



Introduction to Steiner Education

Steiner education cultivates three principal faculties in children: thinking, feeling and willing. As such, it is often described as education for the “head, heart and hands.” “Head” refers to the ability to think clearly and independently. “Heart” refers to the capacity for feeling emotionally connected to one’s work and the world at large. “Hands” refers to the willingness to take action to achieve one’s goals and to contribute to the world.

At Sheidow Park School our Steiner classroom spaces are designed to create a calm, wholesome, home-like environment. In all grades, an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere is key. Classrooms have subtle soft tones and are filled with plants, natural light and natural materials as far as possible. Children’s art is prominently displayed. Our classrooms are screen and technology free.

In Reception the emphasis is on play and on observing and doing real work. Children may engage in activities such as making soup or bread baking and setting tables for mealtimes. A strong daily rhythm and sense of routine is instilled from a young age. Singing is an integral part of all parts of the day and much of the oral language is delivered through song and verses as well as stories told to the children orally, each day. Watercolour painting and craft times are typical activities. Formal instruction in Reception as well as the introduction to reading is intentionally delayed. Instead, imagination and free play (including outdoor nature play) are central and favoured. Sensory work, eye-hand coordination, sequencing and other skills are fostered to lay a foundation for the academic learning to come in class one.



Class one is the first year of formal education.

The introduction of reading and writing is intentionally delayed until class one when the children are seen as being developmentally ready for such an intellectual task. In class one a strong sense of structure and routine is maintained. The day begins with morning circle comprising of songs, verses, beanbag work and movement activities. It is followed by the 'main lesson'. The core curriculum is taught in a two-hour block of time, focussing on one subject for weeks. It could be described as an intensive period that allows for deep immersion in any given subject. The rest of the day is divided into skills and specialist lessons, such as Craft, Art and music. Arts and music are woven throughout the Steiner Stream and are seen as vital in the learning especially in the first 7 years of a child's life. The children learn to play the recorder in class 1 and they continue to do so for years to come. In class 3, the students start to play string instruments, namely the violin or the cello.

In our Steiner classrooms, the same groups of children are kept together, with the same teacher, if possible, from classes 1 through to 6. From the age of 7, students perform in class plays annually and from Reception children participate in Seasonal Festivals. The social environment is highly valued and the children build close relationships with their classmates. As the children grow older, the curriculum changes to meet the unique stage of life and development of the child. The main lesson structure and block format stays the same but the content and delivery differs as the children become older and more industrious. Children from class 3 to class 6 enjoy camps with their peers each year. These experiences help to solidify learning and are invaluable. Students cherish these times and remember them for years to come.



In our Steiner classrooms the use of Digital Technology is intentionally delayed until class 6. Children are afforded ample time to foster and enrich their own imaginations and become critical thinkers, creators and innovators. To support the delivery of the Steiner Curriculum, parents are strongly encouraged to make a commitment to reduce screen exposure at home as far as possible. No screen time is preferred. Teachers deliver age-appropriate content orally, through writing on chalkboards, music and art. It is only in class 6 that computers are introduced and utilised by the students and even then, it is done sparingly.

At Sheidow Park School students are encouraged to embrace diversity. We are fortunate to be a part of a dual stream school where there are opportunities for the 2 streams to share in activities and celebrations together. During recess and lunch play, all children play together daily and there are various One School events such as Sports Day, The Colour Run and the Moon Lantern festival that all children at the school are invited to participate in. Where possible, classes are partnered with a “Buddy” class from a different stream so that children can connect and learn from one another in our Sheidow Park community.

Further Information on Steiner Education

<https://www.steinereducation.edu.au>

<https://waldorfanswers.org/Waldorf.htm>