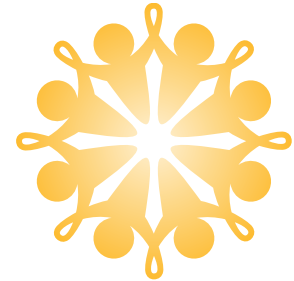


PROSPECTUS



Aurora
SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
STEINER SCHOOL

Receive the child in reverence,
educate the child in love,
release the child in freedom.

- Rudolf Steiner

A small school with big-hearted learning



Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School provides innovative and inspiring education for children from early childhood to primary school years.

Based on the insights of Dr Rudolf Steiner, we offer an enriching, unique and academically challenging education with more than 100 years of proven outcomes.

Informed by the latest neurobiology and drawing on a deep understanding of child development, our focus is to meet the specific needs children have in their education. Central to these are building confidence, fostering resilience, supporting emotional intelligence, inspiring creative thinking and fostering a life long love of learning.

An Aurora education creates a strong academic foundation on which your child will build throughout their life. We equip our students not just for today's world, but for the world of tomorrow.

Our solid educational outcomes meet national standards and are delivered in child-focused, developmentally appropriate ways.

We nurture curiosity, creativity and capacity, and encourage and honour the special gifts and interests of each child.

Our school upholds a respect and reverence for the natural world - we celebrate the seasons, grow

food, play sport, explore our surrounds and regularly set our learning in the outdoors.

We have a strong emphasis on the arts and include handicrafts, painting, drawing, movement, musical instruments, singing, storytelling, puppetry and drama at all stages of learning.

We have a strong school spirit - welcoming families into our community with open arms and hearts. We value kindness and compassion and seek to create an environment that fosters safety, respect and healthy relationships.

Aurora values equally all aspects of education - the practical, the artistic, the social and the academic.

We aim to support our students to become balanced, well-rounded and emotionally stable young people who have a depth of understanding about themselves, about their relationships with others, society and the times in which they live.

About Steiner education

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School is part of the international Steiner schools community. With

more than 1000 schools in 60 countries worldwide, it is the largest independent educational movement in the world.



Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.
- Rudolf Steiner

Each school is part of its local cultural community and yet all share in recognising the developing child as multi-dimensional, and in holding a profound respect for the individuality of each child.



Steiner, or 'Waldorf' education was inspired initially by research into child development conducted by Austrian educator and philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). Since then the approach has been developed to reflect the modern world and be adapted to local cultural contexts. The Steiner approach recognises the simple but profound insight that children learn in distinctly different ways at different stages of their development. As a result, Steiner schools introduce subjects and teach in ways that correspond to the developmental needs of the growing child.

Our strong academic, practical and artistic curriculum is based on building and fostering the child's natural capacities at each developmental stage. Students learn traditional academic subjects through the distinctive and time-tested Steiner teaching methods that serve the children's intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual development. Engaging the hands and the heart as well as the mind cultivates a real inner enthusiasm for learning, the hallmark of a Steiner education.

A Steiner education helps children to enter adulthood with the following strengths - reverence and wonder for the beauty of the world; self-discipline; independence; and true freedom.

Developmentally appropriate learning

Steiner education is based on a view of child development that sees learning as a process of human development - not simply an accumulation of facts and capacities in preparation for a career.

The teaching at our school endeavours to nourish the innate forces of childhood and nurture the essential humanity of each individual. The curriculum and the whole organisation of the school are based on these principles.

In Steiner education, children are seen as moving through three different phases of roughly seven years during their schooling. Two of these phases take us from birth through to the primary years:

The first seven-year phase of a child's life see huge physical growth and development - from a tiny infant not able to do anything without help, to a child who can stand upright, run, climb, make things, talk, express wishes, play imaginatively and understand stories and simple instructions. This is a time to nurture the growing body of the child in a warm and supportive atmosphere, in which learning is by imitation and by experiential doing.

The second seven-year phase sees the child ready to take on a new style of learning, having built the foundations of the physical body. Children are now ready to learn through love and respect and to engage through their feelings.



For the young child, play is work; creative activity helps to develop skills for life.

- Rudolf Steiner

We find that when children's feelings of wonder and enthusiasm are awakened through imagination and beauty, they will relate both to the subject and to the teacher who brings it. In this way, learning becomes strong and deeply rooted. The class teacher gets to know each child in depth and so can bring the curriculum in the best way for that child and that class.

The third phase of seven years, though not completed at Aurora, is marked by the exploration of concepts and ideals, and the journey towards clear thinking. The young person should face questions such as: who am I, and what have I to offer the world?

The Playgroup

At Aurora we run a playgroup for children aged from infancy to preschool age. These facilitated parent and child groups enjoy story-telling, free play, bread making, nutritious morning tea, singing, dancing and parent craft. The children enjoy the gentle and creative environment, whilst parents benefit from the friendly and supportive group of other families.

Playgroup draws on the same nurturing themes that can be found in our Kindergarten - with an emphasis on rhythm and natural exploration. Children are encouraged to develop their creativity with simple toys that allow their imagination and sense of wonder to flourish.



The Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten

Our Kindergarten welcomes children from the age of four as part-time students in Pre-kindergarten; and from the age of five as full-time students in Kindergarten.

In the Kindergarten room the day starts with free play and activities. This is followed by more structured activity including arts, crafts, food preparation, circle-time and sharing a morning tea. Outside time is for climbing, running and experiencing the changing seasons and elements. At story time the children enjoy a quiet moment for listening to a folk tale or nature story.

Young children often astonish their parents with their boundless energy, running, climbing and jumping. They also watch and imitate the adults around them, exploring the world and what they themselves can do in it. All this activity is the young child's natural way of learning.

As children imitate and absorb everything around them, the Kindergarten teachers endeavour to present that which is worthy of imitation. An atmosphere of love and warmth surrounds the children. To encourage a sense of wonder there are objects of natural beauty: seashells, stones, pinecones, sheep's wool, wooden toys and handmade dolls. These are playthings, which give space for the child's developing imagination to transform anew each day.

Creative play is a vital element for children so that, under the teacher's care, they can develop their own inner space by imitating adult life and creating an imaginative world of their own.



Social awareness develops through interactive, imaginative play between children. A strong sense of rhythm runs through the week, incorporating the regular activities of painting, drawing, modelling, baking, crafts, Eurythmy movement, singing, walks, gardening and ring-games. A special experience is the daily story, carefully chosen from the rich realm of fairy tales and folk tales, whose imagery

nourishes the inner world of the child and contains much wisdom.

Through all these activities our aim is for the children to develop imaginative qualities and a respect for others that will guide and nourish them throughout their lives and provide a strong foundation for their personal, social and intellectual development.

Through creative play and diverse activities in the Kindergarten the children learn skills that will later enable them to be practical, to take initiative and responsibility. These years are where the foundations for learning and life are laid.

The Primary school

At Aurora, children generally enter their first year of primary education the year they turn seven. From this moment, they embark on a journey of learning and discovery through to Year 6, at 12 years of age.

Over these years a deep, caring relationship and understanding is fostered between the child, the teacher and the class as a whole. All teachers at Aurora are university qualified and approved by

BOSTES NSW (Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards).



Each class teacher has undertaken, or is undertaking, training in Steiner teaching. They lead the child and class through the challenges and joys of six years of growing up. Whilst the children may not have the same class teacher for the full six years, the task and approach for the class teacher is the same.

In the Primary years the pupils learn to work together as a class, to help one another, and develop social understanding. During these years

much of what the children do and learn is because of the love and respect they have for the teacher - as well as for the love of the subject inspired by the teacher. The children also learn to respect the class teacher as an authority, both on the subject matter and on conduct and behaviour.

Conceptual learning starts slowly in some areas in Steiner education and gathers pace as the children grow through the classes. By Year 4 or 5 the pupils will have covered much the same academic subject matter and skills as in mainstream schools, but our intention is to be selective about content bringing greater depth and breadth.

The Primary years offer a caring environment - with learning occurring through the notions of beauty, truth and healthy authority. The teacher brings each part of the curriculum at the right stage in the children's development to meet and satisfy their inner needs. The Primary teacher's task is to bring all the subjects in a living way, involving the whole child in the learning process.

This approach is unique to Steiner education.

In the early school years the pupils develop numeracy, literacy and social skills, and the

confidence to stand up in front of the class or school and present their work. Whatever the subject, the teacher will, where possible, bring the content in story form so that pupils can live into it



with their imagination. What is first firmly rooted in the imagination will later be grasped by the intellect. It is equally important for a child in Year 5 to wonder at the inner secrets of a flower as to identify its various parts, and in science in Year 6 the teacher is careful to lead the children through observation and experience of the phenomena, so that a sense of wonder and reverence for the world and its processes is nourished.

The Primary curriculum

Each day begins with the Main Lesson, a two-hour period when a core subject is taught, experienced and worked with for a block of time, usually three to four weeks.

Academic subjects are presented imaginatively, to engage the whole-hearted participation of the pupils - physically, cognitively and emotionally - incorporating movement, supported by music, poetry, modelling, painting and drawing, along with the traditional skills of writing, reading and mathematics.

The teacher and pupils have time to explore many aspects of the subject through experiential activities, as well as through an imaginative and academic approach. After a snack and an outdoor break, the classes resume with subject teachers or the class teacher for painting, modelling, form-drawing, handwork, music, religion, and language.

In Year 3 more formal physical education, music and woodwork lessons are introduced. Lunchtime is for quiet eating of a healthy packed lunch and an outdoor break for games, chat, climbing or other play.

In each lesson the teachers will ensure that concentration levels are rhythmically increased and reduced to enable good learning.



The curriculum at a Steiner school can be seen as an ascending spiral through the Main Lessons. As the pupils mature, they engage at new levels of experience with each subject. It is as though each year they come to a window on the ascending spiral that looks out into the world through the lens of a particular subject.

Through the Main Lesson spiral curriculum, teachers lay the ground for a gradual vertical

integration that deepens and widens each subject experience while, at the same time, uses and develops essential skills. All pupils participate in all core subjects regardless of their special aptitudes.



In Steiner education, the purpose of studying a subject is not to make a student into a professional mathematician, historian, or biologist, but to awaken and educate capacities that every human being needs. Naturally, one student may be more gifted in maths and another in science or history, but the mathematician needs the humanities, and the historian needs maths and science, and both need art. The choice of a vocation is left to the free

decision of the adult, but a child's early education should give them a palette of experience from which to choose the particular colours that their interests, capacities, and life circumstances allow. Each subject studied should contribute to the development of a well-balanced individual.

If the ascending spiral of the curriculum offers a 'vertical integration' from year to year, an equally important 'horizontal integration' of all the subjects enables pupils to engage the full range of their faculties at every stage of development. The arts and practical skills play an essential part in the educational process throughout the classes. They are not considered luxuries, but fundamental to human growth and development.

*The healthy social life is only found
when in the mirror of each human soul
the whole community finds its reflection
and when, in the community
the virtue of each one is living.*

- Rudolf Steiner



Teaching is considered an art rather than a technique, and learning as an active process involving observation and practical, artistic and academic work.

- Rudolf Steiner

The curriculum supports the pupils in gaining an understanding of the natural world and of the achievements of humankind. The educational aim is to stimulate their curiosity, imagination and interest in the world; to foster a balanced feeling life, to develop a sense of morality and citizenship in a wholesome way. This encourages each child to grow in confidence, imagination and initiative.

Sample Main Lesson blocks

<p>Year 1, age 7 Letters and Sounds Writing Folk and Fairy Tales Numbers The Four Operations (+, -, ×, ÷)</p>	<p>Year 2, age 8 Writing and Reading Numbers and Arithmetic Numerical Patterns & Times-Tables Legends and Fables Stories of Saints</p>
<p>Year 3, age 9 Stories from the Old Testament World Creation Stories Farming Building Measurement Money and money systems Writing and Grammar</p>	<p>Year 4, age 10 Norse Myths Humans and Animals Local geography (and history) Grammar Letter Writing Fractions</p>
<p>Year 5, age 11 Ancient mythologies: India, Babylon, Persia, Egypt, Greece Plants Grammar Decimals (ordinary fractions and decimal fractions) Freehand Geometry Geography of the British Isles</p>	<p>Year 6, age 12 The Romans The Dark Ages and the Age of Chivalry, the Crusades Geology and Mineralogy Astronomy Geometry and Pythagoras Percentages and Business maths Geography of Europe Physics: Sound, Light, Warmth, Magnetism</p>

This outline can vary according to the class needs.

The subject of each Main Lesson is designed to address the inner needs of the developing child, as well as to open up understanding of the world around them. Each day the teacher will bring new subject matter, and students will be asked to recall the information brought on previous days and then consign this to their books. This three-part process is an important part of the cycle of learning and developing concept. Each Main Lesson will be recorded with drawings and writing by the students in their Main Lesson books; in the younger classes this may be copied from the board, and as their skills and independence develop, the children's individual work increases.

Maths and English are the backbone of the Main Lesson curriculum and have a place in the morning lesson every day, whatever the subject. There are also separate Main Lessons in Maths and English in each class. As the students get older there may also be practice Maths and English lessons timetabled weekly. Much of the work on English as a language, its structure and usages, is brought to the students through the medium of a Main Lesson on another subject and practice given by writing up the Main Lesson work.

School subjects

Languages

Learning foreign languages is an important part of an Aurora education as it opens up different cultures and approaches to life and provides children with an opportunity to experience flexibility of thought and expression. Students are exposed to foreign languages from Primary's Year 1. The language is initially taught (in the foreign language) through games, verse, song, acting stories, and other activities. The work remains in the oral realm until the beginning of Year 4, when the children begin to learn to read and write in the respective languages. Topics are learned with associated word families and from Year 5 more foreign language grammar will be gradually introduced. The use of foreign language readers is often introduced from Year 5 onwards and knowledge of and respect for the cultural aspects of the country is imbued throughout the language curriculum.

Science

Science, in a formal sense, is taught gently in the Primary school. Sciences appear through nature studies, stories and craft technology in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3-5 studies on farming, building, animals and plants are undertaken. Scientific method is taught more formally in Year 6 in geology and meteorology, as well as physics Main Lessons - with work on concepts such as heat, light, sound and magnetism. In Steiner education the exploration of science is taught by the observation of phenomena, followed by looking at the results and then at understanding how it works.

Main Lessons aim to give students a thorough grounding in basic scientific phenomena, schooling their observational faculties and as far as possible, deriving relevant concepts directly from the phenomena - rather than from theoretical models. These Main Lesson blocks include substantial amounts of hands-on practical work. Space is also given to biographies of leading scientists, their struggles, setbacks and victories, and the paradigm shifts that resulted from their intellectual battles.

Art

In Steiner education, art is not just a subject: it is an integral and essential medium for learning and a support for the whole curriculum. As the students study, art helps them both to reflect and to find ways of exploring and expressing the discoveries they make in the subject matter brought in lessons. One important aim is that the creative faculties are cultivated in the child so they remain a part of their whole approach to life. Children's ability to express themselves artistically is as important as the product of their work.

Art plays its part in every subject, at every age and stage of development, from Kindergarten and throughout the Primary years. In the early years, painting with wet on wet is an experiential approach to colour. Gradually, as the child gets older, and motor skills and hand/eye co-ordination develop, form is introduced. Art supports all subjects and learning experiences. Drawing and modelling are used to explore subjects and record lessons and the classes have a weekly painting lesson. Wet on wet is used at least up to Year 5. As students progress through the Primary years the teacher will introduce different techniques and

mediums, such as veil painting, pencil drawing and charcoal.

Handwork and Crafts

It is recognised that the practising of fine motor skills is essential to the development of thinking. Modern life has deprived children of so many opportunities to imitate and practise meaningful movement through the activities of the hands, so the practical and artistic side to the curriculum can in part compensate for this lack.



We provide a range of crafts that are part of the curriculum for all students. These crafts support the overall learning process and the development of a wide variety of skills and interests. Craft activities enable children to make things of use and beauty, to harness their imagination and energy to productive outcomes and they give skills that can be used for creative activity throughout life.

In handwork the children develop dexterity and skills through knitting, crocheting, sewing, embroidery, including cross-stitch, and simple clothes making. The students also develop a sense of design and use of colour through the different types of handwork. As children grow towards puberty their physical strength and energy need new challenges.

Woodwork starts with whittling in Year 3. By Year 6, pupils learn how to use tools such as saws, chisels and gouges, to hold the wood in place with clamps and to choose different woods for different types of projects: eggs, bowls, toys, etc.



The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility: these are the three forces that are the very nerve of education.

- Rudolf Steiner

Music

Music plays a large part in the education of students at Aurora. In the school, all children learn to play the recorder from Year 1 onwards, initially by imitation, later learning to read music. Singing is a regular activity as the students progress from simple pentatonic songs to rounds and then to part singing. From Year 1 all classes have music lessons

every week learning singing, notation, musical concepts and experiences. In the Primary years, students will join together to form choirs, exploring harmonies from around the world and providing musical contributions for our seasonal festivals. From Year 3 onwards students will take up a stringed instrument; instrument teachers will visit the school to give private and group lessons to pupils, which supports the musical life of the classroom and the school orchestras. Students will leave the school having an appreciation of a wide range of music and having been involved in both creating and performing.

Eurythmy

Eurythmy is a movement art form in which music, the sounds of speech and geometrical design, as well as rhythmic and dynamic form, are explored in bodily movement, gesture and group choreography. Eurythmy can be used as a vehicle of self-expression in storytelling and drama. Eurythmy is a central part of the curriculum in Steiner Schools. It supports the growing child and adolescent with exercises designed to develop spatial and social awareness, fine and gross motor skills, listening and responding to music and language, balance,

concentration, proportion and aesthetic awareness as well as self-awareness as an integral part of a group creative process. The lessons also support the curriculum in overall content and individual development.

In Kindergarten and Years 1 to 6 the children will generally have one lesson a week. In the older classes some of this work will lead to performances for the school community. The curriculum is taught by a trained Eurythmist.

Drama

Drama is carried by the class teacher in the early Primary years, with classes doing a play most years. In the later years the students will work more intensively with drama with a variety of styles that enhance the stages of history they are exploring in the main lessons. Presentations and performance evenings will take place throughout the year at festival times.

Religion

Steiner schools have an underlying Christian ethos that informs the teacher's approach to education

and the experience of festivals through the seasons of the year. The education is not religious or denominational but aims to support children's experience and understanding of goodness, truth and ethics, and a feeling for the sacred.

Teachers recognise that there is a physical, emotional and spiritual side to each person and this is respected and nurtured. For this reason, our school attracts and welcomes families of diverse faiths and beliefs.

Religion lessons at our school explore the sacred and moral aspects of life through stories and biographies, through exploring aspects of religions of the world as well as Christian heritage. Lessons are non-denominational.

Festivals

Steiner education recognises the importance of rhythm in all aspects of life, and for all age groups. Throughout the school, but particularly in the early and class teaching years, the teacher places a high value on nature: seasonal tables, stories and activities are woven throughout the curriculum. We also believe that there is a deep human need to

underpin our daily lives with points of inner meaning.

Seasonal festivals are celebrated in the school, including Harvest and Easter, Midwinter and St John's Tide, Whitsun, Michaelmas, and Advent. These are Christian in origin, and resonate with the seasonal rhythms of the year; however, their context is that of a search for a meaningful spiritual perspective, and is not denominational or sectarian.



School and home

Our teachers and staff work closely with parents and encourage involvement in and support for the children's education and school. There are many opportunities for this through parent information evenings, discussion forums, social and fundraising events, support work around the school, plays, trips, special activities and festivals.

It is important for the children and for their ability to engage in the education, that the home and school values are in harmony. Parents are therefore encouraged to find out about the school's ethos and underpinning philosophy. For example, at Aurora, TV, videos and computer games are discouraged as forms of entertainment, particularly for younger children, as these are stunting to children's imagination, initiative and social interaction. For further information on the school and Steiner education's insights on how to support your child's optimal development both at school and at home, please speak with a teacher, or our school Principal.

School structure

Our School's structure consists of a governing body - *The Southern Highlands Association for Steiner Education Inc.* (SHASE). The Board Directors of SHASE are responsible for overseeing the business and legal matters of the school and are the trustees of the Association. This group is made up of elected members of the association.



While we are such a new initiative, voluntary members of our Association and the school Principal share the varied roles of school management. A vibrant and enthusiastic Parents and Friends group is a key part of our organisation. It is expected that as our school grows, our school structure will change to support its development.



As part of the ideals that underpin this education, our school consists of a small College of Teachers that leads the educational direction of the school. This is a group of committed teachers and staff who meet weekly to hold the overview and direction of the education.

Enrolment process

We encourage all interested families to first attend an Open Day or school tour at Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School.

Following this, an application form is sent to the school with a recent photograph of your child, and the application fee. Following assessment of your application and subject to availability of places, an enrolment interview is undertaken. Following the interview and subject to the considerations above, places are offered. For our enrolment application form and further information on enrolment, please visit our website at <http://aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au>

Location

Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School is located in Bowral in the Southern Highlands of NSW - around one hour from Sydney. The area is known for its heritage villages, gardens, artisan community, rolling green hills and wide range of local produce. We wish to acknowledge the original custodians of this land, the Gundungurra and Dharawal people.



Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School

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