



# PARENT HANDBOOK

**Milkwood Steiner School**

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# WELCOME

Many different paths lead children and their parents to Milkwood Steiner School. We are delighted you have chosen to become part of our school community.

This Handbook has been prepared to provide our families with information about your school and community. We hope this Handbook will answer many questions and direct you to answers for the rest. By consulting it you will be better informed and feel more at home at Milkwood Steiner School, which we refer to fondly as 'Milkwood'.

Please take the time to read this Handbook carefully. It will help us to work together and act as an invitation for you to explore your personal connection to the school. A Steiner school differs from other educational institutions in a multitude of ways, and parental involvement is fundamental to achieving the school's vision.

This Handbook is just one source of information for families in which we endeavor to keep information up to date. Please keep in mind that changes or new information will be announced in our Newsletter as well as letters and notices from School. Wherever possible we distribute information via email in order to help reduce waste and protect the environment.

We welcome helpful suggestions and if you have any question not addressed in this Handbook, please do not hesitate to ask a staff member.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Larrakia people, who share with us the land for which they have cared and handed down for many thousands of years. Upon this land we built a school blessed with community, culture, story and song.

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# MILKWOOD STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Milkwood Steiner School is an initiative of the Milkwood Steiner School Association (MSSA). MSSA is a not-for-profit incorporation of which parents become members for the period children are enrolled at Milkwood Steiner School (Milkwood). MSSA membership is also open to non-school parents and other interested parties. The MSSA Board governs the school and throughout the year you will receive notices and information from the Board that relates to your membership, such as the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The direction of the school is guided by the Board in consultation with College of Teachers (COT), who create the policies from which management operate. Meetings are held monthly and the AGM is held during Term 2.

The objects and purposes of the Association are:

- To develop and maintain a co-educational, non-denominational school in the Darwin region, in accordance with the educational philosophies of Rudolf Steiner.
- To provide members with the opportunity to participate in activities which promote a sense of community and support the school ethos.
- To engage in and support discussion about Rudolf Steiner's philosophies.

The Association is often referred to as 'the Community', and includes the whole body of members, and active participation in the Community is of benefit to both the school and the students.

Current Board members are;

Amica Gordon – Chairperson

Amy Tretter - Treasurer

Amy Harrison – General Member

Thisbe Purich – General Member

Board email address: [board@milkwood.nt.edu.au](mailto:board@milkwood.nt.edu.au)

## POLICIES

Milkwood's Steiner School policies can be requested via the office.

# MILKWOOD STEINER SCHOOL OVERVIEW

## VISION STATEMENT

To offer a quality Steiner Education to our students and demonstrate the value of Steiner Education in our wider community.

## MISSION

To promote a strong learning environment based on Steiner Educational principles to meet the educational needs of our students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## ETHOS

The ethos of Milkwood Steiner School is the strength of the school. It reflects the curriculum and delivery of education within the school. The virtues of love, reverence and selflessness bring the wisdom to work and grow together. The ethos of Milkwood encompasses the following:

- I. The principles of Anthroposophy
- II. Community development
- III. Respect for all
- IV. Best practice schooling
- V. Consensus within decision making processes
- VI. Collaboration
- VII. Fairness and due process

## MILKWOOD STEINER SCHOOL'S FOUNDING STORY

### THE EARLY DAYS

Since 1996, Steiner-inspired playgroups for young children and families have operated in Darwin and Litchfield. The response to playgroups was very strong with over 40 families participating. In 1999 several playgroup families formed and incorporated the Darwin Steiner Association (DSA) to enable the development of a Steiner Kindergarten and school. The DSA grew into a diverse, enterprising and highly motivated group of around 60 members. The primary focus of the DSA was the development of Milkwood Steiner School. The DSA published regular newsletters, created a library, supported craft and study groups (Waldorf Learning Group), held public and private seminars, fundraising events, founded the Milkwood Nightcliff market stall, and supported seasonal and cultural festivals as well as Steiner-inspired playgroups. Prior to the school opening, the DSA changed its name to MSSA.

## **OPENING THE SCHOOL**

Milkwood Steiner School opened its doors in January 2004 in the converted Nightcliff Scout Hall in Bauhinia Street, Nightcliff. In the first year Milkwood started with 26 students ranging in age from 4 to 8 years old with a Kindergarten and a combined Class 1, 2, 3. We began with two wonderful Steiner teachers, Wendy Watt and Di Johnson. Each following year we expanded by one class year level and so in 2007 we were proud to have grown to Class Six.

In February 2007 we moved to 3 Cecil Cook Avenue, Marrara. Here the children were blessed with two enormous trees in which to climb and play. Milkwood has now grown enabling us to offer specialist subjects including craft, nature studies and outdoor education, music ensemble and private music tuition.

At the end of 2009 with the assistance of BER and BGA funding we built four tropically inspired classrooms with wide shady verandas on our current leased premises at Boulter Rd Berrimah. We also hold a lease on the neighbouring natural bush block which extends our play area.

We continue to wait to be granted land from the government to grow the school grounds.

Milkwood Steiner School Association would like to thank past and present members (Darwin Steiner Association) and all those who have nurtured the growth of Milkwood Steiner School with their encouragement, support and contribution.

## **NAMING MILKWOOD STEINER SCHOOL**

Milkwood Steiner School was named after a beautiful Milkwood tree growing in Knuckey Lagoon Recreation Reserve. It became very special to the children who attended the Steiner-inspired playgroups and the Waldorf Learning Group held there in 2001.

Early in its life, this tree began growing horizontal to the ground, resulting in a magical and safe leafy place for children to play and be. From the first moment, the Milkwood tree drew the children to it. From the highest perches came the sounds of children's voices and laughter and lilting recorder tunes.

Great billowing, cloth 'green ant nests' were built in the lower branches. The children whispered to it and hugged it every day. In times of confusion and sadness, children found solace in its broad, curly limbs. There was great excitement when it flowered and tender new green leaves emerged. The Milkwood became their 'Crinkum, Crankum Tree'; a beautiful story written by Margaret Mahy and told over and over while sitting in and under it.

We warm to the symbolism of the Milkwood tree as one of nature's gifts which has strength and resilience and medicinal uses and a representation of this tree is now part of our logo.

# ORGANISATION OF THE SCHOOL & CONTACTS

## MANAGEMENT/ ADMINISTRATION

PRINCIPAL	Netanela Mizrahi	principal@milkwood.nt.edu.au
ADMINISTRATION and ENROLMENTS	Isabelle Kirkbride	admin@milkwood.nt.edu.au
FINANCE MANAGER	Caron Farrell	finance@milkwood.nt.edu.au

## CLASSROOM

### COLLEGE OF TEACHERS (COT)

The COT is responsible for all educational matters and student welfare, ensuring Curriculum, Student Conduct, Student Assessment, Teacher Mentoring and Adult Education.

<b>Kindergarten</b>	Penelope Johnson	kindergarten@milkwood.nt.edu.au
<b>Class 1</b>	Marissa Madigan	marissa.madigan@milkwood.nt.edu.au
<b>Class 2</b>	Milly Flook	milly.flook@milkwood.nt.edu.au
<b>Class 3 /4</b>	Fiona Couattie	fiona.couattie@milkwood.nt.edu.au
<b>Class 5 /6</b>	Alan Drysdale	alan.drysdale@milkwood.nt.edu.au

<b>String Instrument Tutors</b>	Michael Bardon , Tara Murphy
<b>Kindergarten Assistants</b>	Lara Andropov
<b>Classroom Support Aides</b>	Caryn Dunning, Bernadette (Bernie) Murray
<b>Ensemble Conductor</b>	Netanela Mizrahi

### CLASS GUARDIANS

Milkwood Steiner School Class Guardians are a valued help to the teacher and parents. Under the direction of the Class Teacher, the Class Guardian liaises with the whole class community when necessary. Class Guardians are appointed by the individual teachers and generally help for the one year.

## OPERATING HOURS

**OFFICE:** 8:00 AM TO 3.00PM

### **KINDERGARTEN AND CLASSES 1-7: 8.15AM TO 2.35PM**

8:00am to 8:15am	Duty
8:15am	Bell
8:20am to 10:00am	Main Lesson
10:00am to 10:15am	Eat Recess (supervised)
10.15am to 10:45am	Recess Play
10.45am to 12.30pm	Mid-Morning Session
12.30pm to 12.45pm	Eat Lunch (supervised)
12:45pm to 1.15pm	Lunch Play
1.15pm to 2.35pm	Afternoon session
2.35pm to 3.00pm	Teacher on Duty
2:50pm	Walk to Bus Stop

## DROP OFF & PICK UP

### **KINDERGARTEN**

Kindergarten drop off is at the Kindergarten between 8:00am – 8:15am. Parents are to walk their children to the Kindergarten. Parents are requested to leave the Kindergarten area after drop off. On arrival, we ask that children put away their hat, water bottle and bag and then move outside for play. Students are to be collected by their parents or guardian from the Kindergarten at 2:35pm.

### **CLASS 1 - 6**

Drop off is from 8.00am with the morning bell ringing at 8.15am. There is no supervision of children before 8am – please stay with your children until then if early. On arrival, children must proceed into the schoolyard; the car park is not for play. Bags need to be hung outside their classroom and move directly to the playground until class time. Arranging with other families to share drop off can reduce the number of cars on the premises and improve safety on the driveway.

Classes finish at 2.35pm. Children must remain on the verandah with the Teacher on duty until they are picked up. If parents have not arrived to pick up their children by 3pm the Teacher on duty will phone the parent or emergency contact. Children will be checked into Afterschool Care and costs will be incurred to parents until the child is collected. Please see our Afterschool Care Program.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Teachers are focusing on the start of the school day so please find an alternative time to chat. If you need to talk to your child's Teacher, please make an appointment by leaving a note in the class book outside the classroom or contact the office to leave a message for the teacher.

### **NOMINATING SOMEONE ELSE TO PICK UP YOUR CHILD**

If you carpool we would appreciate a note to the Teacher to notify of the person collecting your child.

If another person is authorised to pick up your child / children then the school must be notified. In the situation that an unauthorised person arrives to pick up a child from the school, the school must not release the child. Staff will action the Child Protection Policy if ever they are suspicious of unauthorised persons on the school grounds. Police will be called before the parents.

## **BUS**

Please phone The Department of Transport on 8924 7666 or visit the website [PublicTransport@nt.gov.au](mailto:PublicTransport@nt.gov.au) for bus times. The closest bus stop is on Vanderlin Drive, opposite the Police Headquarters. Once you have determined the bus your child is to catch you are required to complete a permission slip. This can be obtained from the office. At 2:50 each afternoon a staff member walks students to the bus stop and waits until the bus collects them. Children will only be permitted to catch a school bus. Written permission is required for occasional or regular bus use.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

One of the greatest gifts we can give one another is the practice of punctuality. It is a gesture of deep respect for others and a virtue that will hold children in good stead throughout their lives. When we are habitually late, we create a sense of lack of appreciation for others who are ready to begin on time. Beginnings in life are significant. An agreement to begin on time, when kept, strengthens discipline within the individual and creates a community of mutual support and commitment.

We appreciate parents' efforts to achieve punctuality to begin the day together. Those first ten minutes at the beginning of each day set a mood and tone of inclusion and mutual commitment to the day ahead and can be difficult to make up later.

### **LATE ARRIVAL & EARLY DEPARTURE**

Classes will start promptly at 8:20am and children that arrive after this time **MUST** register at the office with a parent/ caregiver and receive a late note before proceeding to class. Children arriving between 8.20am and 9.20am will be recorded as a late arrival. If a child arrives after 9.20am they will be marked as absent for the morning session. The parent is to accompany the child to the classroom and wait there until the child is permitted to join the class. Please be aware this affects your child's overall attendance and may have funding implications.

If for some reason your child must leave early, please register an early departure at the office, receive a note from the office to give to the teacher, then you may go to your child's classroom to collect them.

These processes are for the safety and wellbeing of your child and account for where they are during school times.

## **ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES**

All children aged 6 and up are of compulsory school age and must attend the school where they are enrolled on every day that instruction is provided. Unexplained absences directly affect government funding to schools.

Please contact the school, by phone or email, before 9am when your child is absent, so records may be marked appropriately. Notification by a parent of a child's absence also allows us to be assured that the children are safe and where they should be.

Regular attendance is important for a child to receive the full benefit of a Steiner curriculum. The main lesson format and textbook-less approach make it difficult to make up missed classes. The College of Teachers strongly urges families to avoid children missing school for reasons other than illness or religion. Schedule doctors, dentists or other appointments for after school. After Main Lesson, 10.20am is the next appropriate time to join the class.

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## SCHOOL FEES

### SCHOOL FEE EXPLANATIONS

Application Fee: An administration fee of \$100 that confirms your application to enrol your child and indicates your desire to meet with the class teacher to discuss the enrolment of your child at Milkwood.

Enrolment Deposit: Payable upon receipt of the enrolment acceptance letter securing your child's place in the school. The \$400 will then be deducted from your school fees invoice on commencement.

Tuition: Operational school expenses.

Resources Fee: Includes all writing & art materials, swimming lessons, excursions, camps & music tuition. No additional texts or books are required. String instruments are introduced for all students from Class 3 and instrument hire or purchase are not included in this fee schedule.

Voluntary Annual Capital Donation: A voluntary annual tax-deductible donation used for buildings and infrastructure. This appears on your annual invoice and applies once per family. This can be removed from your invoice on request.

Morning Tea supplied: Kindergarten classes only –

**\*\* Recorders (Class 1):** Each child is issued a **Moeck Flauto 1 Plus Soprano Recorder** in Class 1 and the cost is included in the Resources Fee. Please advise the office if your child does not require a recorder and your account will be credited accordingly. If you are unsure please liaise with the Class Teacher.

Uniforms: Non-compulsory Milkwood T-shirts and Hats are available from the office at \$18 each.

Extended Absences: If a student is to be away from school for extended periods and the parents wish to ensure there is a place held for the student in their class, then full tuition fees are applicable. In cases of financial hardship parents may apply for fee relief according to the below instructions.

Repair Fee: Damage to school property (including books and desks) due to lack of care or respect will be invoiced at repair or replacement value.

Withdrawal Fee: Advance notice of 1 term or 10 weeks is required in writing to School Management. First and foremost the school's policy of 10 weeks (one term) minimum enrolment and therefore one term minimum fee payment will apply.

Debt Collection: If school fees are not paid within the agreed time as per payment plan, debt collection will ensue.

### DISCOUNTS AND FEE RELIEF

Sibling Discount: Families with more than one child attending the school will receive a 20% reduction in tuition fees for the second child and 50% reduction in tuition fees for the third and subsequent children. Sibling discounts do not apply to Bush Apple Kindergarten fees as these are already heavily subsidised by the school.

Annual payment by week 4: 5% Discount applicable.

Fee Relief: Fee relief is determined on an individual basis when unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances present a difficulty to meet the payment agreement. The Parents/guardians must apply in writing to the Board clearly stating:

1. The amount of fee relief required;
2. The invoice for which fee relief relates and;
3. The reason for the request, and
4. On request may need to provide additional documentation to substantiate their claim.

The Principal will take into consideration:

1. The duration the family has been enrolled at the School;
2. The contribution the family has made to the growth of Milkwood;
3. If fee relief has been granted previously to the family; and
4. Whether independent advice is required to ascertain if the circumstances could have been avoided.

## **PAYING FEES**

Annual invoices are emailed to parents/guardians before the commencement of Term 1. In general, this invoice contains all fees for the year related to your child's enrolment at Milkwood.

Fees are **due within 14 days** of the date on the invoice unless a Payment Plan has been agreed in writing with an administration manager (See Payment Plan below). Parents are responsible to notify the school if payments cannot be paid as agreed.

The school will send one tax invoice only, advising parents of their account balance. If on the **last day of term** 4 full payment has not been received your child's enrolment is jeopardised and the school may engage a debt collection agency.

## **PAYMENT PLAN**

At Milkwood Steiner School the contribution of fees by parents and caregivers is essential to the School's ability to provide and resource its educational program. Fees can be paid in full or in instalments.

- Annual – Full advance payment by week 4 of Term 1. (5% Discount applies)
- Quarterly – 4 instalments payable Week 1 of each School Term
- Fortnightly – 20 instalments commencing 1 February 2021.
- Monthly and weekly payment plans can also be arranged.

All parents/guardians must enter into a Fee Payment Agreement unless they choose to pay annual fees in full by Week 4.

## **PAYMENT OPTIONS**

**Direct Deposit** - Account Name: Milkwood Steiner School Association; **BSB:** 035 311; **ACC:** 176 329; **REF:** Invoice number

**Cash** - Pay in person

**EFTPOS** – 1% fee may occur

### **Important:**

- Payment plans must commence by Week 1 and subsequent schedule of payments adhered to.

## **LEAVING THE SCHOOL**

Ten weeks written notification is required if a student shall be withdrawn prior to the expected graduation from Class 6. Withdrawal Forms are available from the office and will be supplied with an Evaluation Form and the opportunity for an exit interview. Parents of graduating students are also asked to complete an evaluation. This allows the opportunity for closure and feedback that can lead to improvements.

## **BUILDING TRUST FUND**

The Building Trust Fund is a tax-deductible fund operated by Milkwood Steiner School for the purpose of raising money to contribute to the cost of buildings. It relies on the vision and generosity of people who believe in the value of the school. The funds raised will help manifest a beautiful and functional space in which our children can grow. The Building Trust Fund will be used to pay deposits on construction, renovation or refurbishment as required. It is an essential part of the whole vision of the school.

Donations to the Building Trust Fund are tax-deductible. Funds are kept in an account separate from the working finances of the school.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Milkwood Steiner School has no formal uniform. Functional, neat clothing fosters self-respect and reflects a respectful attitude towards school. As part of our emphasis on being sun-safe, students, like staff, are asked to wear clothing that covers them adequately; shoulders and midriff are to be always covered, natural fibre clothing with tight weave, collars covering back of necks and sleeves are recommended. We would like to make it clear that some attire is unsuitable for school. Singlets, halter necks and muscle shirts are not appropriate, and we ask that the colour black not be worn by the children. We ask that commercial and inappropriate images and large logos are not worn as they are distracting and may affect the quality of children's play, work and attitude. Any student who arrives wearing inappropriate clothing will be provided with an alternative from the spare clothes box.

Each child must wear a wide brimmed or Legionnaires cap and protective footwear when off the verandahs. Caps and fashion headwear are not suitable. If a student does not have a suitable hat or appropriate foot wear they will be asked to remain under the verandah outside the classroom during recess and lunch.

SPF 30+ sunscreen is available in the office. Parents are responsible for ensuring children use sunscreen.

According to MSSA OHSW Policy students must wear shoes always. Play in the bush block requires closed shoes. Sandals are suitable footwear for other times. If parents are concerned about Melioidosis they need to supply knee high gumboots and notify the class teacher. (Refer to MSSA OHSW Policy/ Melioidosis).

Only small and subtle jewelry is acceptable, for example studs and sleepers. Please avoid necklaces as the play and outdoor activity can become energetic and just as one would not wear it on sports field, we ask that children do not wear it to school. Make up is not to be worn. Hair dye must not be worn to school. School bags carry the same rules about commercialism and symbols that can be distracting and offensive. All 'loose' clothing, school bags and hats must be labelled on the inside. T-shirts and hats with the Milkwood logo are available for purchase from the school office.

Please Note: Authorities recommend that items, particularly school bags and raincoats be labelled on the inside so that "strangers" won't have any advantage.

## LOST PROPERTY

Lost property is kept in baskets outside each class, though you should also enquire at the office depending upon the item. There is always a considerable amount of lost property. If your child is missing something, please remember to check the lost property boxes. Please ensure that all items brought to school are clearly labelled. Any unclaimed items will be given to an opportunity shop at the end of the school term.

## BIRTHDAYS

A child's birthday is special and his/her teacher may collaborate with parents to bring a simple celebration for the child and class. This may include some of the following elements: a special birthday story, a visit from parents to the class, special birthday circle, card or book making and/or a cake. Each teacher will create the class tradition.

## MORNING TEA AND LUNCH

Nutritious and ample food for recess and lunch give active children the energy for learning, playing, growth and development. Foods are chosen for their place in the season, for their colour and smell and for their healthy qualities. We encourage whole foods rather than highly processed foods. We suggest fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and home baked goods for snacks. Chips, lollies, chewing gum, chocolate, fruit drink poppers or soft drinks are not suitable for a lunch box. Therefore, we do not allow children to eat these during school time. Please be conscious to minimise the amount of throwaway packaging (e.g. yoghurts, poppers etc.)

Children are supervised during recess and lunch eating time before play. Children experiencing growth spurts do require more nourishment so please gauge if your child is receiving enough food each day.

Classroom water and bubblers have filtered water, changed regularly throughout the year. Water bottles can be kept in the class fridge except in Kindergarten where children drink filtered water from the bubbler. All lunch boxes and water bottles need to be clearly labelled and removed from the fridge at the end of the day.

Commercial lunch boxes with distracting images are to be avoided as they change the nature of conversation and interaction among children.

## OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS ACTIVITIES

Short nature study walks, or full day excursions may be arranged to complement the curriculum. Parents will be notified via one or more means of communication regarding the upcoming event and are requested to complete and return a permission slip to the school. Children must be wearing shoes, hat and appropriate attire with an ample supply of water or food if necessary.

Occasional short spontaneous excursions may occur, as indicated on the enrolment form, so it is important that children have their hats and shoes to be able to participate.

Parents frequently volunteer to assist excursions by providing extra supervision and to enjoy a day with the class. The number of parents who might be of assistance will vary according to circumstances. Parents and Volunteers must provide the school with a current Criminal History Check (Ochre Card) for working with children.

## TOYS, ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT (INCLUDING MOBILE PHONES)

We ask that children not bring toys, personal music devices, mobile phones, i-pads or similar electronic equipment to school. If any of these items are brought to school they will be held by the child's class teacher for parents to collect. The school will take no responsibility if any of these items are lost or damaged whilst on school property. Children are welcome to bring in items that complement Main Lesson themes, are handmade or are found in nature. Please ask your child's teacher how best to share these treasures with their class. If your child carries a mobile phone for family reasons they must leave it in the office during school time.

## MSSA MEMBER LIBRARY

The library is available to all MSSA members. Please see office staff if interested in borrowing items. Two items may be borrowed for a period of 1 month. All items must be returned before the end of each term. Members are responsible to sign out and in their items and return them to the shelf.

The collection is diverse and provides for all needs; from the new parent to the founding parent.

Donations are always welcome, especially items to build up our parent collection, as are volunteers who have a few hours to spare and would like to spend them in the pleasant ambiance of the library.

Unfortunately, in recent years members have not cared to return books to the library which has meant the available items have diminished for other members. Books not returned on time incur a replacement value fee without exception.

## CRAFT CABINET

Our craft cabinet sells a range of beautiful handmade crafts, art and craft supplies, books, play cloths, wooden toys, candles and more. Purchases made here support the school and encourage local craft makers. The Craft Group aim to have a selection of gifts from \$10 - \$15 for children's birthdays with a lovely selection of cards as well. All products are selected for their high quality using natural products whenever possible

## COMMUNICATION

Mutual respect and understanding shall be the cornerstones for all communications at Milkwood Steiner School.

Working in community can be challenging and rewarding. The school bridges our diverse backgrounds and open communication contributes greatly to the successful operation of the school. We encourage you to express yourself with confidence and with respect for one another.

Please refer to the Communication Policy for information on where to direct your communication and how to raise a concern or express a grievance.

## KEEPING INFORMED

### NEWSLETTER

The weekly Milkwood Newsletter email is sent to all families and friends of the Milkwood Steiner School. This newsletter provides the main means to keep up to date with what's happening at school and in the school community on a weekly basis, including updates from class teachers, excursion dates, event and working bee dates etc. It is the parents' responsibility to read the newsletter. It is also available on the school website.

Please email (preferred method) articles to: [admin@milkwood.nt.edu.au](mailto:admin@milkwood.nt.edu.au)

The newsletter is generally not the vehicle for business advertising. Flyers for events etc can be displayed on the notice boards in the office and outside the library, please give to reception to put up.

### CLASS TEACHER COMMUNICATION BOOK

Teachers use a communication book to leave messages when class is underway and the teacher is not available. You may use this book for such things as a request or confirmation of interview with your child's teacher. The teacher will also leave reminders for class families.

### PARENT TEACHER NIGHTS

Parents are encouraged to attend the parent evenings hosted by each Class Teacher. These evenings are significant as they inform parents of the curriculum and educational philosophy of the school and are an opportunity to have questions answered. It is important that parents are well informed about what happens in the classroom and school expectations so that there is harmony between school and home for the child.

### PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Parent Teacher Interviews are private conversations with the Teacher where you can discuss your individual child's needs and achievements. You are welcome to arrange an appointment with your class teacher any time you have a concern.

### WRITTEN STUDENT REPORTS

The Class Teacher and Specialist Teacher will report on the progress of your child's work. This written report will be mailed out to all families in the first week of the term break of Term 2 and Term 4. The report provides confirmation and information of achievements in all educational capacities.

Reports in Kindergarten are concerned with Social Personal Learning, Health and Physical Learning, Learning Language and Communication and Early Mathematical Understanding. They are not based

on academic progress. The reports are for the parents, not the children; the teachers strive to enable each child to arrive at a sense of self-worth that is based on the wonderful uniqueness of their being which cannot be glimpsed in ticked boxes.

## SPREADING THE WORD

Word of mouth remains the most effective means to increase interest in our school. Like many other community organisations the healthy future of Milkwood depends upon member's active participation and financial stability through enrolments. The school is as good as its members. To help the enrolment efforts of the school you can:

- Inform friends and family about Milkwood Steiner School.
- Bring prospective parents, friends and relatives to public events such as Open Day, School Tours and Café.
- Write an article for the Newsletter about successful experiences you or your child have had within the context of Milkwood.

## CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE

Understanding appropriate behavior is important for social cohesion. Inappropriate behavior can result from simply not being aware of expectations within a particular situation. We ask adults to set an example for their children. We aim to create a safe and caring environment which promotes personal growth and positive self-esteem for all.

### MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct requires that all MSSA members must in the course of their engagement with the association agree to abide by the following:

- Behave honestly and with integrity;
- Act with care and diligence;
- Treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment;
- Comply with all Australian laws;
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding School matters;
- Disclose and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with their engagement;
- Use the schools resources in an appropriate and proper manner;
- At all times behave in a way that upholds the values, integrity and good reputation of Milkwood Steiner School.

Please refer to the Discipline Policy for full details of Behavior Management

## HEALTH & SAFETY

Milkwood has a comprehensive Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy that covers Staff, Students and Members. Please refer to the OHSW Policy for full details. General health information is outlined below.

### CHILDREN'S DENTAL SERVICE

Children in the Northern Territory who are attending school are entitled to free public dental services until they are 18 years old. Call Oral Health Services on (08) 8922 6466 to make an appointment

### EMERGENCY CONTACT REGISTER

The school maintains an Emergency Contacts Register (see enrolment form) so that parents can be contacted when necessary, for example due to illness, accidents, fire or hostility. If you change your address, or telephone numbers, please ensure that you advise the office as soon as possible.

## HEAD LICE

Head lice are a problem, especially in the tropics, but not a medical emergency. We ask all parents to become comfortable with a successful control technique to help manage head lice and to conduct a treatment method throughout Week 1 and 2 each term to help reduce outbreaks. Information on management and control of head lice can be found in OHSW Policy.

If head lice are identified parents will be notified and a general notice will be sent to class parents for all families to check their children's hair. Children found with head lice will be asked not to return to school until the lice have been treated and removed.

## ILLNESS

If your child is sick or in need of medication we ask that he/she is kept at home. We do not have the facilities to care for or treat sick children at school. If your child needs ongoing medication, a medication advice slip must be completed. Staff will administer medication providing it is clearly labelled and discussed with the teacher in advance.

At enrolment, parents or legal guardians are required to provide relevant medical history and known medical condition of their children. They are asked to provide a written authority for staff at Milkwood Steiner School to seek emergency medical attention for the child and provide direction for first aid trained staff to follow in the event of a medical emergency requiring the administration of medication.

Parents will be informed if their child receives first aid at school. The school maintains a register of students who receive first aid. Parents will be notified if the student requires further medical attention or monitoring. School staff will not administer Paracetamol. In the event of sickness or accident where the child is not able to participate in class the parent or guardian will be asked to take the child home.

In case of an emergency and in the interests of the student's wellbeing, the school will take whatever immediate action is considered necessary and will contact parents as soon as possible. Milkwood currently carries an extra student accident insurance policy for parents/guardians. This insurance policy helps cover medical costs for when a student is injured. The school will undertake regular assessment of hazards and endeavour to provide a safe environment and ensure staff are trained in First Aid through an authorised training body.

Parents are required to give permission for the administration of homeopathic (and other) first aid on the Enrolment form.

With Parent written consent homeopathic medications may be used for first aid at Milkwood. These include Apis Mel for allergic reactions and skin swellings; Arnica for soft tissue injuries, bruises and sprains; Rescue Remedy (Bach flowers) for shocks and upsets; and Calendula/Hypericum as an antiseptic wash for wounds.

## IMMUNISATION RECORDS

Schools are required to maintain records of children's immunisation. By knowing these details the school can quickly identify children at risk if there is an identified or suspected source of infection at the school. Please provide a record of your child's immunisation to the school on enrolment. This can include a signed and dated record in a baby book, or an official record from a community care health centre, Aboriginal medical service, local government Board, doctor or other health care provider. Children without vaccination documents will be recorded as not vaccinated and may be sent home from school during an outbreak of a disease.

Territory Centre for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and exclusion periods for communicable diseases is available by phoning 8922 8310 or from their website.

## EMERGENCIES & NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING CYCLONES

In the event of a broadcast warning of an impending event, the Principal shall determine if the school will operate during the warning period. If the decision is made to cease operation during the course of normal operating hours, contact will be made with parents and carers to advise of the decision and arrange for children to be collected.

During cyclone watches or warnings the school generally follows the same pattern as Government Schools, however to be sure parents should check our website for Milkwood specific information.

A Cyclone Coordinator is appointed at the beginning of each cyclone season and this person will call for a team of helpers for the season. Pack up and tie down preparation for a cyclone and the unpacking procedure post cyclone requires strong able bodies and any help parents can provide is warmly accepted.

## EDUCATION OVERVIEW

### FOUNDING OF STEINER EDUCATION

Steiner Education is found across 46 countries. In Europe and The United States it is more commonly referred to as Waldorf Education. Steiner/Waldorf Education has become one of the largest independent educational movements in the world today.

The first Waldorf School was established in Germany in 1919, inspired by the vision and leadership of Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). To help address the social and economic chaos following World War I, Steiner developed a mode of learning that would promote peace and harmony, one which developed all human faculties - physical, emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual.

At the request of its owner, Steiner established a school in Stuttgart's Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory for the children of factory workers. That school and others since have striven to follow Steiner's injunction:

*“Receive the children in reverence,  
Educate them in love,  
Let them go forth in freedom.”*

Rudolf Steiner

## OVERVIEW OF PHILOSOPHY

Rudolf Steiner's philosophy is known as Anthroposophy or "the wisdom of the human being"

From the Greek: Anthros - *human being* & Sophia - *wisdom*

Through his writing and lectures, Steiner conveyed a vast body of knowledge. He deepened the understanding of nature and existence, which in evolution had been carried by religions and scientists. He brought ways to practically identify the spiritual dimension of the human being and life as a whole.

An introduction to Anthroposophy is the foundation of teacher training. The principles of the delivery of the curriculum seek to bring about recognition and understanding of all the world's cultures and religions. Milkwood Steiner School is not part of any church or following. Our school's interest in spiritual matters is aimed at awakening the child's natural reverence for the wonder and beauty of life. We recognise and honor the diverse faiths of all our families.

Particular phrases and words are used among adults familiar with the philosophical base of Steiner Education. You may ask your teacher to clarify anything that you may not understand. Further information can be found in library books, at workshops and information evenings.

Through this education, Steiner hoped to cultivate in young people capacities of heart and mind, and the strength of will that would enable them to meet the challenges of their own time and in the future. He laid the foundation for an art of education in which the teacher, ever aware of the inherent dignity and individuality of each child, would strive to awaken and draw out the child's individual gifts. This is in keeping with the true meaning of "to educate" – from "educere," to "draw out" rather than to put in. Instead of becoming a passive receptor for information, the child is led to participate actively in all that is presented, in hope that he or she will become a seeker of truth and knowledge and a doer who may one day find the strength and capacity to make positive transformation in the world. Many elements are involved in Steiner education, among which are the following:

- Physical exercises which develop spatial orientation, balance, coordination, and the sense of rhythm.
- Exercise of the will through the completion of age appropriate physical, artistic, and academic tasks.
- Deepening of the feelings through story, drama, and practice of the arts.
- Step-by-step development of thinking from simple, concrete sequencing to abstract reasoning.
- Gradual exposure to the wonders of the natural world and to the cultural history of humankind.
- Affirmation of the child's innate goodness and creativity.
- Affirmation of basic human values including mutual respect, courtesy, cooperation with and service to others, and the proper use of our language.
- Acquisition of a fund of knowledge requisite for participation in one's time and context.

The curriculum is designed to unfold according to the stages of development of the growing child.

Education proceeds in three major steps as the child develops. During this process, the child's consciousness develops. Up to age 12, it is largely a pictorial and imaginative consciousness; from then on it adds the element of reason. Until age 12, the curriculum works with the child's imagination, proceeding from fairy tales, legends, and fables through the Bible stories and ancient mythology. In fifth and sixth class, the

transition is made to actual history and science. From then on, without losing its imaginative and artistic elements, the curriculum is presented in a more scientific manner, increasingly relying on direct observation, objective description, and reflection in all subjects.

*Steiner schools have a unique and distinctive approach to educating children, aiming to enable each stage of growth to be fully and vividly enjoyed and experienced. The academic, artistic and social aspects, or 'head, heart and hands', are treated as complementary facets of a single program of learning, allowing each to throw light on the others.*

Through the life of feeling, art is used as to develop language. Children are nourished with a rich heritage of wise folk tales, histories, fairy stories, music, poems and games that are part of our world civilisation. This creates the cultural atmosphere in which the children are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, nature study, geography, science, languages, music and other subjects.

A unique quality of human beings is our capacity for conscious thought. Steiner education strives to support the development of well-rounded human beings who are able to feel deeply and broadly, to think penetratingly and clearly, and then to act rightly out of conscious and free choice.

The best overall statement on what is unique about Steiner education is to be found in the stated goals of the schooling:

*"Our highest endeavour must be to develop individuals who are able out of their own initiative to impart purpose and direction to their lives." (Rudolf Steiner)*

## THE STEINER EDUCATOR

Steiner defined 'three golden rules' for teachers:

- to receive the child in gratitude from the world they come from
- to educate the child with love
- to lead the child into true freedom

The reverence and respect felt by Steiner teachers for the special qualities of each stage of childhood shapes the school environment – the way children are spoken to, the materials used, the activities undertaken and the approach to learning at each developmental stage.

Teachers are dedicated to creating a genuine love of learning within each child. By freely using art, craft, music and language in the teaching of academic subjects, learning becomes a living, creative process. Academic subjects are enriched and enlivened in a way that meets the developmental stages of the children, offering both sensory and intellectual nourishment.

Steiner educators believe that children should not be rushed into adult consciousness but allowed to savour their childhood. Our task as teachers and parents is to assist young people to learn to know and love the world in childhood, to begin to develop good judgement in adolescence, and to freely take responsibility for life's journey in adulthood.

Close co-operation between teachers is an important aspect of the provision of care to individual children. When a teacher encounters a difficulty with a particular student, this will be brought to the attention of the College of Teachers and through the pooling of experience and insights, a solution can more quickly be found.

While specialist teachers may be involved the class teacher is responsible for the overall class work, including the main lesson.

## BUSH APPLE AND WATER LILY KINDERGARTEN

During the first seven years children are physically forming and live very much in their imagination. This great capacity to enter into imaginative pictures and stories is a good place to begin the process of learning. Free, creative play is considered the best preparation for self-realising adult life.

Milkwood Steiner School offers Kindergarten for two age groups.

Bush Apple Kindergarten is for children who are 4 turning 5 sometime in the year. They attend four days a fortnight.

Water Lily Kindergarten is for children who are 5 and will turn 6 sometime in the school year and is compulsory for all Northern Territory children. These children attend 5 full days.

Activities are based around the homelike environment of the Kindergarten, such as gardening, baking, painting or simple handcraft. Stories, songs and verses are chosen to harmonise with the season and the rhythm of the day. The Kindergarten is a beautiful and secure sanctuary, in which the children can begin their journey into the wider world.

In Steiner education, the day is usually divided into three parts and activities are repeated over three or more days. Typically the same circle games, rhymes and story will be told each morning for the full week.

For young children, activities requiring concentration and will, such as stories, plays, poems, songs and rhymes, are taught in the morning. Activities that evoke the feelings such as painting and music are taught mid-morning and activities that require less concentration such as games and walks are taught in the afternoon. These afternoon activities bring the group together, teaching social skills such as sharing, cooperation and patience. They also begin the teaching of observation and wonder which are built on in later years by science and nature study classes.

In the early years, days are known by the children as 'walk day', 'painting day', and so on. Teachers feel these rhythms help to maintain health and well-being. Imitation, imagination and rhythm are the key words in Steiner education in early childhood.

### **The following three statements can sum up our approach to early childhood education:**

- Imitation of adult role models who are engaged in wholesome activities and work develops gross and fine motor skills and provides a sound basis for confidence in self and trust in the world.
- A sense of wonder is cultivated through activities in nature. Celebration of seasonal festivals fosters enthusiasm for learning and life-long moral strength.
- Imagination in play, dramatisation and artistic work provides the first step of a cognitive process that is furthered through the academic work of the elementary school. Much genius originally springs from the fantasy and imagination of individuals whose creative thinking enables them to visualise how things are and also how they might be.

### **While the Kindergarten curriculum does not emphasise cognitive learning, it does prepare children for academic learning in many important ways:**

- Foundation for language arts: Broad fundamental work in listening and speaking skills, including singing, proper pronunciation, rhymes that form the later basis of word families, poems, listening to and comprehending stories, which also provide vocabulary enrichment.

- Foundation for mathematics: Broad work in developing gross motor skills, graceful movement, balance, coordination, and dexterity in fingers and limbs; imaginative play with simple objects provides the basis for abstract manipulation of symbols in school.
- Artistic training: Beeswax modeling, watercolor painting, music, singing and Eurythmy and simple dramatizations.
- Social skills: Learning to live, work and play in a group, sharing and taking turns; practicing common courtesy and politeness.
- Work habits: Learning to complete tasks, helping to clean up after themselves and working within the gentle structure provided by the daily rhythms of similar activities.

For Kindergarten, this is the beginning of their journey as members of a social group. There is so much to learn! This is a time of figuring out that there are others who have a different perspective than they do, a time of learning how to share, a time of figuring out how to play successfully with different children, and a time of feeling comfortable and safe in someone else's care besides their families. All children have their own way of greeting the world around them and it is our intent to lovingly guide and help each child become more comfortable and skilled at being with others. This may be through a redirection of their activity or energy, helping them express through words their emotions (especially the older ones), or giving them an activity away from others such as helping the teacher do a task, so that they can collect themselves to be able to happily play again. The children begin to know the importance of three things: respecting and being kind to others, respecting and being patient with one's self, and respecting the materials we use in the world around us.

## CLASS 1 - 6

**“It is important that we discover an educational method where people learn to learn, and go on learning from life throughout their whole lives.” (Rudolf Steiner)**

The school offers primary double composite classes. We also employ specialist subject teachers and offer craft, nature studies and outdoor education, specialist music and private music tuition.

In Steiner schools, during the primary years the class teacher generally moves up through the year levels with the children for six years. This allows for the development of great continuity, trust and respect between student, family and teacher. Milkwood Steiner School is working towards single stream classes to facilitate this. The class teacher is responsible for the Main Lesson period each day, as well as leading or participating in many other sessions, and has the primary responsibility for the overall wellbeing of the class and students.

The Main Lesson is held each morning, lasting two hours, and focuses on an academic subject area in depth for three to four weeks (in the early primary classes, such areas as math's or writing). After the morning break, there are practice sessions and artistic activities that revisit and expand the Main Lesson subjects. After lunch the children engage in more expansive practical activities such as gardening, sport, craft or nature walks.

The curriculum content of the Main Lesson is delivered primarily through stories told by the teacher. Almost

all teaching is based around story, imagination and art, as well as incorporating physical elements such as clapping, chanting, skipping or stepping. These methods are applied to all the basic early primary subjects such as writing, reading, and arithmetic.

The children are led through the recapitulation of human consciousness which corresponds to the development of the child as they move through each class level. For example, the teacher tells fairy tales in class one, animal fables in class two, old Testament stories in class three, Norse myths in class four, Indian and Egyptian myths in class five, and begins to delve into Roman history in class six. The child's life is inspired by images from these stories of individuals striving to live together and to transform the world. This also lays the groundwork for an understanding of history, geography, politics and science.

As with other Steiner schools, the curriculum at Milkwood will not incorporate formal grading or exams. The teacher works to promote a genuine inner enthusiasm for learning and to transcend competitive testing. The imaginative scope of the curriculum usually allows each child to find something in it appropriate to their level of ability and understanding.

As part of our funding agreement with the Federal Government as a school we are required to offer parents the opportunity to have their grade 3 and grade 5 students sit the national exam called NAPLAN. It is your choice as a parent to have your child involved in the testing or not. The school will inform you of the testing in advance. Parents who wish to seek to an exemption for their child from the testing must do so in advance in writing to the school.

## MAIN LESSON CURRICULUM

### **CLASS 1**

Form drawing, Introduction of numbers and letters, Moving from letters to text, Mathematics: the four processes, English: fairy tales, Nature Studies, Roman Numerals

### **CLASS 2 AND 3**

English: Grammar, English: Story Writing, Nature Studies, Animal Fables, Celtic Legends, Lives of Saints, Russian Fairy tales, Home Surroundings, Old Testament Stories, Farming and Gardening.

### **Class 4 and 5**

Nordic Mythology, Man and Animal, History of Writing, Geography of the Natural Environment, Mathematics: incl. fractions and decimals, English: Poetry, English: Parts of Speech, India, Persia, Greece.

### **CLASS 6**

Study of Rome, Astronomy, Botany, Hat, Electricity and Magnetism, Geometry, Simple Machines, Study of the Middle Ages, Geography: Mountains, Maps of Continents, Drama: Shakespearean Play

## ART, CRAFT & DRAMA

Art and craft are an integral part of the curriculum and are used as a way of engaging the children in the current topic from every angle. This compliments and enhances the intellectual aspects of the class work. Learning through the arts promotes multiple skills and abilities and nurtures the development of cognitive, social and personal competencies. For example, in a class 4 history main-lesson the children may learn Nordic dancing, paint a Nordic shield and present a Nordic Play to the School.

Art includes recitation and drama, wet-on-wet painting, form drawing, beeswax and clay modelling, and

handcrafts such as sewing, knitting, weaving, woodwork and carving.

The primary school child experiences life as a world of pictures and feelings. This promotes a richer inner structure enabling the later development of conceptual thinking. The practice of art educates the feelings and calls for skill, form and style.

Handwork is an important bridge in developing a connection between the child's inner world and the outer world. Handwork stimulates inventive powers and the ability to have creative ideas when facing the unknown. The child must develop judgement and a sense of form and space. Learning of this kind can have a balancing effect on the child's whole being. It awakens feelings in the child who is one-sidedly intellectual, stimulates activity in the weak-willed child and awakens the thinking in the dreamy child.

***“Joy and happiness in living, love for all existence, a power and energy for work, such are among the lifelong results of a right cultivation for the feeling for beauty and art. “***

**(Rudolf Steiner)**

Children who learn to make practical things in an artistic way, for the benefit of others as well as themselves, will be able to form their lives and their relationships in a social and artistic way when they are older, thereby enriching their lives. The training through art in school is not for the purpose of producing artists but in order to educate young people for the art of living, based on disciplined exercise. The type of exercise and the time it is introduced are the important factors.

## MUSIC

Music is a very important form of expression and brings balance to the day. It develops sensory capacities necessary for understanding mathematics and language. It also calls upon the will to develop self-discipline, patience and listening. Exercises for training the musical ear are practiced, providing a solid base for subsequent musical accomplishment. Singing and choral work are developed throughout the school years. Children learn the recorder from class 1 through to class 6. Individual tuition of a stringed instrument - violin, viola or cello and music notation is taught from class 3 and by class 4 children participate in orchestral work. Music is delivered in intensive blocks as well as weekly orchestral work.

## OVERVIEW OF STRINGS PROGRAM

### INDIVIDUAL LESSONS

The school provides on-site tutors. Students receive private or paired tuition with one of the school's tutors. During these lessons, students work both on the technical and artistic aspects of making music on their instruments, develop a solo repertoire and may also work on ensemble pieces with their teacher. Many Milkwood students have been working through the Australian Music Examination Board syllabus and several have received outstanding reports, certificates and awards from the AMEB during their time at the school. Private or paired lessons are a prerequisite for joining the music theory class and ensembles. Lessons run weekly for half an hour, and may be during or after school time, depending on what is realistic for each family and the teacher's availability. Students are expected to take their instruments home for daily personal practice, and to attend their lessons on a weekly basis with their instrument and books. Parents are to provide notice of their child's absence from lessons by phoning or emailing the teacher directly.

## **ENSEMBLES**

Milkwood ensemble is available to all Milkwood students. Before entering this ensemble, students only need to know how to hold their instrument and use the bow on all open strings. Students learn the foundations of playing in a group and experience the reciprocal nature of music making. They learn to follow a conductor and understand this new language of orchestral/ensemble direction, develop performance etiquette, experience the fun social aspect of music making, and work with their peers. Some will take on leadership positions within the ensemble before moving on to the Senior String Ensemble.

## **PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

Milkwood Students are encouraged to perform regularly throughout the school year. Past events have included Open Days, Café Days, Christmas Concert, Solo Recitals (end of each semester), Ensemble Recitals and even busking at local markets.

## **INSTRUMENTS**

Instruments must be sourced and either bought or rented by the student's own family or through the school. Students need to be 'measured' for the right sized instrument. This can be done by your music teacher or by some retailers.

## **LANGUAGE**

Children in Classes 2 – 7 have Indonesian lessons once a week.

## **EURYTHMY**

Eurythmy is a dance-like art form, which involves the expression of sound through specific movements that correspond to particular notes or sounds. It enhances co-ordination, strengthens the ability to listen and reinforces social connections. A Eurythmy Teacher visits Milkwood once a year for two weeks and works with each class. Teachers may continue some of this work depending upon their experience with Eurythmy.

## **SEASONALITY – NATURE STUDIES**

Nature Studies in Darwin are a unique experience and special to our hearts at Milkwood. In the early years playgroups associated with MSSA started to celebrate the six seasons from the calendar of the Gundjeihmi speaking people from Kakadu. We make recognition of our unique seasons and reflect this in the classroom.

For this reason, we have incorporated a special section on the seasonal calendar. We recognise the rhythm of the cosmos through the changing seasons and incorporate this into the classroom and excursions.

We encourage children to gather fruits and elements of nature and reverently share them with the class. Nature tables are created in each class for this purpose, particularly in the Kindergarten.

*See Gundjeihmi People seasonal calendar from "Walking with the Seasons in Kakadu" with permission from Di Lucas. (in Parent Library)*

## FESTIVALS

*“If people can take part in an annual cycle of seasonal rites of passage that have an observable reality in the changes of nature, they may, it is hoped, feel a stronger responsibility as adults for the earth and its needs, and not be confined to their heads.” (Rudolf Steiner)*

The rhythmic cycle of the year is celebrated in all Steiner schools. We foster a sense of harmony with the changing seasons. These changes are reflected in our activities and nature. The children will recreate the event in a dramatic story or ceremony. Milkwood celebrates seasonal and cultural festivals. We are developing our programs to include the six seasons of our local region. As whole school events we currently celebrate:

### **TERM 1**

Banggerreng – An afternoon walk in the bush to find and dig yams.

Easter – A Morning Tea / Lunchtime celebration, Easter Egg hunt and special Easter Story Puppet Show for the Community.

### **TERM 2**

Winter Solstice – An evening during Wurrng in which a spiral of lanterns is created by the children followed by a community supper.

### **TERM 3**

Michaelmas – An evening school play with harvest table and shared dinner is celebrated during the season of Gurrung.

### **TERM 4**

Advent – A story, concert and shared lunch with contributions from all families.

Depending on the festival, Teachers may ask the assistance of Parents to help with such things as set up or singing. Each festival has its own purpose and hence its own atmosphere. We rely on the support of parents to maintain the atmosphere in unison with the event. The festivals are open to MSAA members and families.

When children come together, our hope is that there will be a sense of sharing with the greater community of what they are doing. With a quiet, receptive fully engaged atmosphere we try to place less emphasis on individuals and more emphasis on the synergy of what is created together.

Some festival activities do not require applause. The use of camera and recording equipment is limited to the times and places agreed upon by a class teacher and the photographer. As a general rule we ask you to refrain from photography (either still or video) during the ceremony or story.

Families are invited to share their family cultural celebrations by speaking with the class teacher.

Further festivals are created by community members, in particular Diane Lucas, and are advertised in the school weekly. These festivals are complementary to the curriculum and a joy to experience though not part of the school as such.

## COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY

Electronic media is not used in the classroom. We feel it is more important for students to have the opportunity to interact with one another and with teachers in exploring the world of ideas, participating in the creative process, and developing their knowledge, skills, abilities, and inner qualities. Students develop a love of learning, an ongoing curiosity, and interest in life. As older students, they quickly master computer technology and Steiner School graduates have successful careers in the computer industry.

## ADULT EDUCATION

At Milkwood, parents are often as keen to learn as the children. The method of teaching and themes in the children's lessons are encouraging and exciting for a parent. As well as attending Parent Teacher nights, Milkwood offers workshops to allow the parent to explore Steiner Education and Anthroposophy. A teacher is given the responsibility of ensuring the opportunities are provided. Over the years we have held Conferences which offer a full agenda of workshops along with a book shop. *EduCareDo* group study course opportunities are available - <http://educaredo.org/>

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

## CAFE

Each term a class hosts The Milkwood Café; an afternoon tea on the verandah that is open to all members and the wider community. The Class Guardian coordinates the Café with class parents and teacher. Healthy homemade food is brought in by class parents and available for purchase by Café patrons. Funds raised are used by class go back into the class resources. Cafe is a terrific opportunity to welcome new families and build community.

## CRAFT GROUP

Milkwood runs a parent craft group that meets during the school term. Many Steiner inspired crafts can be learned in a friendly relaxing environment. Experience the joy of creating your very first felt animal or wet felted panel! Items made by the craft group are showcased in our annual Open day, the schools craft cabinet and local craft markets where parents and friends can purchase wonderful handmade treasures. All are welcome and prior experience in craft is not necessary.

## FUNDRAISING

Fundraising for Milkwood is through food stalls at community events, craft stalls, craft cabinet sales, the Milkwood Cafe and Open Days.

## WORKING BEES

Throughout the year parents will be asked to participate in working bees and as a new and growing school we often need many hands for the tasks involved. There are many ways that families can help and again, this is an opportunity to meet other parents and create some fun through working together. Gardening and school grounds maintenance in the tropics can be fun and a few hours regularly can make a real difference. Please offer you support to class teachers or at the office.

## HOME

Parents and guardians are a child's first teacher. Many habits are formed through imitation from our parents and can be a direct reflection of family life. Respect is extremely important for social cohesion. At Milkwood, we have expectations of parents to provide some basics in the home that will compliment and greatly improve your child's education and ability to fully prepare them for learning. Some of these expectations may not have been considered by you in the past; however, we consider them to be very important to the fulfillment of a healthy child. When the experience received at home and school is complementary and health giving, the child learns healthy discernment and life skills for social behaviour.

### FAMILY CRISIS OR SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Significant changes can occur at one time or another. Difficulties that a child may be experiencing will naturally be carried into the daily school life and affect their academic, social or physical ability. If your child's Class Teacher notices changes they may ask to meet with you to assist your child. We recommend that parents contact their child's teacher to allow compromises while your child is adapting to changes.

### HOME PLAY AND WORK

Children will naturally review their day. We encourage parents to create a space at home in which the child can explore and continue what they have learnt at school. A nature table and clear work space are a simple fruitful start to a place the child can respect and maintain at home. Speak to your child's teacher and other parents to obtain ideas on how you can create an enriching environment for your child's home play and work space.

As a general rule home work is not given at Milkwood; we consider home time to be a time for digestion of the day, allowing for greater capacity to learn the next day's lessons. From time to time an assignment may be given to older children. From Class 3, children include daily instrument practices into their home routine. This is an expectation for all children involved in the string program.

Telling and reading your child a story (even when they can read themselves), creating puzzles and setting up games are all appropriate actions to show an interest in your child and allow them to display their achievements.

### NUTRITION

Digestion is individual and requires the capacity to be able to break down substances and build them back up into matter which we can use in our self. Whole foods such as unprocessed grains, fruit and vegetables, allow our bodies to perform both these functions. Processed and fortified foods weaken both functions and hence the ability to think, feel and act in the healthiest way possible. Offering the child whole foods provides the experience of a healthy diet which will be drawn upon in later life. We encourage parents to strive towards healthy nutrition to assist your child's growth and discernment of taste.

### MEDIA AWARENESS

We highly recommend no media during the school week, especially before school. The passivity inherent in the use of TV, computers and video games, etc. is increasingly recognised by educators and parents as counter-productive to the process of learning and growth in young children. The fast pace and fragmentation work against the cultivation of concentration and imagination. It is not only the content that is harmful, but the actual physical and psychological processes involved. After a day filled with creative play or creative learning, children need a quiet space and time to work through their experiences, rather than additional stimulation.

Milkwood Steiner School is dedicated to nurturing the children's capacities for imagination, healthy feeling,

independent thinking, and active willing. It is our experience that these capacities develop best through warm human interaction and the children's enthusiastic immersion in the natural world, with all of their senses fully engaged.

The debilitating effects of media on children's developing capacities are increasingly apparent to us and are well documented by independent researchers. By "media" we mean the full array of visual and aural electronic devices, including, but not limited to videos, DVDs, video games, CD walk-man units, computers, computer games, television and radio. Of equal concern are large-screen movies, whether in the theater or at home. We fully recognise the prevalence of media in our culture and the need that many adults have for this in their vacation and leisure time. We must also recognise, however, that the adult has the potential to absorb and consciously process these experiences; children are still developing the faculty.

When children are actively and imaginatively engaged with the natural world, they experience the joy of their own energy. Their energy soon becomes will power, self-discipline and ultimately, self-direction. With a will, they apply themselves to all artistic endeavors; the music that soothes the soul, the painting that nourishes it, or the drawing that enlivens it. They apply themselves equally to the precise observation so essential to middle school sciences and mathematics, and the habit of clear thinking in all academics. Children's thinking also becomes flexible and imaginative: their capacity for living vividly into the stories and biographies they hear becomes the capacity of empathy for their fellow humans in adulthood. As adults too, they become independent, creative individuals, feeling at home in the world.

Seen in this light, it is not so much a matter of avoiding media, as it is one of simply allowing the natural capacities of children to unfold. Some children are highly sensitive to media influence and cannot leave it at home but bring it into the classroom in their play. This in turn changes the nature of the play for many children in the class, rather than out of their own inner needs they re-enact the disturbing or violent images they have seen or heard.

Clearly, this area will involve a process of reassessment and compromise for many families, and there are no absolutes. However, Steiner teachers feel strongly that an effort to reduce television time is of great benefit to children's education and their overall wellbeing.

## REST AND SLEEP

When we sleep the body repairs, grows and allows organs to complete their daily function. Thoughts and feelings are also reviewed and digested. A Kindergarten child needs 12 hours sleep a night and by Class 6 a minimum of 9.5 hours sleep to achieve full function. The capacity to assimilate and retain new information is dependent upon this sleep. Children benefit from a rhythm of regular meal times and sleep.

## RECOMMENDED READING & WEBSITES

Steiner Education Australia <http://steinereducation.edu.au/>

You are your Child's First Teacher – Rahima Baldwin Dancy

Education Towards Freedom – Frans Carlgren

Knowledge of the Higher Worlds – Rudolf Steiner

A Guide to Child Health – Michaela Glockler

Rudolf Steiner on Education, A Compendium - Roy Wilkinson

## RELATIONSHIPS FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT

### STEINER EDUCATION AUSTRALIA (SEA)

The Milkwood Steiner School is a member of the Steiner Education of Australia – a National Association that represents Steiner Education at a Federal Government Level. <http://steinereducation.edu.au/>

### ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (AISNT)

The Milkwood Steiner School is a member of the Northern Territory Association of Independent Schools that represents non-government school's interests at a territory and a National Level.

### SYDNEY RUDOLF STEINER COLLEGE

'Foundations in Steiner Education for State Trained Teachers' is a certified long-distance education course offered by Sydney Rudolf Steiner College (formally known as Parsifal College). Milkwood formed a partnership with the college to offer the course intensives in Darwin in June 2010. This provided the opportunity for local teachers to prepare to teach at Milkwood. Non-teachers are also welcome to enrol in the certified course.

### ALICE SPRINGS STEINER SCHOOL

Milkwood Steiner School and Alice Springs Steiner School are the two Steiner Schools in the NT. Alice Springs was established only a few years earlier than Milkwood and we are encountering progress with similar developmental changes. We liaise on curriculum and administration issues.

### LOCAL ASSOCIATES RELATED TO THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

Sea Salt Complementary Health – Louise Schnitzhofer is a homeopath and remedial masseuse who prescribes Anthroposophic remedies and provides workshops at Milkwood on child development and home health care. [www.seasalthomeopathy.com.au](http://www.seasalthomeopathy.com.au)

Bio Dynamic Network - This group is active in Darwin's rural region. Meeting notices are placed in the Milkwood newsletters.

Anthroposophic Society of Australia NT branch – monthly facilitated discussions are held on a Wednesday afternoon in Class 3/ 4 at 4pm. The theme of the conversation "Supporting Our Child's Education" and is open to anyone. Call the secretary on 08 8988 6215. <http://www.anthroposophy.org.au/>

## AFTER SCHOOL CARE

Milkwood Steiner's After School Care (ASC) Program is an extension of and adheres to the philosophy, policies and practices of the Milkwood Steiner School. Kindergarten children are not recommended to attend.

We provide a relaxed, safe and nurturing environment for children to interact with peers of all ages within our school.

The daily programs always aim to provide a gentle transition from school to home in an informal nurturing setting where the children can choose to be involved in group activities or spend time in solitary pursuits of play and learning spontaneously through exploring the world and space around them.

Milkwood Steiner's ASC is an approved childcare provider and Government subsidies are available.

### **Hours of Operation**

The program operates on the school grounds from Monday to Friday 2:35pm – 5:30pm during the school term.

### **Meals**

Afternoon Tea is provided daily consisting of fresh, nutritious and wholesome foods.

### **Fees**

The fee is \$30.00 per day, per child. Sibling discounts apply and are consistent with the Milkwood Steiner School Fee Schedule.

Fees will be billed out on a monthly basis separate to school fees.

### **Enrolment**

Enrolments are essential for Full-time, Part-time and Casual use. Enrolment forms can be obtained from the school office or online via our website [www.milkwood.nt.edu.au](http://www.milkwood.nt.edu.au). Completed enrolments are to be returned to the school office prior to commencement.

### **Casual Bookings**

Casual bookings are welcome however, bookings are required to be made 24 hours before the day of care is required.

### **Policies**

The Milkwood Steiner School After School Care Program operates in accordance with the policies of both Milkwood Steiner School as outlined in this handbook and the Northern Territory of Australia Education and Care Services National Uniform Legislation Act 2011.