

Welcome

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our Dandenong Ranges Steiner School Kinder and Prep Group.

It is a big step for both parent and child beginning kinder. Suddenly the door opens on a new world filled with new people and challenges. The kindergarten is a stepping-stone into that world. The teacher is there to help you begin. Warm cooking smells entice you. Happy faces and chattering children greet you and you find a quiet corner to watch for a little while before you 'jump in'.

Hours and Days of Operation

The Kindergarten is open on the following days and times:
Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 9.00am - 2.00pm and Tuesday & Friday 9.00am – 3.00pm. The Prep is open Monday-Friday 9.00am - 3.00pm.

Children commence the year gently, building up to the full program over a number of weeks. Check with your child's teacher.

Colours of the Week

Your child may like to wear the colours of the week when they come to Kinder.

Monday	Blue
Tuesday	Red
Wednesday	Yellow
Thursday	Orange
Friday	Green

Rhythm

Creating a rhythm is central to the teacher's work in the kindergarten. It helps the children to feel secure and nurtured. As the day unfolds, songs and verses mark the different activities. Rhythm brings discipline as the children find their own way from one activity to another. It is the framework of the day.

Kinder Morning Verse

*The Earth is firm
Beneath my feet
The sun shines bright above
And here stand I
So straight and strong
All things to know and love.*

A Day in the Kinder

As you come into the kinder, leave your world behind. Come in softly. Help your child by guiding him/her to put their bag on their hook, take off their outside shoes and put on their slippers. It is important that you arrive on time at the kindergarten so your child is entering with other children and being welcomed into the morning as 'one'. Play and more play is what it is all about. The assistant teacher will be busy preparing the food for morning tea at a table, and children may choose to help. The teacher usually greets your child, but sometimes the child just slips in almost unnoticed. A shy child often prefers it this way. Some children may 'romp' for a while before being redirected as the day gathers its rhythm.

Kindergarten Timetable

8.50am	Enter your child in our sign-in book
9.00am	Arrival
9.00-10.00am	Free Play - including artistic, handcraft & household activities.
10.00-10.15	Pack away time
10.15-10.30am	Morning Circle - We gather together at morning circle and enjoy singing, circle games and verses, often with a seasonal theme.
10.30-11.00am	Morning Tea
11.00-11.45am	Outside Play
11.45-12.00pm	Story Time - Story time is a very special time of the day when the chairs are placed in a circle, the curtain pulled, a candle lit and the teacher tells the story. A story is told many times during a two or three week period so that the child learns to know and love it.
12.00-12.30pm	Lunch
12.30-1.15pm	Rest time - Children rest on kinder mattresses bringing their own sleep time sheets from home. Sheets are taken home for washing at the end of each term.
1.00pm	Afternoon session begins
1.15-1.45pm	Inside Activity
1.45-2.30pm	Outdoor Play
2.30-3.00pm	Afternoon Tea

When you pick your child up, please help him/her put their slippers away and take home all their belongings. This is a great help to the teacher and encourages good habits.

Food

The children and teachers make the morning and afternoon tea together. Biodynamic and organic food is used whenever possible.

Each child's special needs are considered, therefore if your child has allergies, please speak to his/her teacher.

Children who stay for a full day bring their own lunch of wholesome, low sugar, simple and easy to manage food. (No sweets or packaged food please) We provide spring water for the children to drink.

Lunchtime Grace

*Earth who gives to us our food
Sun who makes it ripe and good
Dear Earth, dear Sun, by you we live
Our loving thanks to you we give.*

Birthday Celebrations

Children's birthdays are very special events. We warmly welcome parents, grandparents and guardians to join us for the morning session on that day or soon after, and to bring a home-made cake to share. We honour your child and his/her place in our group with a simple ceremony and tell a Birthday story, which through the imagination, describes an understandable picture of the human birth experience. (Please contact your child's teacher at least one full week before the birthday to discuss the details).

Kindergarten Walks

We love to go walking in our neighbourhood. Menzies Creek Station is so near we even hear the train whistle from the kinder. Monday is walk day. The children have the opportunity to stretch their limbs and to experience the changing seasons. In Autumn we gather leaves and acorns. In Winter we rug up for cold and windy weather. Spring finds us wearing daisy chains, and in Summer we have a ride with our parents on Puffing Billy to Emerald Lake Park.

There will be an excursion form in the foyer, which you will be asked to sign on a term basis allowing your child to participate in these

activities.

Eurythmy

Our eurythmy teacher takes the children for this art of movement, which helps children develop in a harmonious way. Please ask the teacher if you would like more information.

Equipment & Resources

We are often in need of fleece, plain coloured pieces of natural fibre cloth, interesting pieces of wood or bark, shells, feathers, seed-pods etc. If you can contribute to our collection of natural materials, please let us know.

Painting & Crafts

As play is our focus your child will not be bringing 'things' home every day. Most paintings and drawings will be kept until the end of term, however you are welcome to look at your child's work at any time.

When is Your Child Ready for Kinder?

Children are invited to join our Little Kinder Group when they are 3½ years old, but if your child's birthday is in the latter part of the year, i.e. June to October you may decide to stay on longer at Playgroup and join us at mid-year. We recommend that children who turn 4 after October 30th wait until the next year to begin Little Kinder.

The Kindergarten teacher really enjoys meeting and getting to know your child in Little Kinder. This is a time when a special relationship is begun and forged with the teacher sometimes over a three-year period. Your trust in the teacher allows your child to have a special relationship with his/her first teacher, who will be another loving adult in his/her life.

Before the new school year begins, you and your child will be invited to an orientation session in the Kindergarten. Every year there are information evenings for new parents. Each year starts off slowly and for the first month of the year, children in Kinder and Prep do not attend morning sessions. This is to ease the children into their new routine. The fee charged per term is a yearly fee divided equally over four terms.

Discipline

Discipline for the child in the kinder requires learning to fit in with the

group and flow along with the kinder activities. Mostly this happens through the rhythmical process of the session. Things are said or sung and done in the same way and at the same time. Good behaviour is modelled by older children and by the teachers.

When a child is unable to fit in, or hurts another child, or interrupts play we look for an inner reason and try to accommodate that child. Sometimes however a child may need a little bit of time sitting beside the teacher or doing an activity with the assistant.

We choose to work together with parents. A teacher may request a discussion time with parents or make a home visit. Often, a home visit, by showing the child just how much the teacher cares, modifies behaviour. Children may be helped by change in diet or routine. Parents will assist teachers by informing them of changes at home, which may affect behaviour. Good communication between teacher and parents is of the utmost importance.

Parents are encouraged to request discussion times with teachers when they need clarification about any issue. The best time to talk to a teacher is after an afternoon session. In the morning teachers are focused on beginning the session and greeting children.

Television and the Kindergarten/Prep Child

The presence of television and other media in a child's life is clearly seen in the Kindergarten. The strong influence it has upon children is visible in many ways. The child may seem "stuck" in creative play, unable to play anything but a super hero or monster. Other children seem to lose their imagination and can't think of anything to play. More subtle changes may be noted in a child who cannot sit still during a story, making it a distressing time instead of a time of wonder and delight.

There are many well-documented effects of TV on children; for example hyperactivity and lack of attention span, or inability to complete tasks. Perhaps the greatest loss is the dimming effect it has on the child's wonderful imagination. We fully recognise that TV is in the domain of the family and that it is up to you to decide for your child, however we ask that NO television be watched in the morning before school, and we feel that TV watched before bedtime is very disturbing to a child's sleep.

What is true of television also holds for videos and computer games and other media. Too many music and story tapes, if they are a

substitute for the live human voice; can also be harmful.

Toys

If the child brings 'home toys' to kindergarten, they may be damaged or broken.

We love to receive flowers or treasures for our nature table.

Clothing

Children in their early years need us to help them know when they are overly hot or cold. Warmth helps children stay healthy and allows their inner organs to grow. Cold contracts children so that they are unable to play.

On cold days children need winter hats and raincoats, which come down and cover their bottoms. Gumboots are best for keeping feet dry. Children enjoy some outdoor play everyday even when it is windy, cold and rainy.

In the Summer children must have sun hats and protective clothing. (Kinder sun hats have a back flap to protect the neck or a brim that goes all around)

Inside each child needs a pair of plain slippers, which facilitate movement. Please keep a bag of spare clothes in the bottom of your child's bag. Children sometimes get wet or dirty in their play.

It is important to name clothing and footwear so that we can make sure that nothing is lost. Many children, for example, have the same slippers.

Sunny happy colours suit children and we ask that children do not wear black. Through our work we have noted how commercial television or film images printed on T-shirts, lunch boxes and slippers affect imaginative play. Please refrain from sending your children to school with these.

Health & Safety

As parents, you know better than the teacher how your child appears and acts when he or she is ill. The lively Kindergarten is not a soothing environment for a child who is not well. Please make arrangements so that your child can be in a quiet and restful environment when he or she is ill.

All working parents know the desperate feeling of needing to go to

work when a child is not feeling well. The teachers are very sympathetic with the situation, but we urge parents to arrange back-up childcare. After an illness, children often appear healthy in the morning but are still not up to the vigorous activity of the kindergarten. Please allow your child at least one full day of rest after an illness. The teachers will make every effort to support you in keeping your child healthy. If your child is ill or will be absent for other reasons, please call your teacher in the morning.

In an emergency, we will use the information you have provided regarding contact numbers, doctor's name and phone numbers, and any other specific instructions. In case no parent or guardian can be reached, your signed consent will allow us to give the medical attention your child might need.

Immunisation

Parents are asked to provide details of the child's immunisation status as requested in the "Confidential Enrolment Details" form or "Medical/Emergency & Permission" form. Prep children are required to provide a School Entry Immunisation Status Certificate. Please contact the Office for further information.

Absences

If your child is sick, on holidays or unable to attend for any reason, please advise the teacher. Prep children are required to provide notes for all absences.

Admission Requirements & Enrolment Procedure

Please refer to the Admissions Policy and Procedure that you received in your Information Pack.

Fee Policy

Please refer to our separate Fee Policy and Fee Schedule.

Parent Responsibilities

In a developing School, there are many tasks. The participation of all families is required to carry our School through these early years of its development.

There are some maintenance tasks, and many other jobs in the Kindergarten and School, which are performed voluntarily by parents and others. You are asked to contribute wherever possible.

In addition, we ask all families to participate in fund-raising activities and working bees, etc. Not only does this play an integral role in the running of the School and in keeping fees low, it helps families to feel involved, and strengthens the community.

If your family has specific skills to offer, we would love to hear from you.

Kinder/Prep Parent Evenings

Once per term a Parent/Teacher night is organised. These are very important because they give parents a chance to strengthen the loving circle of parents and teacher around the child. They also provide an opportunity to learn more about Steiner education. These meetings offer a wonderful opportunity for community development, and your presence is strongly recommended.

Home Visits (Kindergarten)

When possible, we like to make a home visit. Home visits are a very enjoyable experience for the kindergarten child. This is when the teacher “comes to call” at home. The child is usually thrilled to show his/her home and special treasures to the teacher. This is also an excellent way for the teacher to become more acquainted with the child and his parents and with each family’s particular “family culture”. All this contributes to a deeper understanding of the child by the teacher. Teachers will contact parents to arrange these visits. Parents are also free to suggest this to the teacher at anytime.

Communication

News Sheet

A fortnightly whole school *News Sheet* is circulated to all families. It includes announcements from both staff and committee as well as community notices. This is automatically sent via email. Please let the office know if you would like to receive a hardcopy.

Pockets

Each family is allocated a ‘pocket’ where notices etc. are placed for collection. These are located in the foyer (kinder) or courtyard (prep). You may also use these pockets to leave notes for the teacher, assistants and office staff, however fees must be paid directly to the Office.

Notice Boards

General notices are placed on the notice board in the foyer (kinder) or courtyard (prep).

Please refer to the Communication (Complaints) Procedure for further Information.

Exit Interviews

Families who choose to withdraw their child will be invited to attend an exit interview with the bursar and/or their teacher.

Other Activities

Talks & Discussion Groups - are scheduled throughout the year on a variety of themes.

Library - We have a small Parent library currently located outside the school office. Contact the librarian if you are interested.

Market Day/Open Day - become involved in a practical way with the organising and running of this enjoyable, major community event and fund-raiser.

Further information on all of the above can be found in the fortnightly News Sheet, on the School's website or by contacting the Office.

Philosophy

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School is a co-educational school conducted in accordance with the educational indications of Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). This education is creative and artistic, stimulating the imagination of the child, and thereby strengthening each child's thinking, feeling and ability to do. By fully exploring the wealth of world wisdom from ancient times to our present age, the school will resource children for the challenges of today, fostering a deep love of humanity and the world around them.

Located within the Hills District, the Dandenong Ranges Steiner School offers a unique rural setting. Underlying the school's activity and focus is the integrity of the Bio Dynamic Gardening and Farming occurring on site. This is supported by the Bio Dynamic Association.

Administration

The School is registered as an Independent School with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). The Kindergarten is registered as a Children's Service Centre.

The Dandenong Ranges Steiner School Association is incorporated in Victoria with Consumer & Business Affairs.

A list of current Committee and College members is available upon

request. Do not hesitate to contact the person responsible for any area you are interested in.

Democratic Principles

The programs and teachings of the School support and promote the principles and practices of Australian democracy, including a commitment to elected Government, the rule of law, equal rights before the law, freedom of speech and association and the values of openness and tolerance.

Emergencies

Please ask your child's teacher if you would like to see our full **Containment & Critical Incident Plan & Procedures**.

The School (Playgroup, Kindergarten, Prep and Primary) will close on days when the Fire Danger Rating is "Extreme" or "Code Red". Parents have the option of keeping their child at home on days when the Fire Danger Rating is "Severe". A day with a Fire Danger Rating of "Severe" or above will also be a day of Total Fire Ban. Further information on Fire Danger Rating is available from the School office or from the Country Fire Authority website.

In the event of an emergency in this area, all children will be evacuated with their teacher. Please do not attempt to come into the area. Parents will be notified by SMS or telephone when it is safe to collect their children.

Evacuation and Fire Drill Policy and Procedures

An emergency is any event, arising either internally or from an external source, which may adversely affect some or all of the occupants within the school and which requires an immediate response.

To ensure the likely types of emergencies that may occur at this school can be handled safely and effectively, the school implements the following practice:

- notification to staff of a planned evacuation/fire drill.
- regular drills. These will be planned to occur at different times of the day and week & will be recorded in the Evacuation & Fire Drill Schedule.
- inform parents of students when an evacuation occurs through notice in school *News Sheet*.
- notify the school community of Evacuation Procedure by publication in Parent Handbook and by having the procedure available for perusal in each teaching space.
- Immediately after an evacuation drill, key participants shall attend a debriefing session and complete the Evacuation and Fire Drill Evaluation. Where any deficiencies are noted, amendments shall be made to the Procedure.

In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation the following steps will be taken:

- The teacher will blow a whistle to alert the children that there is an emergency situation.
- Staff and children will exit the building through the front door immediately. They will walk without talking and will not stop to put on their shoes or to gather school bags.
- Staff and children will sit together at the Puffing Billy Railway Station or the Hall, according to the circumstances.
- The Assistant will bring the sign-in book, the excursion bag containing medications & instructions for special needs, the Evacuation Pack, the First Aid kit and the mobile phone.
- The teacher will call the roll.
- The Assistant will notify emergency services
- The Assistant will notify the school office, who will then notify parents.

Contact

Our postal address and main office is:

Dandenong Ranges Steiner School

11C Duffys Road
EMERALD VIC 3782
(Melways: 126 D12)

Our street address is:

51 School Road, Menzies Creek
(Melways: 126 H1)

Telephones

Main Office	(03) 8790 4797
Fax	(03) 8790 4793
Email	drss@ozemail.com.au
Web	www.drss.vic.edu.au
Kindergarten	(03) 5968 2122 (emergency & AH only)
Prep	(03) 5968 2630 (emergency & AH only)

The Kindergarten phone number should only be used before 8.45am and after 3.15pm or for emergencies. For non-urgent matters, or during session times, please use the Main Office number.

The Kindergarten & Prep staff extend a warm welcome to you and your child

July 2013