

**St. Anthony says, "Now, if  
I'd booked a SWAS  
adviser..."!**





## Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship

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### **STEINER WALDORF SCHOOLS' ADVISORY SERVICE (SWAS)**

#### **Important Notice**

#### **STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING**

The Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship provides an Advisory Service with the aim of supporting schools at all developmental stages (i.e. "Interest Groups", Sponsored or Member) and all staff and Trustees, to provide education in accordance with principles established by Rudolf Steiner. The Fellowship Executive, in conjunction with the Advisory Service, has the duty to support schools in ensuring that the criteria for the proper running of schools in the UK and Ireland (legal, constitutional, organisational and educational) are understood and carried out. The Fellowship Code of Practice sets out the fundamentals for this.

Individual advisers will seek to ensure that the advice given is appropriate. However, the outcome of such advice will depend substantially on good communication between the school and the adviser. This also requires processes and procedures within schools being in line with good practice. Advice can only be accurate if the adviser receives as clear a view as possible of the activities and situations about which advice is sought. Those receiving advice - Teachers, Administrators, Collegiate or Trustees - have a duty to act on advice only after they have given it due consideration. The SWSF cannot be held liable in this respect.

There may be cases when the Fellowship, through the advisory service, gives specific indications of work to be carried out or criteria to be fulfilled. For example, in the case of a school seeking to attain Sponsored, or Full Member status, or where there are serious grievances that would call membership of the SWSF into question. Advice given specific to such matters would carry the full authority of the Trustees of the SWSF and action within a given timescale would need implementation and should be reported to the appropriate body or individuals.

## SWAS ADVISERS 2011-2012

### The SWAS team:

#### Eurythmy:

- ✧ Mary Watson - FULL AVAILABILITY

#### Early Childhood:

- ✧ Jill Taplin - FULL AVAILABILITY
- ✧ Winny Mossman - FULL AVAILABILITY

#### Class teachers

- ✧ Richard Holden - FULL AVAILABILITY
- ✧ Emma Tame - FULL AVAILABILITY

#### Upper School

- ✧ Jon Syed is - FULL AVAILABILITY
- ✧ Roy Allen - LIMITED AVAILABILITY
- ✧ Peter Snow - LIMITED AVAILABILITY
- ✧ Josie Alwyn - LIMITED AVAILABILITY

#### SWAS Co-ordinator

- ✧ Kevin Avison - Adviser, school organisation, Ofsted preparation, initiatives, mentoring and appraisal, support for developing schools/initiatives and In-service workshops

**Back-up advisers:** (Who may be able to undertake work in a small number of schools, usually on a limited basis) -

- ✧ Angela Querido
- ✧ Alan Swindell

**Associate Advisers** - Costs for SWASAA visits must be negotiated with the individual Associate

- ✧ Andy Phipps (Novalis Trust) - Ofsted, Safeguarding, Special Needs
- ✧ Gabriel Kaye (independent) - All areas of administration including administrator mentoring, marketing and PR etc
- ✧ Jonathan Wolf-Phillips - (Associative Leadership), Personal and school effectiveness training

**Early Years' accreditations** will continue to be conducted by **Janni Nicol**

**\*New advisers** - We welcome Emma Tame back to the SWAS team following her excursion into the wider world of education. Peter Snow (Edinburgh) and Josie Alwyn (Michael Hall and LWTTTS) have also joined the upper school team. Please see the note on upper school advice with this mailing.

**Georg Locher & Gordon Purdy** both retired this year. We thank them for their sterling help and support over the years. Between them, in their different ways, they have made a great contribution to Steiner Waldorf education and we wish them well for the future.

We also thank Sue Marshall and Henry Howlett for their contributions. Their other work has meant that they were unable to offer many visits or participate in regular SWAS meetings and trainings.

**Important note:** *Visits can only be booked via the enclosed form and co-ordinator. Schools can make forward arrangements with advisers, for example, to secure a booking for a coming year, but these must be confirmed by completing a **current booking form**. Follow-up visits within a single year can be arranged with the adviser at the time of the first visit. The adviser concerned then informs the co-ordinator. The costs of the service are substantial and visits are carefully monitored, **the SWSF cannot carry the costs of unofficial visits or others that are not authorised by the co-ordinator**. Normally school departments (Early Years, Class Teacher or Upper School) can receive up to two visits per year; an initial visit with a follow-up has proven the most effective arrangement for Class Teacher visits.*

**Other Matters:**

The advisory team is able to provide support for schools wishing to embark on school-based evaluation or appraisal on request.

As part of developing advisory skills, it can be beneficial for advisers to be able to mentor one-another. In some cases, we may ask whether a school is prepared to host two advisers in order to facilitate this. **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT THE CO-ORDINATOR.** This involves no extra cost to the school or setting concerned

**SWAS continues to seek suitably qualified, enthusiastic colleagues to join the team. If interested, please contact  
SWAS co-ordinator**

## Guidance Notes for Advisory Bookings - Please read carefully

Please return the booking form to the address shown on it. The school liaison for the visit will be contacted by the adviser prior to the visit. The adviser will ask for the following information and will confirm the visit once these arrangements are finalised.

Follow-up visits can be arranged directly with the adviser concerned. However, you are asked always to inform the Advisory Co-ordinator and office in order to avoid conflicting dates

The adviser will need to know the following to help make the visit as fruitful as possible:

- ✧ Who is responsible for arranging the visit (timetabling, accommodation etc)? - N.B. We strongly recommend that this is not the principle teacher to be visited, unless this is unavoidable (e.g. in small schools)
- ✧ Which teachers and subject areas will the adviser work with? (N.B. have all the teachers concerned been informed?)
- ✧ Are there particular concerns that have occasioned the request for a visit?
- ✧ Please provide an outline of the timetable for the visit, including times allocated for consultation, and, where appropriate, the mentor(s) of the teachers (N.B. Consultations should be timetabled so far as possible, i.e. not shoe-horned into breaks or after school)
- ✧ The telephone numbers or contact for the first teacher the adviser will be working with (and possibly their mentor)
- ✧ What school meetings is the adviser invited to attend and for what purpose?
- ✧ Is the adviser being asked to participate or contribute to other school events: give a talk, run a workshop (could other schools in the vicinity be invited?), attend class evening's etc. If so, these should be arranged with the adviser before the visit. The decision whether to offer these is at the discretion of the adviser concerned
- ✧ In addition, please note:
  - Accommodation and meals for advisers during the visit is at the cost of the host school. Please ensure that arrangements are made for a suitable packed lunch, where required.
  - Please establish any particular dietary needs prior to the visit.
  - Accommodation should take account of the peripatetic nature of the advisory task, a suitable working surface; reasonable privacy and quiet are needed to enable a visiting adviser to give their best. Households with small children are not always conducive for hosting an advisory visitor. Access to a bathroom is appreciated!
  - The adviser's duty of confidentiality should be born in mind when choosing an appropriate host.
  - It is the duty of the host school to ensure that proper provision is made for the visiting adviser.

## STEINER WALDORF ADVISORY SERVICE - Statement of Objectives and Principles

### **SWAS objectives:**

- ✧ To provide schools with access to *external mentors* who can assist colleagues and schools in caring for the quality of their work In principle, advisers work to assist in-house mentors, or supplement collegial co-working
- ✧ To share good practice between individual colleagues and schools in the movement
- ✧ To undertake research into the development of Waldorf method, organisation and curriculum
- ✧ To visit colleagues in schools, observing lessons or other work in order to provide observation and reflection useful to the development of the school and profession in general
- ✧ To research the needs for and to facilitate the provision of in-service courses
- ✧ To support and assist quality care measures in schools and with the development of policies and procedures in matters such as evaluation, record keeping, pupil and teacher support etc.
- ✧ To provide objective appraisal of the working environment, relationships and structure of a school and to make recommendations relevant to the particular area of the school for which advice has been sought
- ✧ To advise the Fellowship Council as to the situation of member schools, especially when membership status is under consideration

### **Statement of Principles:**

- ✧ Advisory work is secondary to the tasks undertaken by school staff, volunteers and Trustees: i.e. all those who are involved directly in providing or organising the process of education alongside the young people whose needs these serve
- ✧ The basis for the work of the Steiner Waldorf Advisory Service is provided by policies ratified by the Trustees of the SWSF. In particular, advisers have a duty to uphold the SWSF Code of Practice as it applies to member organisations
- ✧ Advisory recommendations seek at all times to be impartial, founded on observation and commensurate with the fundamental impulse of the Waldorf curriculum, method and social ethic
- ✧ Advisers seek to act professionally and with integrity in the conduct of their work; they seek to do this with objectivity, sensitivity, respect and courtesy and in the primary interest of the young people within the organisations in which the adviser is working
- ✧ In that context, advisers work with respect for the those carrying responsibilities within the member organisation, upholding appropriate confidentiality wherever this does not conflict with their primary task
- ✧ Advisers seek to inform their work with individual spiritual investigation, dialogue with colleagues and the identification of evidence. This sets out, in broad term, the basis for the accountability of advisory personnel

### **Criteria for SWAS Personnel:**

SWSF advisers are appointed by the advisory co-ordinator on behalf of SWSF Trustees through its agreed procedure and criteria. Appointments are made following successful interview with at least two but no more than three existing SWAS or Fellowship executive members (SWEYG representative in the case of Early Years' advisers). SWAS operates co-mentoring and peer appraisal both directly and through review of post advisory questionnaires and via the regular meetings. Criteria for advisers as follows:

- ✧ Adviser applications should be supported by their most recent College of Teachers and/or school management group or Council. In addition to the SWAS co-ordinator should be provided with the names of two independent referees
- ✧ Potential advisers will have shown ability in their work (classes 1-8 in the case of class teacher advisers), have held positions of leadership within their school (e.g. as Chair of Collegiate, member of the school's Council or management group/s and/or in other ways) and will normally have acted successfully as a mentor within the school. Involvement in curriculum development, practical policies, teacher administration is also preferred and, where relevant initial teacher training.
- ✧ An open-minded attitude towards the development of colleagues, interest in the wider educational world in general, an enquiring attitude towards Waldorf in practice are important qualities in advisers.
- ✧ Involvement in the Waldorf movement in addition to work in one particular school should also be indicated (e.g. SWSF representative, taking part in conferences as participant and/or contributor, or in other ways).
- ✧ Evidence of effective communication skills
- ✧ Evidence of a "learning stance" to the task of being an adviser
- ✧ In addition the following points will be taken into account:
  - Participation in the work of the Education Section
  - Evidence of depth of Anthroposophical and general educational study
  - Evidence of original research and/or other professional development.
  - A positive experience of being mentored, or having received advisory visits
  - A practical approach to Waldorf education
  - QTS. or other relevant qualifications
- ✧ Ideally an adviser would be available to work as such for more than one year. However, since advisory work is a form of "post graduate" research, we recognise that there is particular value in staff intending to return to the classroom after a sabbatical taking on advisory work. This can benefit the school that retains them and, consequently, the movement as a whole.

**N.B.** Advisers are not expected to have all the answers, but to have rehearsed many of the questions and to be open to the fresh encounter and questions of newer colleagues.

### **Clarification:**

Confidentiality is the heart of the advisory relationship. Such advice has something of the character of counselling, but for and within a profession, rather than for personal development. In the case of recently qualified, or newly appointed colleagues, the colleague's mentor should normally be present or party to advisory conversations. Thus confidentiality is not an absolute. In particular, we recognise that a teacher's task has

at least two sides: an inner commitment to professional development and personal striving, and a public responsibility to the future of the children (and to the parents whose duty it is to protect that potential). With regard to the personal, inner developmental aspect of Waldorf education, the adviser has an absolute duty of confidentiality. However, public responsibility is carried by the school as a whole. The administration, Collegiate and ultimately Trustees are accountable for their fulfilment.

*Where an adviser has major concerns regarding this 'public responsibility', the adviser has a duty of disclosure. The teacher in such a case must be made aware of the adviser's decision, and wherever possible be present when any report is made. The area of public responsibility includes concerns about serious deficiencies in the general attainments of a class, individuals whose needs are evidently not met, health and safety issues etc. Although a classroom adviser will usually endeavour to remain as "invisible" as it is possible to be while in the classroom (an introduction to class is, however, recommended!) there may be occasions when a situation requires action on the adviser's part. Particularly with regard to issues of safety as e.g. a pupil pulling a chair away as another is about to sit down, the adviser must retain the freedom to act as a responsible adult in order to avert injury, assist the teacher in charge to deal with the consequences, or take other action that may be imperative in the moment. Although any such action should be taken with regard to the twin principles of supporting the teacher and protecting the fundamental interests of the children, the safety, well-being and effective education of the children must always be the primary concern.*

### **Reports, Evaluation and Assessment:**

- ✧ It should be clear from the above that SWAS advisory visits are not assessments. The assessment of individual staff members is a matter for the individual school and needs to be handled by the responsible body in the school. With the proviso indicated above, the confidentiality of the advisory relationship should not be compromised and advisers and the co-ordinator has a duty to act so that advisory visits do not come to be seen as a type of inspection
- ✧ Advisory "reports", whether verbal or in writing, would thus be of a general nature, reflecting the situation of the school as a whole, especially drawing attention to key areas regarding how the quality of work in the school is, or can be best sustained and developed. This could be characterised as an evaluative process, but not formal assessment
- ✧ Written reports are made at the discretion of the adviser unless specifically requested by SWSF Council or Advisory Co-ordinator or as part of the process of accreditation for SWSF membership
- ✧ In the light of the above, advisers may, from time to time, be authorised to participate in a review process that might typically involve, self-evaluation, peer appraisal and an advisory support and consultation