful and courteous to all members of the School community, and not act in a way that could harass, bully or intimidate;
- not criticise the School's core principles;
- not discuss or mention the School, its staff or any members of the School community in a negative or defamatory way, or otherwise break the law;
- not use these platforms to voice grievances about the School;
- never disclose the personal details of, or confidential information about, any member of the School community to third parties without the individual's prior consent or that of their Parent or Guardian;
- never post defamatory, offensive, sexually inappropriate or other material that may damage the reputation of the School or a member of the School Community.
- not share photos of students, staff, school community or grounds without specific permission.

Supporting Positive Student Behaviour

Newcastle Waldorf School endeavours to promote a healthy positive environment, where students gain an understanding and appreciation for the importance of spiritual, social, emotional, mental, and physical health and wellbeing, where students grow to be healthy individuals who: are able to assess and maintain their own health throughout their lifetime, in order to develop appropriate and healthy relationships both professionally and personally; have an appreciation for aesthetic, artistic, and creative movement; and have a lasting sense of responsibility for, and appreciation of, the environment in which many of these pursuits take place. The NWS Supporting Positive Behaviour Policy can be found on our school downloads page [here](#).

Code of Conduct

Parents and Carers play a fundamental role in the School Community. The NWS Parent Code of Conduct for parents and visitors has been designed to guide adults in their dealings with staff, other parents, students and the wider school community. Teachers abide by a code of conduct which overlaps with the Parent Code of Conduct, which can be found on our school downloads page [here](#).

Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

Respect and dignity will be awarded to all members of the school community, staff and all children, and effort will be made to listen to the grievances of all parties in a calm and rational manner without recourse to involvement of outside parties who are not directly involved. The School's Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures can be found on our school downloads page [here](#).

Medical Treatment and First Aid

The school recognises its duty of care to take reasonable steps to care for the health and wellbeing of students.

First aid

- There are adequately stocked first aid kits in the Technology Building, the Laboratory, the Kindergarten, Kitchen, Office and the Primary Library. Staff using these first aid kits are responsible for informing the WHS Officer if supplies are running low.
- The first aid supplies are checked on a regular basis by a member of support staff.
- The majority of staff hold current Senior First Aid certificates, anaphylaxis training and asthma training. New staff members will gain their qualifications with the next refresher course organised by the school.
- Some teachers also hold a Wilderness First Aid qualification.
- Qualified teachers are present on all school excursions and all members of teaching staff carry first aid kits.
- Asthma medication and plans are stored in the Kindy foyer cupboard.
- All anaphylaxis medication and plans are stored in the Kindergarten office in a temperature controlled fridge.
- Asthma and anaphylaxis medication and plans are carried by two staff members on excursions as detailed in excursion risk assessments, and also by the individual student.
- Class teachers have copies of asthma and anaphylaxis plans for the students in their class.
- Any qualified staff member may administer first aid in accordance with their training.
- A defibrillator is located in the school administration building.
- Parents will be consulted where possible if their child needs urgent attention, but the school reserves the right to take all necessary steps to provide first aid in an emergency situation in accordance with their training.
- Parents can participate in the decision making process and this helps with an individualised approach to student welfare.
- Class teachers should seek a second opinion from other teachers in assessing injury or sickness of a more serious nature.

Administering prescribed medications and individual health care plans

- Class Guardians are responsible for overseeing all medication (prescribed, over-the-counter or alternative medicines) as advised by parents/guardians.

- Parents need to contact their Class Teacher/Guardian to initiate a consultative process to develop a plan for any medication that a student is required to take at school. This plan may consider the following:
 - Students identifying as having an asthma or anaphylaxis condition will be required to complete an individual health care plan.
 - A copy of this plan will be given to the school along with the relevant medication that is within its expiry date. Parents are responsible for keeping this medication up to date.
- Individual plans and regular medication will be stored in the office, given to staff on arrival, and administered there.
- Emergency individual plans and medication (anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes) will be stored in the kindergarten foyer.
- Students may self-administer medication provided they:
 - are supervised while self-administering, or
 - notify the Class Teacher/Guardian when they have self administered, and
 - are made aware that they are not to share their medication with other students.
- Students are responsible for bringing their own plan and medication on school outings/camps, and hand it in to a teacher along with instructions.

Temporary care and communication when students become unwell or are injured at school

- The Class Guardian will organise for parents of unwell or injured children to be called if they believe that the student should go home, or may need further medical attention.
- There are two sick rooms for unwell students.
- The decision to call a parent through the day is at the Class Teacher/Guardian's discretion, however they should consider the following:
 - Specific parent advice
 - Minor ailments and injuries (stomach ache, stubbed toe) may not need reporting through the day, but catching the parent at the gate or a follow up phone call after school may help to encourage ongoing communication about student health and increase the level of support.
- Injuries and ailments of a more serious nature (for example an injury that requires bandaging, vomiting, shock and head injuries etc.) should be reported to parents, where possible, through the day. On excursions or camps this may be impractical, but every effort will be made to inform parents and involve them in decision making.

Student dietary requirements

- Parents inform the school on enrolment of a student's dietary requirements.

- Class Guardians and all members of staff have access to this information and are responsible for helping students manage their requirements in a way that is suitable to their age and level of responsibility.

Safety and Supervision

Security

Staff on duty roster will ensure that students are not in rooms that are out of bounds and that those rooms are kept locked where necessary.

Staff are rostered on for opening the school in the morning and closing the school in the afternoon/evening. Each member of staff with such a duty will complete a full check of the school before they leave including:

- classrooms
- doors, windows and vents (hall)
- alarm systems
- animal enclosures
- heaters, fans, lights, fountains and indoor taps
- and making sure all students have left

The Technology Teacher will be responsible for security in the technology facilities with regard to the School's WHS Policy. The Science Teacher will be responsible for the security of the science store with regard to the School's WHS Policy.

Students are not permitted to leave the School property from the time they arrive at school until 3:23pm unless they are in the company of a Teacher, Parent/Guardian or the School has been notified by the Parent/Guardian of any special circumstances.

Year 11 and 12 Students may only leave during school hours on school-approved business. Examples of school-approved business are:

- attending TAFE courses at a regular time each week.
- attending HSC exams.

Supervision

Appropriate measures will be taken by school staff to ensure that all students are adequately supervised while onsite in school hours and during offsite activities, bearing in mind the type of activities and the age of the students involved.

- Supervision rosters are stored in Drive and on the notice board in the admin building.
- Teachers will comply with supervision guidelines for on-site and off-site activities as stated in the NWS Code of Conduct and on the duties roster.
- At least one member of staff is onsite from 8am and until after school activities are finished, and all students have left.
- When a non-teaching staff (i.e., specialist) is scheduled to deliver approved curriculum content a qualified teacher will be present.
- Parents are required to advise the school of any legal restraints in the collection of students.
- No student is permitted on school premises prior to 8am. With the exception of excursions, as advised.
- Families must advise teachers of any changes in picking up and dropping off arrangements for the children, and are requested to collect their children no later than 3:40pm.
- If a student is not collected by a reasonable time after school, a teacher will contact parents and will stay with the student until the student is collected.
- After school, teachers are allocated 'Gate Duty' to ensure students wait within the school grounds until they are collected by their parent/guardian, catch the bus, or make their own way home.
- The School takes all possible care to make sure students leave the school safely, however, there are a wide variety of means of travel and regularly changing travel arrangements (particularly for older primary and high school students). The School, therefore, cannot take responsibility for students leaving the grounds after 3:23pm
- Parents are made aware of this in the School Handbook, and they can consult with the school on an individual basis if they have specific requirements at pickup time.
- A teacher is allocated 'Bus Duty' to see primary students safely on the bus or across the road.
- Parents are informed that whilst they are on the premises they are responsible for their child's supervision. This includes before and after school and at school functions and Working Bees.
- Students play in play areas as designated by the playground supervision roster. In Terms 1 and 4 students will wear a hat when outside unless otherwise approved by the class teacher/guardian.
- Unsupervised access to the computer room during lunch periods is restricted unless by permission.
- Access to Science Laboratory, Technology workshop and associated storerooms is restricted.
- School car park safety follow Car Park Safety guidelines in the School Handbook.

- Visitors will report to the administration building on entering the school grounds and sign the visitors book.
- The BSS is responsible for ensuring tradespeople needing to work onsite during school hours report to the office and sign the visitors book before proceeding to the worksite.

Risk Assessment and Critical Incidents

Risk assessment is undertaken across the school for in school activities, excursions and camps. Festivals and outside of school time activities also go through a process of risk assessment.

Our camp coordinator completes detailed risk assessments in the planning of all school camps.

The management of critical incidents follows school procedure and is supported by the Association of Independent Schools and other appropriate services.

Student Expectations

Homework

K – 3

No homework is given to students in years K – 3.

4– 6

Minimal homework is given to students in years 4, 5 and 6, and most of this is finishing work from the day

7 – 12

- A genuine attempt must be made at all homework.
- Students not attempting homework may be required, at the teacher's discretion, to complete it or a substitute task in their break time.
- The teacher will contact parents of students who regularly do not attempt homework to discuss ways in which they can be supported to complete homework.
- Year 11 and 12 students may receive warning letters when their course coordinator deems that they are in danger of not fulfilling the requirements of the course (See year 11 & 12 specific policies)

Dress Code

Newcastle Waldorf School chooses not to have a uniform, and encourages parents and students to give consideration to the clothes their children wear.

- Parents are informed of the Dress Code in the Handbook
- Parents are given a written reminder of guidelines at the beginning of each new school year, and in subsequent parent notes throughout the year when warranted
- Parents are encouraged to dress their children in weather appropriate clothes, including wearing covering clothing and appropriate hats as protection from the sun
- For excursions, notes are sent beforehand informing parents on destinations and for students to wear wide-brimmed hats (no baseball caps), covered footwear, sunscreen
- Covered shoes are required every day at school.
- Clothing should be comfortable and practicable for the whole range of school activities

Students have:

- Covered shoulders, chests and midribs.
- Adequate leg covering that allows running around.
- Covered shoes must be brought to school each day.
- No large brand names, slogans or offensive or distracting imagery.
- No makeup or nail polish
- Jewellery that is safe in any given situation (High School only).
- Broad-brimmed hats (no caps).

Professional Development and Continuous Improvement

Our school community commits to regularly developing and learning in the area of wellbeing. We will engage with experts in their field to inform our teaching and community engagement. The diagram below produced by Sophia Montefiore for Steiner Education Australia provides an overview of the way that we strive for the continuous development of the students in the context of their growth and support from the school community.

