

Steiner Waldorf Schools' Code of Practice

Introduction

All members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship and accredited institutions endorse the principles of this Code of Practice. Sponsored schools work with the SWSF and their sponsors and advisers to achieve implementation of the standards outlined in this document. Affiliated organisations are non-accredited and may subscribe to the Code if they choose to do so. The aim of the Code is to help schools evaluate the quality of their educational provision and organisation practice. Individual institutions may wish to incorporate the standard requirements contained in this document within their own individualised Code of Practice. Within the framework of each school's Development Plan, the Code of Practice provides a tool for self-evaluation, especially for procedural aspects of this. The Code of Practice also provides guidelines for new and developing schools to help them establish appropriate procedures in the first place. Furthermore the Code of Practice provides a framework for school auditing by the SWSF or other external organisations.

Code of practice: aims and principles of Steiner Waldorf education

Member schools of the Steiner Waldorf Schools' Fellowship aim to foster the healthy physical, emotional and intellectual development of children, to support them in realising their potential to grow as self-disciplined and self-directing adults with the skill and social ability to co-operate effectively with others. The professional community of the school is organised collegially in order to complement the learning of the children through the continuous professional development of staff. Understanding that education is a collaboration of parental and pedagogical responsibilities, member schools endeavour to arrange their policies and procedures accordingly and to operate to the highest standards possible, informed by 5 key ideals:

Respect for the integrity (spiritual essence) of each individual and of the world in general
Interest in and Positive approach towards the potential for development in young people in particular and humanity in general

Recognition of the central importance of lifelong learning

Commitment to the core task of educating children in the light of the above and to encourage, enable and value the **Contribution** of individuals, groups and communities to the improvement of our common heritage

The Code of Practice - supporting educational quality

The objectives of the Code of Practice are to ensure that the school's organisational structures and procedures support the primary activity, the education of the children. Leadership and vision are as necessary as resources. Management and organizational structures, buildings, administration and money are essential if the educational activity is to thrive.

Each area of activity within the social organism of the school needs to have a conscious relation to the whole. It is the task of self-evaluation to stimulate the process of quality development. The core question should always be - *does this activity further the education?*

The healthy social organism requires that each individual working within it feels that his or her contribution is both rewarding *and* valued and that the school is able to harness the talents and strengths of each individual to the central task.

Using the Code of Practice: steps of evaluation

This Code of Practice is intended for use by the Collegiate, executive staff and Trustees.

Using the Code of Practice as a tool for self-evaluation involves asking the following questions in relation to the various areas outlined in the code: a) Do we do this? This clarifies whether a given procedure is actually in place, and if the school fulfils at least standard practice. b) How is this working? This requires an assessment of performance in relation to aims stated within the Code of Practice and/or incorporated in a whole school policy statement (e.g. the educational development plan). c) How do we know? This relates to the use of evaluation references, evidence and criteria,

which enable us to judge or measure our level of success. d) What are we going to do now? This relates to how we report such evaluations and how they are to be followed up. This will normally result in the creation of an Action Plan, detailing an order of priorities, those responsible for implementation, lines of reference, consultation and management, budget, and procedures for on-going review and appraisal on completion.

(N.B. SWSF schools wishing to do so may invite assistance from the Steiner Waldorf Advisory Service through its co-ordinator)

Code of practice: structure

The Code of Practice describes standard requirements, developmental goals for the improvement of practice and specific examples of good practice. Examples of good practice are not prescriptive. They are included here to provide a basis for colleagues in schools to create effective, Anthroposophically-informed processes and procedures. All administrative structures and working practices in a Steiner Waldorf school exist to support its core pedagogical purpose.

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Good practice:

- c. The school provides pupil mediation and/or counselling to support behaviour procedures.

5 Child Protection:

Child protection issues are potentially among the most difficult concerns faced by members of staff. Specific guidance and training in the objective handling of child protection is prerequisite. Ultimately this area involves special care of the soul of the child and protection for their development.

Basic practice

- It is a legal obligation for a School to have a named Child Protection officer (CPO).
- There is at least one named Child Protection officer who keeps up-to-date with legal requirements and has a basic level of CPO training.
- Schools procedures should be in line with the LEA procedures.
- Suitable records of all concerns and allegations should be kept in the utmost confidentiality in a locked file.
- All staff are provided with a general code of practice relating to their behaviour with pupils. This is supported by Inset training as appropriate. This training should be provided by a suitably qualified person.
- At least one Trustee has child protection training and responsibility to the Trustees.
- All concerns about pupil behaviour relative to sexual behaviour or abuse will be brought to the child protection officer's attention and their advice will be sought before any action is taken. Reference to this should be in all staff handbooks.
- Child protection issues will not generally be discussed in staff meetings unless the CPO feels it is necessary.
- The CPO will keep the Trustee responsible suitably informed of all issues and concerns and how the school is dealing with it.
- All people coming into contact with children at the request of the school including help with class trips and other volunteers will have prior CRB checks.
- The Trustees have a specific policy with regard to dealing with incidents concerning members of staff, including any allegations that implicate a CPO.

Good practice:

- l. To have a child protection officer of each sex both of which are fully trained.

6 Communications and information to parents and wider school community

Steiner Waldorf schools have collaborative organisational structures, with many specific areas of responsibility delegated or mandated in co-responsibility to individuals or groups, rather than to a head teacher. It is therefore important that it is made very clear who is responsible for what (e.g. for admissions, curriculum development, finance, who chairs the various meetings etc.). All school must incorporate the statutory procedure for independent schools (see DfES - framework for inspection). Information should be clear, relevant, objective, and accessible. There should be the right amount of information for parents to make informed judgements and to feel they are involved in the school community

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6.1 Prospective parents:**Basic practice**

- Each school should have a prospectus which sets out its aims and intentions, and the main characteristics of Steiner Waldorf education, gives a brief history of the school, range of provision/ages. This also includes basic financial information.
- Written information about school policies, processes, procedures and structures should be set out in the form of a Parent Handbook, provided to all parents on enrolment (at latest).
- These documents are regularly reviewed. Annual updates are introduced as necessary.

Good practice:

- Open days are held in which there is an opportunity to learn about the education, hear about the life of the school and the finances. There is space available for questions and answers.
- Prospective parents may have an exploratory discussion with a teacher. School tours are arranged for groups of parents and prospective parents to visit lessons and see school activities.
- There is opportunity to talk to current parents and pupils at these events.
- The school has a website on which prospectus-type information and parent handbook is available. This can also include information on events, staff, press articles etc.
- There is a clear separation between the prospectus for potential parents and the detailed parents' handbook information.

6.2 Current Parents:**Basic practice**

- The school should provide a regular news sheet/calendar of events to all parents/guardians and staff.
- Trustees, parents and staff should be given regular information about staff changes and pupil numbers.
- Parents and staff should be given regular information about the school's finances (see section 6).
- The role of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship should be described in the prospectus and handbooks.
- There is a list available to parents and staff of key roles and the person(s) with specific responsibility for each area within the school, with contact details.
- If the school conducts public examinations the results should be made available with the prospectus and to current parents (and SWSF).
- Information on dates and events is given to the school community with sufficient reasonable notice e.g. via annual school calendar and/or newsheet.

6.2.1 Complaints:

- All channels of communication should be outlined for parents and staff in the handbooks. There should be an identified person(s) to whom parents and staff can bring questions and concerns (e.g. the current Chairperson of the Collegiate).
- Process whereby complaints is outlined in the parent and staff handbooks and others who enquire.
- The school's complaints procedure must incorporate the statutory procedure as set out in the DfES (Registration and Inspection of Independent Schools documents).
- The written procedure should give notice that parents and teachers make use of the SWSF complaints procedure once and if all the member school's procedure has been completed and the matter is still unresolved.

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published when appropriate in the school newsletter or letter to all parents.

8.2 Budgeting and Management Accounts

Basic practice

- a. There is an annual budget and termly management accounts made available to Trustees and College.
- b. Budget planning should be done in light of priorities established as part of an overall development plan for the school.
- c. Appropriate bank accounts should be held - all cheques and major financial operations signed for by two appropriately appointed individuals. Appointments agreed by Trustees, suitably minuted.
- d. Financial matters should be carried and cared for by a finance group, which includes a Trustees, appropriate staff and as necessary other persons.
- e. The school should have a policy for authorisation of expenditure.
- f. There should be a clear policy re fundraising, they should be coordinated with the schools overall development plan.

Good practice

- g. Parents, guardians, or those carrying financial responsibility for the child(ren) concerned receive an annual statement of their payments etc.
- h. A yearly letter to parents about budget, fee rises, or contribution expectations to arrive at latest in the term before any increase is due to commence - prior to the minimum notice period required of parents.
- i. Parents should be reminded of the school's minimum notice period along with yearly information about finances and expenses.

9 Premises and Accommodation:

9.1 Buildings

- a. All schools will endeavour to provide clean, bright, beautiful and suitably coloured working environment for the pupils.
- b. Within available circumstances and resources schools do all possible to provide attractive, aesthetically sensitive surroundings for children both inside and outside the buildings.
- c. There are DfES guidelines concerning the amount of space per child within the classrooms and number of toilet facilities per number of pupils for different age groups. There are also guidelines concerning provision of out door space (please refer to health and safety section of this document).
- d. Care for spaces should take into account questions of allergies and general health and hygiene for all concerned.
- e. Regular cleaning should be organised by a team of parents or professional cleaners on a sufficiently regular basis to support the daily sweeping done by children and teachers.
- f. Schools are required to meet minimum and maximum temperature regulations for the pupils' well being.

9.2 Furniture and Equipment

- a. Teachers need lockable spaces within the classroom for matches and any other dangerous equipment.
- b. Desks and chairs should be of suitable height and shape to provide healthy posture for pupils at work.
- c. The blackboard should be sufficiently large and well positioned and lit to enable convenient use by the teacher and clear visibility for all pupils.

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- d. Internal access to toilets is available for all pupils and staff during lesson time.
- e. There must be separate toilet provision for staff.

9.3 Reception, offices, staff room and sick room

- a. The reception office will be sited in a position convenient to parents, deliveries, and the general public. It should be a dedicated space; this is an important area for public relations and general impression of the school. This needs to be suitably placed so that all visitors naturally pass through and therefore protects the pupils from the incursion of strangers.
- b. There should be clear signage to the reception office.
- c. There should be a dedicated space for staff for breaks or preparation.
- d. The sick room is provided with its own sink and is in reasonable proximity to a lavatory.

9.4 Insurance

- a. Schools must have suitable insurance to cover buildings and public and employer liability.
- b. Boarding Facilities.
- c. All boarding arrangements organised through the school will require registration with the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate and compliance with the National Standards for boarding schools.

10 Health and Safety

The objectives of Health and Safety are to protect children and adults as far as possible within the school grounds and to meet legal requirements without unnecessarily inhibiting educational practice. Health and Safety involves extending consciousness beyond the immediate with the well being of everyone involved or in the vicinity of the activity. The ability to assess risk and take due precautions is an essential aspect of the children's learning. See DfES and HSE regulations. Legally, it is the Chair of Trustees who will face court if there are serious allegations of breaches of procedure and care.

Good practice:

- a. A member of staff is trained in Health and Safety for schools. Various courses are available, best practice would be trained to NEBOSH standards. Maintenance staff should also have training in health and safety relative to tools and construction and the safety of children around work areas.
- b. An anthroposophical doctor visits the school regularly.
- c. There is a Health and Safety review by an external auditor at least every five years, preferably one with experience of schools.

10.1 Risk assessment:

Basic practice

- a. There should be a Health and Safety policy covering all aspects of the school, incorporating a regular and ongoing risk assessment.
- b. There should be a specified member of staff and a Trustee with overall responsibility for this area.
- c. There must be specific guidelines and checklists (risk assessments) for staff particularly in areas of crafts, science, games and school trips.

Good practice:

- d. The responsible staff member for individual areas, such as crafts, science, trips out etc. is made known to parents via the Parent Handbook, or similar publication. New health and safety requirements are regularly monitored and information circulated to staff. Each place

APPENDIX 1**DfES Policy and Record Keeping Requirements
for Independent Schools**

(as understood from Registration Information Pack - 2005)

This is not a definitive list but simply an aid to working on the issues of policy and government requirements. Further information can be found by working in depth with the above mentioned document, with the Teachernet website www.teachernet.gov.uk/atoz/policies oratoz/modelpolicies.

1. Main Policy Documents etc.

1. Curriculum Policy and schemes of work.
2. Policies and procedures for Work, Progress, and Assessment.
3. Promoting good Behaviour, and sanctions and records for misbehaviour.
4. Anti-Bullying Policy and procedure (see DfES guidance "Bullying" document) and records of incidents and actions taken.
5. Safeguarding and promoting Health and Welfare of children (Child Protection).
6. Health and Safety of pupils on educational trips and risk assessments of activities and performances.
7. Fire Precautions and Risk Assessment. (1997 regulations - 'workplace').
 - a) Fire Risk Assessment.
 - b) Requirement for fire detection and warning.
 - c) Means of escape.
 - d) Fire fighting equipment and Maintenance and testing of fire safety equipment.
 - e) Planning for emergency (insurance requires a Disaster recovery/Emergency plan) and staff training. (inc regular fire drill and accompanying records).
 - f) Minimum 5yearly Risk Assessments.
8. Police check policy - CRB Disclosure Forms for all **proprietors** of the school - and **all staff**, including:
 - a) All Trustees/Directors.
 - b) All staff/volunteers.
 - c) And Policy to cover the management this, including data protection.
9. First Aid provision (and Policy), and proper records (accident book and RIDDOR).
10. Boarding Policy - (see National Care Standards - National Minimum Standard - www.doh.gov.uk/ncsc).
 - a) Welfare Policy and procedures.
 - b) Organisation and Management.
 - c) Welfare and Support and to boarders (plus 'guardianship' of those living abroad).
 - d) Staffing - police check etc.
 - e) Premises - guidelines and suitability.
11. Attendance-
 - a) inc Requirements to keep Registers and
 - b) returns of Attendance stats
 - c) non regular attendance resulting in insufficient access to education to be reported to LEA.
12. Admissions (see Educational Regulations 1995 - 'Pupil Registration') inc proper enrolment records.
13. Medical Fitness Policy / Disabled staff. (staff).
14. Employment Procedures - (see page 17).
15. Complaints policy and procedures - see Regulation 7 of 'Educational Regulations' (Independent Schools Standards 2003). (Also, see 'Policies and Procedures'- p.19).

Under Provision of Information to Parents:

16. Statement of School's ethos and aims.
17. (see 12a) Policy arrangements for Admissions.
18. (see 6) Policy arrangements for Discipline.
19. Policy arrangements for Exclusions.

20. SEN provision and policy (see page 21).
 21. EFL provision and policy.
 22. Policy of information on educational achievements of each pupil i.e. min Annual report for each child of school age (therefore for Kindergarten children from 5yrs).
(-All inspection reports must now be send/made available to all parents.)
 23. Prospectus etc.
 - a) Publish suitable information to assist parents in making choice of education.
 - b) Increase awareness of education provided.
 24. Accessibility Plan and Policy (3yr)
 - a) Increase access for disability (buildings).
 - b) Improve delivery to disabled pupils of information provided to all pupils.
(see pages 34/35) .
 25. Publish return information on Truancy.(see 11,b).
 26. Publish information on exam results.(also via return of stats).
 27. Health and Safety at work policy.
 28. Sex Discrimination, Race Relations and Equal Opportunities Policies for pupils and staff (for staff see employment policies - see no.14 above).
 29. Food and Hygiene Policy.
 30. Policy on restraint and handling of pupils.
- Some other areas that are advisable to have policies on are -*
1. *access to information and confidentiality*
 2. *lost children*
 3. *photography*
 4. *smoking (staff and pupils where applicable)*
 5. *Staff appraisal and training*
 6. *fees and finances*

2. Laws that Independent Schools need to comply with as per Registration pack:

1. Educational Policies Regulations 2003 (Provision of information - Independent Schools).
2. Educational Regulations 2003 (Independent Schools Standards).
3. Educational Regulations 2003 (Independent Schools Inspection Fees).
4. Educational Regulations 1999 (School premises).
5. Circular DfES/0278/2002 - Child Protection.
6. Circular 10/95 - Protecting Children
7. Circular 10/98 (section 550A) - use of force to control or restrain.
8. Compliance with Disability and Discrimination Act 1995.
9. Education Regulations of Sept 1999 concerning suitable and effective education
..... and many others including 'duty of care' - staff and pupils.

3. Information to communicate to DfES:

1. Change in age range. (such as KG to Class V then KG to class VIII)
2. Change in numbers (significant).
3. Change of address.
4. Change in proprietor (inc police checks on new chair of 'governors' - CRB via DfES and CRD checks via ordinary route for other Trustees).
5. Teacher/Staff who leave as inappropriate to work in school or serious misconduct.
6. Fire regs clearance.

APPENDIX 2

Codes of Practice for SWSF, SWAS and Administrative staff

This Code of Practice has come about through the wish of members for a basic description of agreed requirements for institutions operating under the (Rudolf) Steiner/Waldorf name and the recognised need for institutions to act in an accountable manner. The SWSF provides an associative structure for mutual help and support between school facilitated by its employees (the Executive, or Steering Group).

The aims of the SWSF are set out in its legal objects and expanded upon at www.swsf.org.uk. The Council of SWSF comprises trustees drawn from full member schools. Schools seeking full membership, referred to as “sponsored schools” undergo a process of accreditation intended to lead to full membership. The Code of practice informs the accreditation process. Early Years’ centres that are not within schools have a process of accreditation appropriate to their work. Affiliated organisations are non-accredited by SWSF as are registered Interest Groups.

1 The Executive Group - of the Fellowship Code of Practice

The Fellowship Steering Group (SG) works within its own Code of Practice. This includes the following aspects:

1. Roles and priorities within the SG, which are determined by the SWSF Development Plan (agreed by SWSF Council).
2. SG member job descriptions.
3. Task and role review and appraisal procedures.
4. Contractual terms and conditions of employment for SWSF employees.
5. The SWSF equal opportunities policy.

2 Advisory Service: SWAS

The Steiner Waldorf Advisory Service was set up by to provide professional support and to share good practice between schools. The aims of the service are to provide help for individual staff members & to support schools in reviewing their work through observation and consultation, in-service courses, the provision of coaching and other forms of professional development. This service is co-ordinated by the SWSF steering group and is made possible through the collegial and associative working of schools as a “fellowship.” SWAS can also provide help to non-teaching staff and advise whole schools on organisational matters, including preparatory consultations prior to Ofsted inspection. Regular meetings of schools administrators provide a focus for in-service training and collaborative work on areas of policy and procedure that enable the educational work to take place.

SWAS can give advice on professional appraisal and assessment of staff. Please refer to SWAS Guidelines (sent to member schools each year).

Standard practice:

- a) An adviser visits all teachers and other key staff in their first year as “external mentor”.
- b) The adviser speaks with the teacher before visiting a lesson a timetabled feed-back session is provided after the observed lesson(s).
- c) In the probationary period the in-house mentor invites the adviser and is involved in the consultative sessions.
- d) General consultation is given to the Collegiate but personal professional confidentiality of adviser to teacher is maintained.
- e) All members of staff receive periodic advisory visits as part of continuing professional development.

Good practice

- f) A first term advisory visit for teachers (and other key staff) in their first post is arranged by the school.
- g) All key staff have advisory visits at agreed points in the job (such as class 1, 4/5 and 7) or on a regular 3 to 5 yearly cycle depending on the post.

- h) The member of staff with responsibility for CPD co-ordinates the advisory visits and meets the adviser for consultation as well as making sure information is given to collegiate and, as appropriate, to the Trustees.
- i) The school has individual Individual Professional Development plans for all staff.
- j) The school should recommend suitable staff on sabbaticals to apply to join the advisory team as part of their personal professional development.

3 Administrators work and meetings

In most SWSF schools there are few administrative staff and the administrator finds herself or himself in a singular and somewhat solitary position. The area of expertise needed to do the job is extensive and complex as a result administrators work with the SWSF administrative co-ordinators to share expertise, questions, concerns and train and update expertise approximately six times a year. Some of the sessions organised can be useful for Bursars and College Chairpersons or trustees also.

Standard practice

- a) The school enables and encourages the administrator or other appropriate staff to attend these meetings/training sessions regularly.
- b) The school will provide a mentor for key new administrative staff. If there is nobody suitable within the school an experienced administrator from another school can be asked to provide regular conversations and occasional visits. An appropriately qualified Trustee may be able to provide mentoring or professional support for such staff.
- c) Meetings are structured and membership of school teams is constituted so as to ensure collegiality, monitoring and support for all key staff. The need for good communication and informed decision-making is embodied in clear procedures and effective processes.
- d) At least one member of the administrative staff attends collegiate or other key school meetings.

Good practice

- e) The school provides opportunities, supported by a budget, for training in specific aspects of administrative work as needs are identified and includes them in the staff member’s Individual Professional Development plan, e.g. to learn a new computer programme, meeting facilitation skills, receive coaching in aspects of personal planning and time management.
- f) The school provides opportunities for administrative staff to spend some time observing work in the classroom.
- g) Administrative staff provide occasional coaching based on their areas of competence to teaching staff in order to enhance general staff competence and understanding of work issues.