



**Parents Handbook
Updated August 2023**

Table of Contents

Introduction
<u>Section 1</u>
Organisation of the School
Core Group
Operational Manager
Facilities Manager
Trustees
How the School is Financed
Communication
General Enquiries
Communicating with Teachers
Issues & Concerns
Parent Teacher & Friends Association
Financial Matters
Digital Communications
School Newsletter
Emails & Notices
Payments for After-School Clubs
Communicating via:
Email
Phone
Contacting teachers and other members of staff by phone
Changing Personal Information & Preferences
Afterschool Club and Aftercare
School Hours & Absences
Early Departure
Notification of General Absence/Lateness
Leave of Absence (LOA) Requests
<u>Section 2</u>
Aim and Ethos of the School
Ethics Lessons
Festivals, Assemblies and Cultural Life
Pupil Support
Pupil Wellbeing
New Pupils Modern Languages
Instrumental Music Lessons
After School Activities
Medical Aspects
Infectious Illness
Meals
Wifi, Screens & Computer games

Safe Routes to School
Admission & Trial Periods
Kindergarten
Lower/Middle School
Upper School
Punctuality
Kindergarten
Lower/Middle School
Upper school
Homework
Lower/Middle School
Upper School
Evaluation & Assessment
Upper School Student Accreditation
Kit List
Lower/Middle School
Upper School
School Trips
Section 3
Policies and Rules
Discipline
Additional Notes Regarding Suspension & Exclusion
Dress Code
Jewellery & Make-Up
School Rules
Movement/Physical Education Lessons – Clothing / Footwear Expectations
Valuables
Breakages
Insurance
Child Protection & Safeguarding
Equal Opportunity Statement
Bullying
Health & Safety
Policy on Theft
Policy on Tobacco; Alcohol; Drugs & Illegal Substances
Tobacco & Alcohol
Drugs & Other Illegal Substances
Complaints Policy
Section 4
Parental Involvement & Participation
Protocol for Teacher/Parent/Carer Relationship
Supporting Your Child’s Learning at Home
Daily Rhythm

School Dress
Healthy Body, Healthy Mind: The Importance of Nutrition
Screens & Computer games
Participating in Your Child's Class
General Parents' Evenings
Parent/Teacher communication
Class Representative
The Parent, Teacher & Friends Association (PTFA)
The Christmas market
Participating in the School as a Whole
Festivals & Events
Further Reading
Steiner/Waldorf Education
For Parents/Carers of younger Children
Festivals
Stories
Stockists

Introduction

Welcome to Drumduan School.

This handbook has been prepared to give parents/carers vital information about our school and the philosophy on which it is based.

In Sections 1 to 3 we hope to answer most of the common questions you might have, including how the School is structured, organised and administered; the channels of communication that are open to you; information about policies and rules. In Section 4, we provide detailed information about how parents/carers can become more involved in the wider school community. By familiarising yourself with this, you will be able to give your child real support throughout their learning experience.

We are always open to feedback, so if you have suggestions or recommendations for improvement, please contact the School Reception directly or raise ideas by attending PTFA (Parent Teacher Friends Association) meetings. (For details on how to contact the PTFA and get involved please see Section 4).

Section 1: The Organisation of the School

The Core Group

The purpose of the Core Group is to support the running of the school while, at the same time, holding its pedagogical vision. It comprises the Chair of the Core group, the Business Manager and a designated representative from each area of the school. It also draws in other staff members, as and when appropriate.

The Core Group meets weekly to address operational issues and also works towards planning and implementing future developments.

The Core Group makes informed decisions that impact the entire school. In doing so, each member represents and is accountable to/for their area of work.

The Operational Manager

Responsibility for the day-to-day running of the School is delegated to the School Operational Manager(OM). The OM manages the relationship between administration, staffing and the wider school community. The OM manages the School Office and oversee the finance and admissions processes. The OM also oversee the management of HR with the HR Coordinator and Health and Safety area with the Facilities Manager.

The Facilities Manager

The Facilities Manager looks at the aesthetics of the School and oversees the maintenance and development of classrooms, buildings and grounds. The Facilities Manager holds responsibility for Health and Safety.

The Trustees

The legal, financial and employment matters of the School are the responsibility of the Trustees. The School is constituted under The Memorandum and Articles of Association, which established the School as a 'limited trust' in 1986. The Articles were amended in January 2021. The School is therefore a company limited by guarantee and the Trustees are its directors. The School is also a registered charity and is subject to the provisions of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 including supervision by the Office of the Scottish Regulator (OSCR). To stand as a Trustee, any member of the Association can be nominated and elected at the Association AGM. The Association is open to anyone who has the welfare of the School at heart.

How the School is Financed

The continued existence and well-being of the school depends on its financial and material needs being met by the School community. Responsibility for the School's finances is vested in the Board of Trustees. Fees are due annually, quarterly or monthly by direct debit, as has been agreed by signing of the Parental financial Agreement (PFA).

If parents wish to withdraw a child from the School following successful completion of the trial period, written notice is required one full term before the last day the child attends school. If parents do not do this, fees for that child will be payable for the remainder of that term and for one full term after.

While this is not an exhaustive list, there may be additional charges (invoiced separately from fees) for such items as recorders, some craft materials, Class photographs, performances, After School Club, other school clubs or special Class outings. On occasions, it may be necessary to charge for some form of additional learning support.

Communication

Effective communication is essential for the harmonious life of the School. Parents are strongly encouraged to direct questions and concerns to the appropriate person as soon as they arise, so they can be dealt with quickly and openly.

General Enquiries

The School Receptionist is on hand during open hours to answer your calls and emails as well as sending out need-to-know information. The Office is very busy during the day so if your call is not answered, please leave a message or send an email.

Contact email: reception@drumduan.org

Telephone: 01309 676300

Communicating with Teachers

Messages for teachers can be taken by the School Office and teachers will return your call as soon as it is convenient (see below).

Issues & Concerns

If you have questions or concerns regarding your child's experience at school, the curriculum, discipline, homework or any other matter which can be discussed via the parent-teacher relationship, the following steps are suggested:

- If the child is in the Parent & Child group or the Kindergarten, speak to the group leader or Teacher.
- If the child is in the Lower School, contact the Class Teacher in the first instance.
- If the child is in the Upper School, contact the Class Guardian in the first instance.

If the problem/question remains, you can:

- Contact the Core Group by making an appointment via the School Office
- Write to the Core Group by sending an email to coregroup@drumduan.org

For questions of school policy, procedures or concerns beyond the parent-teacher relationship, you can:

- Contact the Operational Manager: operationalmanager@drumduan.org
- Write to the Core Group: coregroup@drumduan.org

For matters concerning the Class

- Contact the Class Teacher/Guardian
The Class Teacher/Guardian should be the primary point of contact for Class related matters. Teachers are happy to help and will endeavour to respond to emails within 2 days, however, please be patient. If waiting for an answer, you may contact the School Office to leave a note for the Teacher.
- Contact the Class Parent Representative. Class Parent Representatives form an important social link between the Class Teacher or Class Guardian and all the families in the Class. They are responsible for contacting and welcoming new parents on behalf of the Class community and assisting the Class Teacher with the organisation of Class, including helping to organise Class outings, baking for parents' evenings, redecoration of the Classroom or inviting parents to join work groups for the Christmas Market.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

For matters concerning school events or how to become involved in the School or other general questions:

- Contact the PTFA: drumduanpta@gmail.com

Financial Matters

Questions about financial matters should be directed to the Finance Manager.

- Contact: financemanager@drumduan.org

School Leadership

Questions about the school's operations, particularly with regards to the pedagogy, should be directed to the Core Group.

Contact: coregroup@drumduan.org

Questions about the school's operations, particularly with regards to the business aspects, should be directed to the Operational Manager.

Contact: operationalmanager@drumduan.org

Communication to the Trustees should be sent to the Chair of Trustees.

Contact: trustees@drumduan.org

Digital Communications

School Newsletter

The fortnightly school newsletter is sent out on Friday afternoon via the whole-school email. We aim to provide parents with event information, news and other information relevant to school life. There is also a space for advertising relevant to the school community.

Contact: reception@drumduan.org

Emails & Notices

The School aims to keep email contact at a minimum level. Essential and urgent information will be sent out via email to the relevant class/families

Payments for after school clubs

The School offers after-school clubs and additional activities which need to be booked and paid for. All bookings for after-school clubs must be made via aftercare@drumduan.org and invoices will be emailed directly to families.

For all other payments, please contact financemanager@drumduan.org

Communicating via email and telephone

The guidelines below are intended for all members of the School community: parents, teachers and school support staff. They are not 'formal policies,' or regulations, although similar matters relating to communication may be covered more rigorously in other documents

Email

While email is now a common medium of communication between parents, teachers, support staff, school management, the School Office and Trustees, we would encourage parents to use email simply to arrange appointments, with face to face meetings being the preferred method of communication.

All teaching staff have a school email address; 'personal' email addresses should, wherever possible, not be used for matters relating to school business. Exceptions might include occasions when members of staff are traveling, or abroad, and may not have secure access to their school email account.

To ensure that email communication remains efficient, sustainable, clear and respectful, and to help members of school staff maintain a healthy work/life balance, all members of the School community should adhere to the following guidelines:

- It is possible to send an email at any time of the day or night. However, if parents/carers send an email to school staff after 4.30pm (during term time), or at the weekend (during term time), they should not expect an immediate reply. Emails sent after 4.30pm, or at the

weekend, are likely to be acknowledged during the next working day, or at the latest within 48 hours, or in the 48 hours following a weekend.

- Class teachers, Class Guardians and subject teachers are not required to check their emails and respond during school's holidays but may do so if they so wish. In some cases, teachers will be abroad during the holidays, in locations where they may have no secure access to their emails, some of which may be sensitive. In such cases, teachers should not feel obliged to open or send documents and other attachments. If an urgent matter arises during a school holiday then a parent or member of staff should, in the first instance, contact the Core group, via the school reception on reception@drumduan.org .
- Teachers and other members of school staff will endeavour to acknowledge all emails within two working days, if not sooner. However, the resolution of a concern, or a full answer to a concern or query, may take at least 7 days. This is to allow departments and other groups—which often meet once a week—to meet and discuss the matter
- Email content should be respectful, factual and relevant; personal comments, intemperate language or repetition of hearsay should be avoided. Parents/carers and members of school staff have the right to expect courteous communication at all times. Any email received by parents/carers which they regard as falling short of this standard may be referred to the Core Group or the Board of Trustees. Similarly, any email received by members of staff which falls short of this standard may not receive a response from the recipient and may be referred to the Core Group or the Board of Trustees, who may request a meeting with the individual who sent it
- Any parent who is dissatisfied with the manner in which their email correspondence has been dealt with may follow the procedure outlined in the School's Complaints Policy
- Emails regarding a query or concern about any aspect of a pupil's education or experience in school should be sent in the first instance to the pupil's Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian. Queries for the attention of subject teachers may be sent to them by email via reception.
- All emails concerning pupils which are sent by subject teachers or support staff to other members of staff or to a pupil's parents/carers should also be CC'd (copied in) to the pupil's Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian. All emails which express a concern about a pupil, or deal with matters that might give rise to a concern about a pupil, should be copied in to the Core Group: coregroup@drumduan.org
- Subject teachers and other individual members of staff may, at their discretion, give their school email addresses to pupils and/or parents/carers, provided the guidelines above are followed. Subject teachers' email addresses, and the email addresses of support staff, are not normally made available for general use by parents/carers
- Parents' email addresses from Class email lists must not be passed on to third parties or used for purposes other than school business except with the explicit permission of those parents.
- All members of the school community should remember that emails may contain sensitive personal information which, if inappropriately shared, would breach GDPR guidelines. To ensure that sensitive information is not shared widely, it is wise to restrict the number of recipients for each email to the smallest number possible.

Phone

Telephone (landline or mobile) remains a common medium of communication for staff and parents/carers at Drumduan School. Following the introduction of the General Data Protection Guidelines (GDPR), however, the School, in common with other organisations, must be very careful about how, when, and for what purpose personal details such as telephone numbers are shared. The School no longer circulates a list of teachers' contact details to parents; nor does the school circulate—automatically, via a Class list—the contact details of parents among the wider parent body. This can make it more difficult to organise, for example, 'phone trees,' and may complicate the arrangements for certain events and trips. Parents may choose to share phone numbers among themselves, provided they do not pass on the phone numbers of other parents to third parties without their explicit permission.

Contacting teachers and other members of staff by phone

Members of school staff may be contacted in school via the School Reception, (01309 676300). A message can be left with the School Reception, and members of staff will be asked to return your call.

Members of staff may, at their discretion, share their personal contact details, including phone numbers, with parents/carers. Kindergarten Teachers, Class Teachers and Class Guardians will normally share this information as a matter of course, but they are not obliged to do so. Members of school staff often work on different days, and their hours of work may vary according to their role. Please bear in mind that a part-time member of staff may not be able to return a phone call until they are next in school. This may not be for several days. Full-time teachers are normally available between 8.45am and 3.45pm on weekdays during term time, but may be teaching throughout the day and therefore may not be able to return a call until late afternoon at the earliest.

Some teachers are happy to receive a phone call in the evening, or at weekends; others would prefer only to make and receive phone calls, where possible, during school hours, or before 9pm at night, or during week days only, or not during a school holiday: the School believes that, given the nature of our work, flexibility in regard to personal phone numbers is essential, and that therefore, the matter of finding 'a convenient time to call' should be at the discretion of individual members of staff. **This should be respected by the whole school community.**

In the case of Kindergarten Teachers, Class Teachers and Class Guardians, who communicate frequently with parents, it is reasonable to ask them to give a picture of when and how they would prefer to be contacted outside of school hours. This might be an item for discussion at the first parents' evening of the school session.

Changing Personal Information & Preferences

Please ensure that the School Reception has up-to-date information on how to contact each parent/carer both at home and at work. The emergency telephone number of an additional responsible adult should also be provided.

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure all information held by the School is accurate. We will remind you to update any changes periodically at the beginning of new academic years. Any changes to contact information should be emailed to the school reception on **reception@drumduan.org**

Afterschool Club and Aftercare

In recognition of the fact that many parents/carers are unable to take their children home once their school day is finished, we endeavor to provide a range of Afterschool Clubs alongside an Aftercare facility here at school. The range of clubs and when they are offered is reviewed every year and we respond according to requirements, when it is cost effective to do so. Pupils are requested to bring a packed lunch if entering Afterschool Clubs at lunchtime. Booking is essential: please contact aftercare@drumduan.org

No child may be left unless they have pre-booked. Afterschool Club is also available in the Kindergarten.

School Hours and Absences

Kindergarten has a flexible drop-off from 8:30am – 8:45am, with all other classes commencing at 8:45am. The school is open from 8:30am. Pupils in Classes 1-12 are expected to be in their classroom by 8:40am for registration, so lessons can begin promptly at 8:45am.

Kindergarten children should not be left before 8:30am, by which time the Teacher will be ready to receive them. Kindergarten children finish at 1pm
Pupils arriving after 8:45am should come directly to the office to notify reception of their arrival and explain the reason for their lateness.

Pupils in Class 1 finish school at 12:45pm each day apart from one day per week when they finish at 3:00pm. In Classes 2 and 3, there are some 'half days' when pupils finish at 12:45pm; on other days they finish at 3:00pm. Notice of which days are half days will be given at the beginning of the new session.

For curriculum and staffing reasons, lessons in the Middle School (Classes 6, 7 and 8) finish at 3:00pm on most days but can occasionally finish at 3:45pm.

Upper School lessons finish at 3:00pm on Monday and 3:45pm Tuesday – Friday.

Parents will be advised of the timetable for their class at the start of each year. Any amendments will be notified by email.

Early departure

Pupils leaving early for appointments, or parents/carers collecting children early, should also email reception, in advance where possible at reception@drumduan.org. Please ensure your child is aware of this procedure—this is to ensure we have an accurate record in case of fire.

Notification of general absence/lateness

If your child is sick, or absent for any other reason apart from a leave of absence, it is essential that you notify the School Reception before 9am.

You may either email reception on reception@drumduan.org or call reception and, if no-one answers, leave a message on the school's voicemail.

You must notify the School each day that your child is absent, even if it is for the same illness.

Absences are recorded by the School as either authorised or unauthorised. Please ensure you give the reason for absence. If no explanation is received, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

For all pupils marked 'not present,' and for whom no prior leave of absence or parental notification has been given, reception will phone the parents/carers at home or work.

Please ensure that notifications regarding absence or authorised lateness (e.g. for a medical appointment) must always be communicated by the parent/carer (by email, phone or written note). It is not sufficient to just receive verbal notification from the pupil themselves.

It is helpful if parents notify BOTH the School Reception (by email or phone) and the Kindergarten Teacher/Class Teacher/Class Guardian. Teachers are very busy and these messages do not always reach the School Reception in time for the pupil absence check in the morning.

Please see the 'Attendance Policy' for further details on all of the above

Leave of absence (LOA) requests

Parents should request permission from the School if they wish leave of absence for their children during term time, giving a minimum of two weeks' notice.

These requests are for unavoidable absences of a day or more, for any reason other than health or bereavement. Authorisation for an absence is at the discretion of the Core Group.

Requests can be emailed to coregroup@drumduan.org

Please see the 'Attendance Policy' for further details.

Section 2: The Education

The Aim and Ethos of the School

The primary task of Drumduan School is to provide the best possible education for its pupils, so that they may become knowledgeable but also inwardly free, secure and creative adults.

Rudolf Steiner described his ideal of a comprehensive education as one that encompasses everyone regardless of social or religious background. The basis of this 'art of education' was—and still is—a deep understanding of the human being and recognition of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of the developing human being.

The philosophy (Anthroposophy) behind the education can be applied to all walks of life and it is out of this that the teachers at Drumduan School work. **The philosophy itself, however, is never taught to the children.**

The broad curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the child at each stage of their development. The teacher is free, within these guidelines, to present the subject material in an individual way that aims to awaken and inspire the children, encouraging them to discover and learn for themselves. In this way the child is not educated solely in the 'three Rs' but also in the 'three Hs'—Hand, Heart and Head— the practical, feeling and thinking capacities.

The School strives to provide an environment in which a child can find security, moral strength and confidence to face the challenges of life with initiative and responsibility.

Ethics Lessons

The purpose of the weekly ethics lesson, which starts in Class 2, is to foster a natural reverence. As the child progresses through the School, these ethics lessons change in character. In accordance with the general curriculum, they aim to guide the children towards a deeper appreciation of right and wrong. Ethics lessons are not seen as something separate from the rest of the curriculum, but rather provide a focus for the values, which are at the heart of our education. The School celebrates the Christian festivals of the year and welcomes children of all faiths and denominations. The rhythm of the year is marked out by the celebration of the festivals.

Festivals, Assemblies and Cultural Life

The way in which festivals are celebrated may vary from year to year, but often the Lower and Upper Schools will come together to present to each other the items they have been preparing in their respective Classes. We always try to strike an appropriately seasonal and festive note with these festival gatherings. Parents are usually invited to join us. Details of this will be given through the school's bi-weekly newsletter and/or will be emailed via the whole-school email.

In addition, there are many cultural events put on at the School, including plays and concerts. Some of these are brought to the School by touring artists and are usually of a very high standard. Many are performed by our own pupils, such as the Class 8 play and Upper School dramatic presentations. The children always appreciate it when other parents/carers as well as their own can support their efforts by attending their performances.

Shortly before Christmas, the teachers perform a play from the Oberufer cycle of Christmas

Mystery Plays. This is offered as a gift to the pupils of the School from their teachers and is also performed in the evening for parents, carers and friends. All parents/carers are invited to attend the performance.

Pupil Support

Drumduan School aims to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of all pupils, within the framework of Scottish legislation for education and as an Independent School. The Learning Support team is central to this, working with the teachers, parents and professionals as well as the children and young people themselves.

Pupil Support embraces:

- Cognition and learning – including those who are gifted or talented, neurodiverse learning styles and hindrances to learning
- Communication and interaction – including EAL provision
- Social and emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Physical development and hindrances and sensory difficulties

The team has a lead practitioner with extensive, specialised knowledge and experience in this area, including literacy and numeracy and other specialists whenever possible. We provide support either by advising teachers about appropriate approaches or by sessions with individual pupils or small groups.

Screening is provided at strategic stages to help ensure an understanding of the children and young people's development and their progress in literacy and numeracy. This is also frequently done when a pupil is new to the School, especially if parents or a previous school suggest it would be helpful, (with parent/carer consent). If a Class Teacher or Guardian is worried about an area of a pupil's learning, they will discuss this with the Learning Support and together they will plan what action should be taken. Parents are usually kept informed and consulted at every stage.

Working within the GIRFEC framework, the learning support team liaises with parents, outside professionals and agencies to fully support pupils. However, as an Independent School, we cannot usually engage with Local Authority financed provision and parents may have to finance some additional support themselves, but we will always advise on this where relevant.

For more information Parents can email reception@drumduan.org or phone via the office.

Pupil Wellbeing

We have safeguarding staff within the school. Pupils can also speak to any member of staff whenever they need to. In a small school such as ours, we are easy to find and will make time available whenever possible. New pupils can ask their Class Teacher or Guardian how to do that.

The safeguarding staff can be contacted on: safeguarding@drumduan.org.

New Pupils: Modern Languages

If a new pupil entering Classes 5 to 8 comes to the School with no previous experience of the French language, they will be expected to have extra tuition on a weekly basis. Extra tuition should continue until the child is integrated into the level of language learning that the Class average has achieved. Where possible, the cost for extra tuition is assumed by the parents/carers. Extra tuition lessons will be offered after school hours at the School although the parents/carers are free to find their own teacher for this, as long as progress is consistent. Any further questions about this should be directed to the Core Group.

Pupils entering the Upper School may also need extra tuition in French and German if they wish to pursue these subjects in the Integrated Education (I.E.) Modules. Private tuition may be available from the School's language teachers for an additional charge. Parents/carers should consult with the Class Guardian.

Instrumental Music Lessons

As a school, we encourage pupils to take up musical instruments at the appropriate age. Usually, instrumental lessons have to be arranged privately. The school keeps a small stock of instruments, which may be borrowed.

If a pupil has private tuition or music lessons at school, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to **contact the tutor personally** at least 24 hours in advance if a music lesson is to be missed for any reason, (including attending a school event), otherwise that lesson may have to be charged. It is not sufficient to inform the Class Teacher or School Reception in this case.

After School Activities

The Steiner curriculum aims to cover a wide range of activities for the pupils throughout each day. For those, however, who wish to extend their interests beyond school hours, a number of opportunities exist. Parents will be advised of the current program via the whole school email, prior to the start of each term. Advance booking and payment is required.

Parents can contact: aftercare@drumduan.org

Medical Aspects

In this school a child's general medical care is held to be the responsibility of the child's parents or carers; there are no routine health inspections.

There are first aid points in all the School's buildings and the majority of staff are trained in first aid. The administration for first aid is under the supervision of members of staff. Only homeopathic remedies are used, unless medicines are provided, where necessary and with written consent, by the parent of a pupil. If pupils are too unwell to attend lessons for the rest of the school day, or if they have sustained an injury requiring more than first aid, we recommend they return to their parents'/carers' care with the minimum of delay. In cases of an injury that requires hospital attention we will seek to inform parents immediately, but if parents cannot be contacted in an emergency, we will see that the injured pupil is accompanied to hospital.

It is important that parents/carers keep the School Reception up to date with their daytime contact numbers and pertinent details of their children's health. A medical/emergency contact form is provided for this information. **For children with serious medical conditions (such as epilepsy) or severe allergies parents/carers should submit a Care Plan alongside the medical form. Care Plans can be obtained from a GP.**

Infectious Illness

Pupils suffering from infectious diseases, including covid, should be cared for at home. Parents/carers are also reminded of the School's policy to keep children at home for 48 hours after the last bout of vomiting or diarrhoea. In cases of Covid 19 infection, the school will follow the current government guidelines.

For quarantine times for other illnesses, please consult your doctor for guidance.

Meals

Parents/carers are asked to provide their children with a packed lunch. In the interests of healthy eating, we would ask you to provide wholesome, nourishing food and to keep pre-packed, convenience foods to a minimum. Crisps, chocolate bars and canned drinks are not permitted on normal school days.

Upper School pupils are strongly discouraged from consuming junk food, and are not allowed to eat crisps, chocolate or fizzy drinks in public areas during normal school days.

In kindergarten, the children help to prepare a meal every morning. If the children are staying for afternoon care, they should bring a substantial snack. Parents are kindly asked to ensure that this includes a savoury snack.

Wifi, Screens and Computer Games

Drumduan aims to be a Wifi-free School and works, where possible, with hard-wired internet connections for all computers used by staff and those used by Upper & Middle School students.

The experience of teachers is that exposure to screens and computer games can significantly interfere with the educational work of the School. This is found to be true for all ages but is especially so for younger children.

Although screen time may have a justified place in the life of an adult, screen time for children is now acknowledged as a medium which impairs strength and creativity, as well as interfering with healthy social development and weakening academic performance. It is preferable for small children not to watch screens at all: the younger the child, the more pronounced the effect is likely to be.

Computers have become a part of everyday life, and the School's computing facilities are an integral part of the Upper School curriculum. However, when children become attracted to computer games, their hands, eyes and attention become increasingly focused upon a small area just a short distance in front of them. As more time is spent on computer games and other screens, less is spent on developing broader social and physical abilities that are essential for healthy growth.

For all these reasons, both screens and computer games are felt to impede the work of the School.

Safe Routes to School

The School actively supports the national Safe Routes to School Initiative. The aims of which are to:

- Enable children to be safe and to feel safe walking or cycling to and from school
- Encourage parents/carers to consider alternatives to driving their children to school
- Improve pedestrian and road safety, and environmental quality for all

While recognising that many people travel great distances to the School, thus relying on a car, we would still encourage parents/carers to use other means of transport i.e. bus, bike, walk or car share if at all possible.

Admission and Trial periods

Kindergarten

When applying for a place in Kindergarten, parents are welcome to request a tour of the school in order to observe the kindergarten classes and the wider school provision. Parents should then complete a school application form. If the parents are seeking Early Years Funding, they should also apply to Moray Council, on-line, for a funded place. The school can provide a paper copy of this application, if required.

When a place becomes available, parents and their children are invited to meet with the Kindergarten staff in order for the staff to gain a better understanding of the child and their individual needs.

On joining kindergarten, the children are observed closely and observations are recorded. Every child has a basic care plan with focus areas that reflect the individuality of that child. Children's development is also monitored in line with Scottish Education Policy, using a tracking system that has been specially developed within kindergarten to work with our unique anthropological approach.

Kindergarten uses the SHANARRI principles (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included) as a framework to ensure that the health and wellbeing of each child is always considered. Parents are an essential part of this process and we ask for feedback, through the answering of SHANARRI questions, during the year. This feedback is used as a basis to develop a 'wellbeing wheel' for each child.

If at any time the kindergarten staff or a child's parents find it hard to best understand the needs of a child, or need help to find the best way to support their needs, the school will ask for extra support from someone specialised in 'additional support needs'. This may lead to the development of a more detailed support plan which parents will be fully involved with.

Lower & Middle School

Every pupil joining the School begins with a term's Trial Period and at the end of this period the following points will be used at the review. This list is intended as a guide for new pupils and their parents/carers:

1. Social integration into the Class is important and it is expected that new pupils endeavour to find their place within the Class.
2. The pupil is willing and co-operative with teachers and completes work and assignments consistently. Work is kept up-to-date and is of the pupil's best standard.
3. The attendance record should be satisfactory and there should not be any unauthorised absences from school (either full or part day or missed lessons). All absences due to illness must be detailed in writing by the parents/carers according to the Attendance Policy. Absences for other reasons should be requested in advance according to the Attendance Policy.
4. If homework is set, it should be done regularly and handed in on time (if this is not possible a note must be written by the parents/carers to explain the circumstances that prevent the assignment from being completed).
5. Pupils are expected to familiarise themselves with the School Rules and keep them at all times.

Please note: The School reserves the right to curtail the Trial Period in situations where there is a serious breakdown of cooperation with the above points.

Upper School

Every pupil joining the School begins with a term's Trial Period and at the end of this period the following points will be used at the review. This list is intended as a guide for new pupils and their parents/carers:

1. The pupil is willing and co-operative with teachers and completes work and assignments consistently. Work is kept up-to-date and is of the pupil's best standard and shows endeavour.
2. Homework is done regularly and handed in on time (if this is not possible a note must be written by the parents/carers to explain the circumstances that prevented the assignment from being completed).
3. The attendance record should be satisfactory and there should not be any unaccounted absences from school (either full or part day or missed lessons). All absences due to illness must be detailed in writing by the parents/carers according to the Attendance Policy. Absences for other reasons should be requested in advance according to the Attendance Policy.
4. Pupils are expected to familiarise themselves with the School Rules and keep them at all times.
5. Social integration into the Class is important and it is expected that new pupils do their best to achieve this.

Please note: The School reserves the right to curtail the Trial Period in situations where there is a serious breakdown of cooperation.

Punctuality

Among the special aspects of a Steiner school is the need for a strong social environment that is provided by parents/carers working together to support the educational work. The School considers punctuality to be of vital importance. If teachers and parents/carers are punctual, the children will learn reliability and respect for others; habits that will last into later life. It is therefore expected that parents/carers will help provide uninterrupted and punctual attendance

at school. To arrive late for the start of school or for individual lessons is not only inconsiderate towards others in the Class and disruptive to the flow of the lesson but, if allowed to continue, can give rise to the formation of habits that may be hard to break later in life. Further details can be found in the Attendance Policy.

Kindergarten

When a child arrives late at Kindergarten they may have problems settling in, and the rhythm of the day will have been disrupted for all the children. Parents/carers are therefore requested to make every effort to ensure their child is at school on time. It is also very important to collect your child punctually. **It can be upsetting for young children to be left behind after their friends have already gone home.** The teachers are also busy with meetings and other commitments in the afternoon. Further details can be found in the Attendance Policy

Lower/Middle School

In the Lower and Middle School, it is considered the parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at 8:40am for an 8:45am start. Class Teachers will monitor punctuality and take appropriate measures in cases of repeated lateness. All pupils arriving after the register has been taken **must** report to the School Reception. Further details can be found in the Attendance Policy.

Upper School

In the Upper School we believe that the pupils share the responsibility for being punctual. Pupils should be at school by 8:40am. If a pupil is late, they must report to the School Reception to report their attendance. If a pupil is late three times within a term, they will have a meeting with the Class guardian. If they continue to be late following this meeting, the matter will be looked into by the Core Group and a meeting with parents/carers will be arranged. Further details can be found in the Attendance Policy.

Homework:

Lower and Middle School

There is no set homework in Classes 1 and 2, though the children may be asked to practice the skills they are learning, and individual tasks may occasionally be set.

Homework usually begins in Class 3 and from then on will gradually increase until, by the end of the Middle School, pupils may be expected to complete at least one piece of homework per week. Pupils are also expected to keep up-to-date with their Main Lesson work.

Projects and book reviews are set regularly from Class 4, and these will usually be set in addition to other homework. The exact amount of homework will be at the discretion of the Class Teacher, who will ensure that the homework is spread evenly throughout the week.

Upper School

Students will be set weekly homework in Maths, English and Language, in addition to ensuring

that any unfinished main lesson work is completed at home. Upper School Students will also be required to complete project work at home.

Evaluation and Assessment

Regular and open communication between parents/carers and teachers is a vital aspect of Steiner education. Evaluation is a continuous process and parents/carers should feel free to ask the teacher at any time how their child is getting on. The termly parents' evenings are also an opportunity for parents to see their child's work and to hear about their progress from the Class Teacher/Guardian and subject teachers.

At the end of each school year a written report is sent out for each child. These narrative reports aim to give a picture of the pupil's development, his or her strengths and weaknesses, areas of progress and potential for the future.

For the Upper School, reports are sent out once a year, at the end of the school year. The Class Guardian is responsible for the collation of reports. Reports aim to be comprehensive, but they cannot take the place of regular meetings between parents/carers and teachers for an objective discussion of the pupil's performance. Meetings can be set up at either the parent's/carers' or teachers' initiative and home visits can also be requested by either party. This can be mutually beneficial and help foster the relationship between home and school.

Pupils' progress is assessed through a consideration of their whole development, which includes social and artistic capacities as well as academic performance. Neither formal tests nor examinations feature in the life of a Lower School child. The joy of learning is its own motivational force in these middle years of childhood.

Because it is necessary for a teacher to ascertain that children have learned what the teacher set out to teach, assessments in various subjects occur in the older Classes. The emphasis, however, is always on how pupils have performed in terms of their own ability rather than measuring them against that of their classmates.

Upper School Student Accreditation

Drumduan Upper School assesses students using the IE (Integrated Education) qualifications which are overseen and externally verified by The Crossfields Institute.

The qualifications consist of two stages: Level 2 (GCSE/Scottish National 5 equivalent) which is aimed at ages 14-16 and Level 3 (A-level/Scottish Higher equivalent) which is geared towards ages 16-18. There are four potential outcomes achieved through a credit system: an Award (12 credits), a Certificate (24 credits), a Diploma (69 credits) and an Extended Diploma (117 credits).

The courses are highly flexible, with the option to fast-track or slow down these stages - allowing the school to remain inclusive and learner-centred whilst adequately supporting and challenging all learners.

Delivery consists of a taught curriculum, individual student projects and a unique Creative

Thinking Skills module which is designed to inspire innovation while developing various creative and critical thinking techniques.

Rather than taking the conventional approach whereby subjects are taught independently of each other, the IE qualifications require an integrated style whereby teachers and students are required to make links across all curricular areas, reflecting a real-world approach to education which prepares students for a wealth of future pathways rather than solely focusing on academia.

There are no obligatory exams; assessment is based on a range of evidence — main lesson books, independent projects and a selected portfolio of work.

Many of our pupils go on to further education, whilst others pursue a wide variety of careers after school. Our aim is to enable the young people who leave our school to make free choices based on sound judgement.

Kit List

Lower and Middle School

Please refer to the list for your child's Class issued to you via the School Reception and check with your child's teacher for any possible amendments.

Upper School

As for Middle School, plus:

A scientific calculator will be required towards the end of Class 9. Parents/guardians will be notified about which model to purchase. ***We strongly advise all materials (including art materials) be labelled with the student's name or initials***

School Trips

School trips form an important part of the curriculum. They widen the educational experience and the whole Class is expected to take part. The Class Teacher, Class Guardian or subject teacher will send out a form giving information and requesting permission for each trip. It is vital that you return this form and/or let the teacher know if your child cannot go with the Class.

General trips, in school hours, are covered by the blanket permission form completed at the start of each school year.

Parents/carers are expected to contribute towards the cost of these trips, both via extra payments and through fundraising activities which benefit the Class fund. One of the purposes of the Class fund is to assist with the cost of trips, either in part for each Class member or in full where the family cannot meet the cost.

In Class 5, the curriculum deals with Ancient Greece. The children take part in an organised Olympic Games camp. This is an occasion when many Class 5s from across the UK come together.

Section 3: Policies and Rules

Policies and rules can be seen as common understandings and agreements that allow everyone to participate in the purpose of the School, which is to educate children. Rules are pedagogically based and are the result of many years of experience. In addition, rules support your family by helping with the inevitable peer pressures that arise as part of growing up. More than anything, the rules are intended to support children on their educational journey towards freedom by teaching them about responsibility in an age-appropriate way.

It is very important that the family and school work together with common and agreed values and we earnestly seek your support in the application of the School Rules.

Discipline

Where there is a good understanding between teacher and pupil, discipline arises naturally. Problems may occur when this understanding breaks down for one reason or another. If a child behaves in an unacceptable way, the teacher must find a way to help the child with this. In the case of young children, an appropriate story may be told; through which the child becomes more conscious of why their action has distressed others. In some cases, Lower School pupils may be sent to a younger Class to be supervised by their teacher, but only if this action does not cause further disruption to another Class. In other cases, a member of the Core Group may become involved. Further details can be found in the Discipline Policy.

Additional notes regarding suspension and exclusion

If suspension is required, the teachers' decision and the reasons for it will be summarised in a written statement to the parent(s)/carer(s) and the situation will be considered by the Core Group at their next meeting. It is usual for a meeting of pupil, parent(s)/carer(s) and the teachers concerned to take place before the pupil rejoins the Class.

Suspension is a very serious sanction. The pupil may be suspended 'internally' (withdrawn from normal lessons and given alternative work) or temporarily excluded from school altogether for a period of time. Specific commitments are normally required before they may return. It is likely to be mentioned in the pupil's end of session report.

Exclusion is a last resort and all concerned should help the pupil to avoid this sanction. However, if the required commitments are not honoured, or if further incidents leading to suspensions occur—either of the summary variety or as a result of repeated misconduct requiring supervision or resulting in detentions—a warning may be issued that exclusion will result unless there is substantial improvement and a change of attitude within a stated period. It is very rare that such an extreme sanction has been warranted in our school.

Dress Code

As the School does not have a uniform, the requirements for school dress are based on considerations of health, neatness and cleanliness together with practicality and suitability for school. Therefore, we seek the cooperation of parents/carers and pupils in steering a course between strict formality and casual attire. Consequently, we would consider the following **unsuitable** for school:

- Clothing which is badly worn, torn or heavily soiled
- Clothing displaying pictures or slogans. NB The only writing on garments which is acceptable is the maker's logo, and then when no more than 10cm at its widest point
- Sports team tops or football shirts
- Military garments or similar uniforms
- Garments which reveal a bare midriff i.e. low slung trousers or skirts or cropped tops
- Garments which do not cover the upper torso/shoulders properly i.e. vest tops with thin shoelace straps
- Miniskirts. That is, skirts with a hem more than 6 inches above the knee
- Any facial piercings (apart from earrings) including nose or eyebrow studs/bars/rings and any piercings in the area of the mouth
- Any tattoos on conspicuous parts of the body (for example hands, arms, neck etc.)

Please note:

- Sportswear is not allowed in class outside PE or sports lessons
- Woolly hats, baseball caps and all other forms of headgear are not to be worn in class
- Clothing should be sufficiently warm so that outer garments, jackets, coats and anoraks need not be worn in class under normal circumstances
- Patterned fabrics are permissible
- All articles of clothing /equipment must be clearly marked with the owner's name. The School cannot take responsibility for lost belongings or clothing

Jewellery and make up

Lower School: Pupils are not permitted to wear any make-up (including unnatural hair colourants and nail varnish). Jewellery is not allowed below Class 7, except for sleepers which may be worn in pierced ears.

Any jewellery worn in Classes 7 & 8 must be in moderation and be in keeping with the guidelines set out by the Class Teacher.

Upper School: Pupils are required to ensure that their dress, make-up and jewellery (if worn) are within moderate bounds and in keeping with the considerations above.

School Rules

We expect that every pupil will be considerate of others and try their best when they are in and out of school.

1. Pupils should feel safe and free from words and actions that, intentionally or otherwise, hurt others.
2. In class, every pupil has the right to partake in the lesson free of interruptions and distractions.
3. Pupils should be protected from activities that may cause physical or mental harm.
4. Pupils should actively promote good 'Health & Safety' practice.
5. Pupils must follow the School Rules in order to make the above rights and freedoms available.
6. In general, except in specific circumstances, mobile phones should be turned off and kept out of sight within School Grounds. Parents are asked not to use their mobile phones on campus

during school hours.

For more details and an interpretation of the School Rules and Dress Code, please contact the School Reception.

Movement/Physical Education Lessons - Clothing / Footwear expectations

Our movement/ Physical Education lessons start from Class 3/4. Pupils will need a white T-shirt and blue shorts. During indoor sessions, up to and including Class 5/6, the pupils will play in bare feet. After Class 5/6, training shoes will be required.

From Class 8/9 outdoor activities are included and students will require various equipment. Parents will be advised, in advance, re specific requirements.

Appropriate clothing for both indoor and outdoor Play and Activity is important and pupils should be prepared for either scenario on their P.E day, as often the location is weather-dependent and decided at the last minute. Pupils should feel comfortable and able to 'move' freely and have warm layers and a coat available.

Warm outdoor clothing including hats, gloves etc, is particularly important for the younger pupils as we try to be outdoors as much as possible.

Valuables

It is unwise for pupils to come to school with valuables or more money than they need; and for obvious reasons money and such things as calculators should not be left unattended in a desk or locker. When necessary, a teacher can hold something in safe keeping until the end of the school day, or it may be left in the School Reception.

Breakages

In cases where a breakage is directly attributable to a pupil's misconduct, the parent(s)/carer(s) of that pupil will be asked to cover the costs of any repairs that may be needed.

Insurance

The School's Liability Insurance covers the School in cases where the School has been proven to be negligent. The School does **not** hold a Personal Accident Policy to cover pupils in cases of injury or accident at school. Parents/carers should consider whether they wish to cover this contingency themselves.

Child Protection & Safeguarding

The School's policies on child protection and safeguarding fulfil the national requirements of GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) and follow the guidelines issued by the Moray Council (as a partner provider) and those published by SCIS (the Scottish Council for Independent Schools).

The School has a Safeguarding Consultant, (Tam McVeigh) and a Safeguarding Co-Ordinator, (Gillian Barrett) and they advise staff and those with concerns as to the appropriate course of action. All staff members receive regular training in issues of child protection.

All allegations brought to the School's attention are taken seriously and dealt with confidentially in as far as they can within the criteria outlined in the Safeguarding Policy. Any parent/carer with a concern for the welfare of any pupil can contact any member of staff about the concern. It is best if an appointment to meet about the issues can be arranged. This is preferable to a telephone discussion. It is helpful if as much detail as possible can be provided of any evidence on which this concern is based. Concerns can also be brought directly to the Safeguarding Team by email on safeguarding@drumduan.org

Equal Opportunity Statement

Under the Equality Act of 1 October 2010, Drumduan School is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for the benefit of everyone. It is part of our core ethos to respect and value each person as an individual human being, each with their own gifts and challenges regardless of age, sex, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion and belief, disability, marital or civil partnership status, having or not having dependents, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

Drumduan School staff recognise their responsibilities in preparing young people for life in our culturally diverse society and showing, by example, the value of respect for each other as well as self-respect. They also recognise the opportunity to demonstrate that commitment both as a community resources provider and as a local employer.

We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination. All job applicants, employees and others who work for us will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on any of the above stated grounds. Decisions about recruitment and selection, promotion, training or any other benefit will be made objectively and without unlawful discrimination.

Bullying

The School does not condone bullying under any circumstance, be it physical or psychological in nature. Any report of an incident of bullying, whether from a child, a concerned parent/carer or a member of staff will be taken seriously. Any child who sees or hears another child being bullied is encouraged to report it to a teacher. Attention can be drawn to cases directly, via Class Teachers or Guardians.

All teachers have responsibility to initially investigate every reported incident and to inform Kindergarten Teachers, Class Teachers or Class Guardians. After this initial investigation it will be decided whether the incident should be referred to the Core Group, which has overall responsibility for wellbeing and pupil support.

It is the responsibility of Kindergarten Teachers, Class Teachers and Class Guardians to do their utmost to prevent bullying in their Class. The manner in which each case is dealt with will depend on the circumstances and the individual children involved, but the above principles should be adhered to at all times.

Please refer to our Anti-Bullying Policy for more detailed information.

Health and Safety

Our comprehensive Health & Safety Policy can be viewed in the School Reception.

Policy on Theft

When a theft is discovered, every effort will be made to find out how it occurred and to get the culprit to own up. This will be done by addressing whole Classes, talking to individual pupils, or to groups of pupils. Class Teachers/Class Guardians will be involved at this stage. Sometimes confidentiality has to be respected and teachers are not able to 'search' pupils, but pupils' own sense of right and wrong should be appealed to. The police may be informed, depending on the nature of the theft.

Once some of the relevant facts have been gathered, parents/carers can be informed and further discussions may take place if appropriate. Where necessary, other members of staff will be informed of the incident. Although each case is different, it is normal to expect money or goods to be returned and for those responsible to undertake some community work within the School.

School trips are regarded in the same way as being at school. Incidents of theft out of school are rare, but it could be that the School becomes involved and it would then work with the parents/carers and the police in order to resolve the situation.

Policy on Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs and Illegal Substances

One of the aims of the School is that pupils should abstain from drugs and other harmful substances as a matter of personal choice. Guidance and advice are provided to this end. However, circumstances arise, and temptations occur. This is the current school policy on this issue:

Drugs are defined as all legally banned or age-restricted substances, substances which may significantly affect mood or behaviour, plus any substance (or usage) specifically proscribed by the School. The School reserves the right to proscribe substances or usages in addition to those legally banned (such as glue or lighter fuel) or on which legislation may be pending (such as so-called 'legal highs').

Tobacco and Alcohol

These may not be consumed during school hours or during school functions on the premises; nor should they be consumed off the premises within the vicinity of the School, immediately before or after school hours or during school evening functions. Any pupil who does not comply with this, or is in the company of someone not complying, is liable to face disciplinary action.

Drugs and other illegal substances

The possession and/or use of drugs and other illegal substances on the School's premises is strictly forbidden.

In the event of a pupil or pupils being suspected of possessing and/or using drugs or other illegal substances, whether on or off the School's premises, the School may follow one or more of the following options:

- Initiate action to ascertain the relevant facts and circumstances
- Inform the parents/carers of the pupil(s) involved
- Suspend the pupil(s) concerned
- Inform the police
- Inform the parents/carers of other pupils in the same Class(es) as the suspected pupil(s)

All these considerations will depend upon the individual circumstances of each case. Other possibilities such as reparation in the form of work inside or outside the School will also be seriously considered.

Permanent exclusion is normally automatic for those who have previously offended, irrespective of the time or place of the offence. This includes Overseas' Students if it comes to the School's notice that they have offended in their home school.

In the event of a pupil or pupils being found in possession of or using drugs or other illegal substances during school hours or on school premises, the School will, under normal circumstances, immediately suspend the pupils concerned until an investigation has taken place. If deemed appropriate, following the investigation, a student/students may be permanently excluded.

This policy may be amended from time to time at the discretion of the Core Group.. The PTFA will be part of this process.

Concerns and Complaints

Parents and carers have a right to make a complaint to the School in relation to any aspect of their child's education. Parents and carers also have the right to make a complaint about any aspect of the School community. It is the School's policy to acknowledge the receipt of all complaints quickly and consider each one carefully. A full copy of the Concerns and Complaints Policy is also available on request from the School Reception.

For the purpose of clarification, for this document, and for general practice:

A **concern** shares information or expresses a hopeful resolution to something which is perceived to be a problem. A concern is **informal**.

A **complaint** expresses a desire for redress of a grievance. A complaint is therefore a **formal** request for action to be taken.

Section 4: Parental Involvement and Participation

Children are more likely to thrive when there is a close relationship between home and school. Parents/carers are invited and encouraged to become part of the School community, thereby creating a strong social environment to support the educational work of the School. While the amount of time any particular family can give will vary according to individual circumstances, all are asked to share what they can.

Protocol for Teacher/Parent/Carer Relationship

The relationship between teachers and parents/carers is based upon their common aim, which is actively to support and guide their children in their development and education. This will best be achieved when the relationship that exists is one of mutual respect and understanding. Frank and open communication is of immense importance in establishing the trust that should grow between them.

Every Class in the School is composed of children who come together daily from a wide variety of families, homes and cultural and religious backgrounds. What they experience as a group is the Steiner/Waldorf curriculum, as interpreted and presented to them by their teachers. While the standards of behaviour, conventions etc. may, in many cases, differ from those required at home, children will readily adapt to such differences so long as they feel the mutual support of both teachers and parents/carers.

Disagreements and misunderstandings may sometimes occur between teachers and parents/carers. While these must be settled as soon as possible, it is also important to find an appropriate moment to discuss these matters and the teacher should be contacted in order to arrange this (see Section 1, Communication). On occasions, a teacher may request some parental help in the classroom. This is very much appreciated by both teachers and children. Parents/carers may not, however, be present during a lesson without the prior consent of the teacher in charge.

If a message, an item of equipment, lunch box etc. needs to be delivered to a pupil or a teacher during school hours, it should be brought to the School Reception rather than directly to the classroom so that lessons are not disturbed. Parents of pupils in the Lower and Upper Schools may not visit a classroom except with prior approval of the School Reception, a teacher or Class Guardian. This does not apply during scheduled drop-off and pick-up times in younger Classes.

As parents/carers, you can participate in the life of the School by:

- Supporting your child's learning at home
- Participating with the teachers and parents/carers in your child's Class
- Participating in the School as a whole
- Joining the School PTFA

Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home

We have only to look back to our own childhood to recall the important part that home life played in our own growth and development.

Daily Rhythm

From Kindergarten through to Upper School, Steiner/Waldorf education provides a well-defined daily rhythm for the school day, week and year so that children have a secure framework in which to learn. A consistent daily cycle at home complements this aspect of school life, with well-defined times for getting up in the morning, meals and going to bed.

Homework may be given in the Middle and Upper School years, and your interest, encouragement and support for study at home will benefit your child enormously. Pupils need to be fresh and alert to work hard at our school, so a healthy diet and adequate sleep are very important to support your child's learning.

Main Lesson subjects are taught in blocks which usually build one upon the other. The rhythm of daily, weekly and seasonal cycles also forms an important part of the life of the School. For these reasons, experiences missed through absence cannot easily be made up at a later time, especially at the beginning and end of the terms.

School Dress

The School has no uniform and so the requirements for school dress are based on a consideration of health, neatness, cleanliness and suitability for work at school. While it may be difficult to resist the pressures of advertising and fashion, nevertheless both parents/carers and children are asked to cooperate with the School in steering a sensible course between strict formality and overly casual attire for the following reasons:

1. We strive to create a beautiful environment in the classrooms and in the buildings. We would like the children's manner of dress to be in keeping with this, avoiding logos, harsh colours and day-glow which disturb this harmonious environment.
2. We aim to teach children that they are not 'walking advertisements.' We endeavour to create a space for the children that is free of commercialism and where there is not a constant barrage of media-imposed consumer images.
3. The child's own imagination should stimulate and direct their play. Mass media characters, superheroes and sports iconography on clothing inhibit the development of a healthy imagination.

For the above reasons, Drumduan School strongly requests parents'/carers' co-operation in ensuring that children are in accordance with the dress code (see Section 3 for more detail).

Younger children especially are advised to wear strong shoes with a firm sole, so that their feet develop healthily and normally. In bad weather, all pupils should have waterproof footwear. Trainers with soft soles, which may be appropriate for games lessons, are not suitable for wearing throughout the day.

Healthy body, healthy mind—the importance of nutrition

Healthy food is a prerequisite for a healthy life and a healthy outlook; it is no coincidence that the terms 'health' and 'wellbeing' are so often bracketed together. As part of its wider ethos, the School makes a commitment to the nutritional needs of its pupils. Healthier pupils are more likely to perform better and less likely to miss school through illness.

Young people who consume a lot of food containing additives, and sugar in junk food, find it harder to concentrate on learning. Children who bring packed lunches should therefore bring wholesome, nutritious sandwiches or other healthy, filling foods. Crisps, chocolate, sweets and fizzy drinks are not permitted in the Lower School while Upper School pupils are not allowed to consume these products in public areas.

Each child may bring a cake to celebrate their birthday with their Class, but teachers ask that chocolate be avoided and low sugar recipes are recommended. Please check with your child's Class Teacher about any food allergies or intolerances there may be among pupils in the Class. Nuts, particularly peanuts, should be avoided as a matter of course. Food sold for fundraising should also be as healthy as possible, low in sugar and avoid nuts.

Screens and computer games

Watching screens and playing computer games, especially during the most crucial years of development, are two occupations, which we find incompatible with the holistic and humanly truthful quality of education we are striving to deliver. We ask the co-operation of parents/carers to minimise the exposure of the children to the unhelpful influences of these media, especially during infancy and the Lower School years. This may seem a lot to ask in our present media-dominated culture. Here are some of the criteria we consider important for your consideration:

At the time of birth many of the vital organs are not yet fully formed. Their healthy development is gradually completed through physical nourishment and through the child's experience of its own movements and the feedback gained through sense impressions. This is particularly important for neurological development, on which the ability for intellectual learning later depends. Watching screens inhibits all movements but, most seriously, it causes eye-focus to be fixed rigidly at the distance of the screen, while the illusion of a three-dimensional picture is presented. On the objective level of sense impressions this is a lie, which can cause subconscious confusion to the nervous system while preventing the movement and feedback which would provide a natural correction. When such things are experienced frequently at a young age, inner habits are formed which can become stumbling blocks for conceptual learning.

Young children learn by imitation and take all sense impressions deeply into their being. Play and amusement are not just time-fillers. The first-hand experiences they bring are the joyful means of developing the child's faculties for doing, feeling and thinking. All sense impressions are food for the growth of both body and soul and children trustfully welcome whatever loved adults bring them. Many well-meaning adults do not realise the extent of their children's dependence in this respect.

Once it is realised that children up to the age of 8/9 will subconsciously imitate what they see, one sees in a new light the effect of the caricatures and stereotypes which pervade so many 'innocent' programmes.

Around the age of 7, the shaping of the physical organs should have reached a certain stage of completion, which frees the forces that were engaged in forming them to serve the forming of ideas instead. In the years 7 to 14, the most important things to educate, besides the skills that

will be needed, are a healthy imagination and a feeling for beauty. The ready-made images from screens blunt and distort a child's own imaginative faculties. At the same time, the physical inactivity while watching, coupled with the speed of the flickering images, tend to produce a reaction of hyperactivity in some children, whereas others become inwardly torpid. The one-sided situation of reacting to a non-responsive stimulus dulls the social faculties in all cases.

Most of the above points also apply to computer games, with an additional dimension to be considered: while a computer does respond in its own way, the type of linear thinking it demands has little to do with human interactions or with a child's natural mode of experience. It is undeniable that computers are of great practical use for specialised tasks in adult life. However, for normally healthy children, who are still finding their place in a three-dimensional world and learning to relate to fellow human beings in a socially harmonious way, computer games constrain their developing faculties and alienate them from live realities.

Concern regarding these activities is not restricted to Steiner schools. Ongoing research continues to suggest that many professionals who work with children are becoming increasingly concerned that TV, smartphones and computer games are associated with an increase in significantly disturbed behaviour among some children. An experienced teacher can tell almost immediately by a child's behaviour whether he or she has been watching screens or playing computer games. We ask you, as parents/carers, to act in support of our efforts to provide a truly human-centred education.

Participating in your Child's Class

General Parents Evenings

Parents evenings are normally held once a term, to enable the parents/carers and teachers to discuss the Class as a whole. The teacher will speak to the assembled group of parents/carers about work being done with the children and describe the curriculum. A broad outline is given of the children's learning process at their current stage of development. The teacher will also present a 'picture' of the Class dynamics. Parents/carers can bring their insights and ask questions about changes their children may be undergoing. These meetings are important. To miss them is to miss a vital link in understanding the curriculum. They also give an opportunity for getting to know fellow parents/carers of the Class. For the child, the parents'/carers' participation in these meetings is a sign of their involvement and support.

Once a year, in the Middle School and Upper School, an evening is set aside for one-one meetings between teachers and parents/carers when pupils can be discussed individually. At other times, it is usually possible to arrange one-one meetings with subject teachers on request.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Regular and candid communication between parents/carers and their child's teachers is an essential part of Steiner education (see also Communication in Section 1).

Your child's Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian relies upon you to tell them about any requirements for physical attention or medication that your child may need during the day. Sometimes changes at home can affect your child's behaviour, such as the absence of a

parent/carer, a serious illness in the family or any other upset. It is important that you let your Kindergarten Teacher, Class Teacher or Class Guardian know about such changes, so that your child's emotional needs can also be acknowledged—confidentially, if that is your wish—at school.

Lower School parents are encouraged to meet with the Class Teacher at least once a year for an objective assessment of their child's progress. Such meetings can be arranged at the initiative of the Class Teacher or the parents/carers, and the Class Teacher will appreciate at least one visit to the home of each pupil. Home visits are mutually beneficial for all concerned and help to foster the close relationship between home and school.

Class Representative

Every year, and in every Class, one or two parents/carers volunteer to act as Class Representative. The Class Representative(s) form an important social link between the Class Teacher or Class Guardian and all the families in the Class. They are responsible for contacting and welcoming new parents and assisting the Class Teacher with the organisation of Class, including helping to organise Class outings, baking for parents' evenings, redecoration of the Classroom or inviting parents to join work groups for the Christmas Market.

A Class Representative's term of office is normally one year, which means that every parent/carer has the opportunity to become Class Representative while their child is at the School. Your child's Class Teacher or Class Guardian, or the PTFA, can provide more information on this topic if required.

The Parent, Teacher & Friends Association (PTFA)

The Parent Teacher & Friends Association (PTFA) is an important part of the school community, helping to nurture the healthy social life of the school and supporting the education—in its widest sense—of the children. All parents/carers are members of the PTFA, which is managed by a committee elected annually.

The role of the PTFA is wide and varied and includes working with and supporting Class Parents, developing initiatives within the School, assisting or supporting new parents/carers and mediating between parents/carers and the School where the need arises. The PTFA maintains links with the Trustees and the Core Group. The PTFA represents the interests of all parents/carers in the School and welcomes suggestions, concerns and ideas.

Contact: drumduanpta@gmail.com

The Christmas Market

The annual Christmas Market is a vital fundraising and social event in the school calendar. Each year the whole school community is involved in the production of goods for sale and their presentation on the day. On this Saturday, usually just before Advent, the School is transformed. There are many beautiful and unusual things for sale: dolls of all sizes, pottery, woodwork, dried flowers, baked goods, preserves, raffle tickets and much more.

Hot lunches, coffees and cakes are served in a cafe in the Great Room. There are activities for the younger children, puppet shows and music. It is a busy day, which regularly raises more than £2,500. This money is spent on vital resources, which the School would not otherwise be able to afford.

The school parents/carers are an ever-changing body but skills for the making of traditional items for the Market are passed on and new ideas are incorporated as people come and go. New parents/carers are always welcome in the groups making goods for the Market and it is a good way to meet other parents/carers with children in different Classes up and down the School.

Participating in the School as a Whole

Each parent/carer is an important part of a Steiner/Waldorf school community. The foremost contribution the parent/carer makes is in supporting the education at home. There is also a very real need for each parent/carer to participate in the overall life of the School, to whatever degree time and resources allow. There are many ways to help; here is a list of the most obvious ways:

- becoming a Class Representative
- Joining the PTFA Committee and/ or attending PTFA meetings
- participating in fundraising activities
- participating in the whole school work days/events

Parents/carers can also be involved in the School community by supporting activities in the School such as the Class plays, concerts, whole school productions and the Christmas plays.

There are classes and study groups offered for parents/carers. If you would like to become involved, to whatever extent you are able, and you are unsure of how to go about it, please speak to your Class Representative or a member of the PTFA

Festivals and Events

When looking at the path of the festivals through the year, they can be seen in a variety of ways. They can be looked at as special markers, or signposts in time, or as turning points within seasonal patterns. Many people, particularly children, enjoy the security of celebrating traditional festivals and they play an important part in the life of our school. Festivals mark special times of the year in which some aspect of the spiritual entering into human life is a cause for celebration—this is not only for each individual, but also for the community.

We celebrate a wide variety of festivals throughout the cycle of the year. Whenever possible, the Lower and Upper Schools are gathered together for these occasions which usually include some form of artistic activity, such as music, drama, or speech and there is often a story or a talk. There may also be activities which arise out of the festival and can take place in smaller groups. Other festivals are introduced and/or acknowledged in the classroom situation and can arise from the members of a particular faith or from the context of a particular Main Lesson.

The Kindergarten celebrates many of its own festivals. More information about these can be found in the *Early Years Handbook*.

Further Reading

Steiner/Waldorf Education

Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the inside out by Jack Petrash (Gryphon House)

The Way of a Child by A. C. Harwood (Rudolf Steiner Press)

Teaching as a Lively Art by Marjorie Spock (Rudolf Steiner Press)

Lifeways by Gudrun Davy and Bons Voors (Hawthorn Press)

Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Education (Steiner Schools Fellowship)

Steiner Education by Gilbert Childs (Floris Books)

Waldorf Education by Christopher Clauder & Martyn Rawson (Floris Books)

For Parents/Carers of Younger Children *Children at*

Play by Heidi Britz-Crecelius (Floris Books) *Ready to*

Learn by Martin Rawson (Hawthorn Press) *Free to*

Learn by Lynne Oldfield (Hawthorn Press)

The Well Balanced Child by Sally Goddard Blynnne (Hawthorn Press)

Toxic Childhood by Sue Palmer (Orion Publishers)

Further Reading about Festivals

Festivals, Family and Food by D Carey and J Large, published by Hawthorn Press

All Year Round by Druitt, Fynes and Rowling, published by Hawthorn Press

Family Festivals & Food by Diana Carey and Judy Large (Hawthorn Press)

Festivals with Children by Brigitte Barz, published by Floris Books

Festivals and their Meaning by Rudolf Steiner, published by Rudolf Steiner Press

Celebrating Festivals with Children by Lenz, published by Anthroposophic Press Inc.

Festival Images for Today by Carlo Pietzner, published by Camphill Books

Festivals Together by Fitzjon, Weston and Large, published by Hawthorn Press

Stories for the Festivals of the Year by Irene Johanson, published by Robinswood Press.

About Stories

The Power of Stories by Horst Kornberger (Floris Books)

The Wisdom of Fairy Tales by Rudolf Meyer (Floris Books)

Stockists: These and other books can be bought or ordered from:

- The Mulberry Bush, 77 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 4AY (0131 447 5145)
- The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship (www.steinerwaldorf.org)