



THE EARLY YEARS (RECEPTION - YR 1) POLICY

In the Steiner Academy Exeter, children from Reception and Year 1 are combined in mixed-age kindergartens, each of around 17 or 18 children. Each kindergarten group is led by a specially trained kindergarten teacher supported by at least one assistant.

In our Kindertagens the children grow in a secure caring homely environment, surrounded by quality toys and materials which allow the children to develop physical and social skills and creative impulses together with imagination and fantasy which all help to form a foundation for a healthy adult life.

The structure and security of a Steiner Kindergarten form a bridge between home and the busy world outside. We aim to be an extension of the children's home life, rather than separate from it.

FOUNDATION SKILLS

The foundation skills in literacy and numeracy are laid through an environment rich in hands-on activity and play, and where language and communication are enabled through a rich oral tradition. Formal learning of the three R's does not feature: children learn these skills more effectively when they have been given the time and opportunity to first develop socially, emotionally and physically in a creative, secure and harmonious environment.

THE STATUTORY EYFS AND EXEMPTIONS

Our educational principles, policy and practice are based on and informed by the Steiner Waldorf Early Years curriculum and framework.

The Statutory **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** Birth - 5 years, applies to all settings including ours. It sets out both learning and development requirements and safeguarding and welfare requirements for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. You can find out more about the EYFS in the *Guide to the EYFS in Steiner Kindertagens* which you will find in your kindergarten or on <http://www.steinerwaldorf.org>. You can also find a *parent's guide to the EYFS* on the government website <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk>

Because there are differences between some EYFS requirements and Steiner Waldorf early childhood principles and practice, we have received some 'Exemptions and Modifications' to the EYFS Learning and Development requirements and Assessment regulations under the 'Established Principles' route. These are mostly to do with the introduction and in some cases formal teaching of reading, writing, mathematics and use of IT/media and electronic gadgetry. There is no exemption from the safeguarding and welfare requirements. (See list of *Exemptions and Modifications* in the kindergarten).

We use the **Steiner/EYFS On-going Assessment for Three - Six Year-Old Children** which includes extensions and progression for children who are 5-6 +.

THE DAILY ROUTINE THROUGH THE “RHYTHM OF THE DAY”

The Kindergarten session is structured with a rhythm based on “breathing in” and “breathing out”: of concentrated activity and free play. By maintaining this rhythm the children feel secure in the cycle of the days, weeks and months, through repetition of seasonal activities, festivals and songs.

The adults present in the Kindergarten are there to help the children to feel safe within the rhythm, to inspire self-motivated learning and to provide role models worthy of imitation. One of the main principles behind the Steiner-Waldorf approach is that young children begin their learning through imitation, rather than instruction. Thus great care is put into the adults’ gestures, speech and movement in the Kindergarten.

For more information on the daily practice within our Kindergartens please see our Kindergarten Handbook [HERE](#)

MONITORING CHILDREN’S PROGRESS AND PARENTAL INVOLVMENT

We monitor the children’s progress in order to be aware of his or her needs, providing continuous support whilst at our school. We keep observations and record of all children using our Steiner Waldorf Early Years Profiles which are completed termly.

Every school term we hold a group Parents Evening where parents and teachers meet together. This is a chance for parents to discuss a particular aspect of child development or education as well as to enjoy a kindergarten activity. It is also a wonderful social opportunity to all meet as part of the Steiner Academy Exeter community and to come together for our children. All parent are warmly invited to attend.

In addition teachers meet individual with parents at least twice a year. Parental involvement in contributing to the child’s records is welcomed, as parents will observe progress and development at home that we may not see in the setting. We encourage the sharing of information.

Parents are also invited to celebrate their child’s birthday and are encouraged to regularly attend festival celebrations in the Kindergartens and the main school.

There are regular talks given by Steiner early years specialists about Steiner education.

BEHAVIOUR

The young child learns through imitation. This is a principle of Steiner kindergarten pedagogy: Seeing how adults act and behave will impact the child’s own behaviour more powerfully than what we teach directly. Learning through imitation is rooted in the warmth and empathy of the Teacher as a ‘loving authority figure’. It is out of a warm and empathic relationship that the child’s will to follow the Teacher’s example can take form.

This kindergarten behaviour policy can be viewed [HERE](#). It caters for the specific needs of the Kindergarten child’s behaviour and sits within the wider framework of the School Behaviour Policy. As such it is based on core principles of Awareness, Honesty and Responsibility.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Kindergarten teachers carry out individual risk assessment based on activities, substances or equipment used. These take into account age of children and level of supervision and will identify measures to reduce risk. Please read in conjunction with the school Health and Safety Policy.

SPECIAL NEEDS/INCLUSION

Every child in the kindergarten has access to all aspects of the curriculum unless agreed within the context of an EHCP or support plan. Differentiation extends to planning and preparation for individual children as deemed appropriate. This includes extension work for the more able children.

AFTERNOON CARE

Although the Kindergarten morning finishes shortly after lunch there is provision for all the children at school until the end of the school day for those parents who request it.