



Laurel Farm Kindergarten



A Steiner-inspired educational setting
for children aged 2.5 - 6 years



A place where children learn through natural play and by exploring the outdoors. A place where children are free to make their own discoveries and express their creativity. A place where children flourish.

laurelfarmenquiries@gmail.com

laurelfarmkindergarten.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 1045469



Based in Carlingcott, BA2 8AN



PARENT'S HANDBOOK 2018

WELCOME

Welcome to the Laurel Farm Kindergarten– a small, independent Steiner-Waldorf kindergarten.

Our aim in creating this document is to provide parents with detailed information about the kindergarten, its organisation and the philosophy on which it is based. It is our hope that it will contribute to forming a bridge between kindergarten and the home.

Our Kindergarten Teacher is Dominika Baran (Level 4 Diploma in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Studies/Early Years Educator and Level 5 Diploma in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood/Leadership and Management). Dominika is responsible for the day to day running of the kindergarten and the development and delivery of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. She makes all pedagogical decisions and works closely with her assistant Merlin Aro (Graduate Diploma in Early Years, currently on the second year of the Steiner Kindergarten training). Liz Casson deals with the administrative running of the kindergarten.

Health & Safety Officer – Clare Player

First Aid Officer – Clare Player/Merlin Aro

SENCO Officer – Clare Player

Child Protection Officers – Clare Player & Kelly Harries

Laurel Farm Kindergarten is meeting EYFS statutory requirements regarding staff. Our staff are qualified to the appropriate levels in Early Years qualifications as required by Ofsted. Any supply staff used have all undergone rigorous interview and selection procedures. They may be called in from time to time due to staff sickness or training.

LEGAL STRUCTURE

Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten is registered with the Early Years Partnership and Ofsted and recognised by the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

We operate as a Charitable Incorporated Organization - Charity Reg. No. 1163992 with a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is made up of a small

group who are not employees of the kindergarten. They hire the staff and make long-term decisions and their main duty is to ensure that the kindergarten meets its objective as laid down in its Constitution as well as all legal requirements.

Current members of this team are:

Kelly Harries: Chair, PR, Recruitment, Child Protection & Ofsted.

Rachel Taylor: Treasurer, Finance, Fees

Anne-Marie Owen: Secretary, PR, Events.

Will Harries: Data Protection Officer, Policies

Frank Holliday: General duties

Olivia Cliff: General duties

CONTACT INFORMATION

General Enquiries

07873 544 146

Kindergarten

07582 094527 (Mon to Thurs 9.00 – 4.30pm).

www.laurelfarmkindergarten.co.uk

ADMISSIONS

Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten is able to take up to 16 children daily, aged 3-7 years old. In special circumstances rising three-year olds are accepted.

Admissions will operate under anti-discriminatory and inclusion policies.

OPENING & CLOSING TIMES

Laurel Farm Kindergarten will be open Monday to Thursday. Morning sessions run from 9.30 – 2.00pm and afternoon care is from 2.00 – 4.30pm.

Parents are expected to bring their children on time, with the kindergarten starting at 9.30am, as punctuality is very important to the smooth running of the kindergarten and settling the children. Parents are to deliver and collect their children from the kitchen at the bottom of kindergarten building.

When collecting their children parents are expected to arrive at 2.00pm, or by 4.30pm if the child is in afternoon care. If another adult is to pick up the child, the parent must inform us beforehand (email or note in communications book please). If the staff do not know the adult, then they must bring identification, or use an agreed password.

HOME VISITS

Just before a child is due to start at the kindergarten, the teacher will visit the child and parents at home in order to begin to get to know the child and to find out about their life rhythm in the home, and specific needs.

TERM DATES AND HOLIDAYS

Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten closely follows B&NES term dates. The Kindergarten is closed on usual public bank holidays. Dates for 2017-18 are:

Autumn Term

Start: Monday 4 September 2017

Finish: Friday 20 October 2017

Half term Break

Start: Monday 30 October 2017

Finish: Friday 15 December 2017

Spring Term

Start: Tuesday 2 January 2018

Finish: Friday 9 February 2018

Half Term Break

Start: Monday 19 February 2018

Finish: Friday 23 March 2018

Summer Term

Start: Monday 9 April 2018

Finish: Friday 25 May 2018

Half Term Break

Start: Monday 4 June 2018

Finish: Tuesday 24 July 2018

Inset Days

Autumn Term

Monday 4th of September 2017

Spring Term

Tuesday 2nd of January 2018

Summer Term

Monday 9th April 2018

Calendar of events:

Festival Diary Dates

Summer Festival – Saturday 24th of June 2.00 – 4.30pm

Parents evening 4th Sept 7.30-9pm

Festival Lantern walk 11th Nov 4-6pm

Parents evening 8th Jan 7.30-9pm

Festival Advent Spiral Thurs 7th Dec 4.30-5.30 and 5.30-6.30pm

Festival Candlemas 3 Feb 3-5pm

Parents evening 9th April 7.30-9pm

Festival-May Day 5th May 1-3.30pm

Summer Festival 23th June 2-4.30pm

SETTLING IN

We are keen that children and parents feel comfortable bringing and leaving their children at Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten and do all we can to ensure this works well. Our teacher's experience shows that children settle in best when the parent or carer dropping the child off can calmly and confidently take the child to the setting and leave. Children pick up on any lack of confidence or nerves on the part of the parent and this can impede the settling in process.

Timely and unrushed drop offs and pick-ups further facilitate this.

If a parent really wants or needs to wait in an adjoining room or close by this will be possible. We ask you to bring some handwork e.g. sewing, knitting, etc. you can be engaged in so the child doesn't feel overly observed and you are able to be distinct in your position and occupation. The process will be discussed and agreed during the home visit before the child joins and further as and when necessary until parent, child and staff are happy that the child is happily settled.

What to Bring for Your Child

Your child will need the following items, which are left at the kindergarten:

- a pair of indoor shoes/slippers
- a pair of rubber boots
- a complete change of clothes suitable for the season
- warm, waterproof clothing for outdoor play in autumn and winter
- sun-hats and sun creams during the summer
- a piece of fruit, and a vegetable if it is soup day

SNACKS & LUNCHES

Every child brings a piece of fruit to share for snack, as well as a vegetable on Soup day that is Wednesday, this helps the children to enjoy giving and receiving.

Meals

Each day has a fruit snack early morning, and brunch, see below:

Monday – Rice day, risotto with chickpeas, red beans and sweet corn

Tuesday – Jacket Potatoes with toppings and salads

Wednesday – Barley kindergarten soup, with vegetables and homemade bread

Thursday - Rye bread rolls with cheese, humus and cucumber and a selection of other salad

Drinks: Water is available throughout the session and a selection of home-grown herbal teas from mint to rose hip, sage, rosemary, and so on.

Note: Should your child have a special dietary requirement, please discuss with the teacher. A fee may incur should the kindergarten agree to provide this requirement.

Communication

It is our aim to ensure the welfare and happiness of your child at all times. This is achieved by working together in close partnership. If you have any concerns about your child or if there is anything at home which may be unsettling them, please discuss this with your teacher.

Day-to-day concerns can be communicated between parents and teacher through the message books or during short conversations at pick-up time. Please try not to approach the teacher at the beginning of the morning unless you need to impart essential information regarding your child as the teacher should give the children her full attention at this time.

For more general discussions on the overall development of your child the teacher is available to speak to you by arrangement on designated days.

Parents' Evenings

Our parents' evenings are different to what you may know about if you are coming from the mainstream sector. Parents' evenings are held each term and provide an important opportunity for parents to come together and learn about Steiner education, the daily rhythm of the kindergarten, crafts and activities of the season, up-coming festivals, child development as well as the social dynamic and development of the group. Most parents' evenings will also offer the chance of experiencing a practical aspect of kindergarten life. Parent attendance of these evenings is important for the child as they help parents develop a deeper understanding of life in the kindergarten and share that aspect of their life more fully with them. Last but not least there is an important social aspect to these occasions in that they help build a circle of loving adults around the children.

Please make every effort to attend the parents' evenings.

LAUREL FARM

Laurel Farm is a working small -holding, with a holiday let. Please be considerate to those other users, take care in the car park, and farm machinery is not for playing on. Thank you to our lovely landowners Emily and Ross, and their three children for sharing their special place. Please be considerate and observe privacy for their home.



LAUREL FARM STEINER KINDERGARTEN – A COMMUNITY

Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten could not exist without the passion and dedication of the parents. It has been & continues to be a huge group effort so we are asking where you might be able to help in this. We know as a group of parents we have an impressive range of skills so want to make sure they're put to best use! We also appreciate everyone's time is limited so are grateful for what you can offer. We would like to encourage all parents to become actively involved in the school, whether this be by joining as trustee, supporting our festivals or fundraising events. Becoming part of the community at Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten can be an enriching experience for both parents and children.

FEES

As a childcare setting registered with OFSTED, we are entitled to receive the Early Years Entitlement (EYE) for 3-4 year old children. EYE covers delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage for up to 30 (if eligible) hours per week, 38 weeks of the year.

Please note, if your child turns 3 in the middle of a term, the entitlement is available from the following term.

Early Years Entitlement- For more information, please see:
<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/educationandlearning/pre-schools/Pages/EarlyYearsEntitlement.aspx>

Fee structure:

Mornings: 9.30-2.00pm

Parent Contribution for Children 3-5 Years Old – charge for delivering Steiner based activities is **£2.00** per hour

For Children 5-6 years old

The cost is **£5.55** per hour.

Afternoons 2.00 – 4.30pm

For Children 3-5 (and one term) Years Old

The cost is **£1.45** per hour

For children 5-6 years old

The cost is **£5.00** an hour

Enrolment

In order to secure your Kindergarten place for your child we ask for a £50 non-refundable deposit and application form.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Deposit: From March 2013 all new parents will be asked to pay a £150 deposit to secure their child's place. This deposit can be paid in instalments over the first 3 months of the child's attendance at the school. This deposit is refundable if all financial obligations of the parents have been met.

Payment - Strictly using a standing order system, on the 1st of each month (in advance). Late payments will be charged at £25.00 per month. 'Bounced' payments will also be charged at £25.

Holidays and Sickness - In order to keep your child's place at Laurel Farm Kindergarten, fees need to be paid in full throughout holidays and sickness.

Holidays - We close for all Bank Holidays and normal school holiday periods, we make no charge for these times.

Changing sessions - Once booked your child's sessions **cannot** be occasionally swapped for other ones. However you are welcome to contact the teacher if you require **extra** ad hoc sessions on an occasional basis.

Notice - A minimum of one term is required if you wish to give notice to leave Laurel Farm Kindergarten. For example if your child is leaving at the end of the summer term, written notice is required by the end of the spring term. If less than one term's

notice is given, then the parents must continue to pay fees for one full term due to their place having been held for them.

Sessions - We advise that Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten requires a minimum of 2 sessions of attendance, per week. A session is 9.30 – 2pm. Within term time all Mon-Thurs sessions are chargeable, and we charge for upto 3 trainings days/Inset days. Half a terms notice is given for this arrangement.

Cancelled Days – In the event that Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten cancels a day, fees for that day will be reimbursed to parents.

Deferred Payments and Bursaries If you are not able to pay the above additional charge for Steiner activities for your 3-4 year old child to attend Laurel Farm Kindergarten, you are entitled to apply for a deferred payments or bursary towards this.

WALDORF EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

Steiner education is about engaging the child's '**head, heart and hand**'

All children learn at their own pace, develop a **love of learning** and develop as a community of 'do-ers'. We seek to encourage this unhurried approach. Creative work is the work of the small child as they observe the world around them. Their world in the Kindergarten is based on natural play, using natural materials.

We seek to take the whole needs of the child into account: *physical, social, academic, emotional and spiritual*. The day and week has a natural rhythm and use repetition to deepen a feeling of security. Activities include puppet plays and story telling, creative craft, cooking, baking, sewing, building and making. Many craft materials are found on the farm and local area. Children are not introduced to formal reading, writing and numbers until they are ready, typically when they are 6-7 years old. The foundations are laid in kindergarten so children are ripe and keen to learn this in Class 1.

Laurel Farm provides a unique environment for children to explore outside with its own secure garden designed for the children. We are based on a 7-acre smallholding with animals to feed and ponds, fields and a growing woodland to explore. This gives the children an exciting playground to observe the seasons and be aware we are all part of nature.

EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

In the Steiner Early Years approach, we provide time and space for the natural, unforced development of key life skills which will help to build a strong base for social and emotional competence, literacy, numeracy, by creating a warm and secure learning environment where the qualities of childhood are nurtured.

Rhythm and Repetition

Steiner education recognises rhythm as an educational principle of key importance, and a strong framework of rhythm, routine and repetition is employed, particularly in the early years. Rhythms provide reassurance and security for children and helps them to understand the past, present and future: it is a healthy way to start to find their place in the world. Repetition plays a key role in establishing continuity, and it assists in the development of memory.

Play & Imitation

Free creative play strengthens the imagination, and repeated research studies have shown that children who are encouraged to enjoy creative play tend to show more empathy towards others and to display less aggression. They are more likely to have the capacity to see things from the perspective of the other, and demonstrate fewer signs of anxiety, distress or fatigue. In Steiner early childhood education, children are allowed to learn through investigation, exploration and discovery, encouraging them to become inventive and adaptable.

Another duty of the early childhood teacher is to provide the presence of a “working adult” – someone whom the children can freely imitate. A role model worthy of imitation.

A combination of practical and artistic activities is undertaken in the company of the children, designed to encourage skills such as concentration, perseverance and independent activity. Children are fascinated by adult activity, and it is certainly a great responsibility to be worthy of a young child’s imitation.

Story-telling

The environment created in Steiner early childhood education promotes the development of competent talking and listening, enhancing the child’s ability to use words with confidence. Children are encouraged to speak freely, and learn to listen to others. There is an overriding concentration on the oral tradition, and many wonderful stories are related. A well-told story creates an appreciation for the human voice and the beauty and rhythms of language. This assists in the development of a strong and rich imagination, and helps to extend the vocabulary and develop a good memory

Festivals and Celebration

Festivals are celebrated with the children so as to nourish body, soul and spirit. Although the Steiner curriculum is non-denominational, many Christian festivals are observed, and the children love the activities and preparations involved, such as finding seasonal materials, baking, making lanterns or other simple craft work

activities. Festivals from other cultures are also marked and celebrated in many Steiner schools. Certain festivals will be celebrated after the kindergarten hours (and throughout the session) to which parent will be invited too in order to create a sense of community for the children.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a very special occasion in the kindergarten. Parents are invited to a special puppet story in celebration of their child's third, fourth, fifth and sixth birthday. Siblings, grandparents or godparents are welcome to join us for that special time.

THE DAILY RHYTHM

Free play and Activity.

As the children arrive they find the teacher and the assistant diligently working and preparing the in daily activities, and food preparations for snack and lunch. The younger children are welcome to join in the activity or initiate their play, which is child initiated, with minimal adult involvement.

It is during this time that the child uses his/her own creative imagination to – for example - make a building site out of wooden planks, a shop, a train, a spaceship or a den with wooden clothes racks and pieces of muslin.

The older children have ongoing projects, such as weaving and sewing, which they will continue throughout the term or for however long is necessary to complete them. During festival times a particular craft or baking activity may be pursued on different days. Activities during free play are:

Monday (Painting),

Tuesday (Craft)

Wednesday (Baking),

Thursday (Outdoor day).

Other purposeful activities carried out during this time which may include: cleaning, polishing, carding, or weaving, spinning, etc.

Tidy time

At the end of free play, we sing our 'Tidy time song' and children co-operate to help to sort, fold, put away the resources in preparation for our ring time. Re-establishing order in the room.

Ring time

Once the room is tidy, and the table has been laid, we join together for our ring time, which is lead by the teacher, this includes seasonal verses, songs, finger games, nursery rhymes and simple finger puppetry and using appropriate gestures.

Children engage through imitation, and they learn the songs by heart, learning through rhythm and repetition.

Snack time

After ring time and the children have washed their hands, we gather at the table for our shared light snack. Children participate with setting and serving the food, as well as with clearing the meal, and helping to wash up.

Outdoor play

Outdoor play snack time, the children will either play in the kindergarten garden or go out to explore Laurel Farm, its animals and nature.

Part of the outdoor time is spent in the enclosed garden where the children enjoy playing with the mud kitchen, digging, using the sand pit, gardening and planting, sweeping and caring for the outdoor space, play their own games...and participate in meaningful purposeful work... watering the plants, cleaning the windows, washing the cloths, sorting our herbs...

Usually we go out for a walk around the farm, and take part in outdoor play and activities appropriate to the season. When we are out and about on the farm, we may feed the animals, watch sheep shearing, help harvest the apples, feed the ducks and the hens, do woodwork projects, gardening, fire making etc.

Story time

Before going home or our afternoon care, we come together for Story time which is teacher led, it helps to nourish the development of a strong and rich imagination, and helps to increase the vocabulary and to develop the children's memory. Each story has a gift to be received, creating an environment of reverence, and using the pentatonic sound of the lyre and the xylophone, the teacher tells a traditional fairy tale or a seasonal nature story that is taught by heart for a period of two weeks thus enabling the children to create *their own* pictures out of their imaginations, and on the third week, we do it as a puppet play.

Stories are also an important part of the festival or a birthday, and help us to celebrate our special occasions.

Afternoon Care

Some children stay for the afternoon care, during this time, they lay on the ground their little mats and pillows and blankets, and relax for a while, in order to have some quiet time while they enjoy the sound out of the pentatonic instruments.

The rest of the afternoon is spent indoor or outdoors, depending on the weather, children engage in free play as well as participate in more purposeful work around the farm.

Television and Computers

Television and characters from television play a large part in the life of most children in modern day society. Children up to the age of seven learn by imitating and therefore, television watching is actually contrary to the developmental approach taken by Steiner schools and kindergartens. Television is a passive occupation and pre-school children need to be active and participating in activities directly in order to learn. It also diminishes the opportunity for social interaction with others. The young child does not have the life experiences to make sense of the images they watch and adopting superheroes as role models from a young age is not beneficial to the developing mind as it provides stylised models of behaviour and inhibits social development that is dependent on the example of others.

We would advise as little television watching as possible and certainly not every day. If you feel your child must watch television then please ensure the material is suitable, i.e. no superheroes or violence, and that it is age appropriate.

Please be aware that time spent in front of a computer should also be kept to a minimum as we believe that using computers/watching television causes chronic disorganising of the child's vulnerable growing senses and is detrimental to whole child development. The development of emotional literacy depends on warm relationships with real people who care for them; secondary experience blurs the distinction between what is and what is not real; fixed images reduce the possibilities of developing mental pictures and the development of imagination.

OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT



At Laurel Farm Kindergarten we are lucky to have access to the 7 acre smallholding as well as our own secure garden. The smallholding offers animals to feed, ponds, fields and a growing woodland to explore. This gives the children an exciting playground to observe the seasons and be aware that we are all part of nature. Nature is a source of thrill, comfort, enjoyment, inspiration and fascination to young children. Outdoor play is every young child's right. Experiencing Nature offers impetus for children's present and future creativity, it gives children a vital sense of space and time. This is proven to develop their imagination and help them express themselves. Such experiences may include rolling in the autumn leaves, watching for signs of spring, feeding the animals, running through the woods, hearing birdsong and seeing every colour of sky, feeling of warm rain or ice cold snow on their faces, learning about plants, insects and trees experientially.

Outdoor play also offers rich opportunities for children to learn through the following areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

Children can play freely and take full advantage of the outside space at Laurel Farm Kindergarten in all weathers. We ask that parents ensure their children have clothing appropriate to the season and weather.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

As part of the EYFS framework, we are required to observe the children's learning and development, and to follow it closely, so that any needs can be met through appropriate actions from their Key worker. Please be aware that your child's **Key worker** is Dominika Baran

From the time they start at our setting at the age of 3 until 5 (following August after their 5th birthday), which will be part of their learning diaries. At the end of their 5th year, we will complete a Profile Assessment, which will be shared with the local authority.

Parents are welcome to access their children's learning diaries upon request. They will also be discussed during Individual Parent's Evenings and will be kept confidential.

The different areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

Prime Areas

- Personal, emotional and social development.
- Communication and Language
- Physical development.

Secondary Areas

- Literacy.
- Maths.
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive Arts and Design.

THE STATUTORY EYFS AND EXEMPTIONS

Please note that the government has granted an Exemption from Literacy, Maths and Technology. The Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Birth – 5 years, applies to all settings including ours. It sets out both learning and development requirements and safeguarding and welfare requirements for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday.

You can find out more about the EYFS in the Guide to the EYFS in Steiner Kindergartens which you will find in your kindergarten or on <http://www.steinerwaldorf.org>.

You can also find a *parent's guide to the EYFS* on the government website <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk>

Because there are areas which conflict with the Steiner Waldorf early childhood principles and practice, we have received some 'Exemptions and Modifications' to the EYFS Learning and Development requirements and Assessment regulations under the 'Established Principles' route. These are mostly to do with the introduction

and in some cases formal teaching of reading, writing, mathematics and use of IT/media and electronic gadgetry. There is no exemption from the safeguarding and welfare requirements.

More information on the EYFS will be provided during the occurring Parents' evenings. However if you would like to find out more about it,.

Please look at:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2011/10/Guide_to_the_EYFS_in_Steiner_Waldorf_settings1.pdf

Throughout the year there will be opportunities to discuss the children's progress during the Individual Parent's evenings (twice a year), and the end of year meeting, however if you feel the need to discuss anything before then, please book in for an afternoon meeting).

Parents are encouraged to observe and take part in the learning diaries, and some postal notes are provided for you to share with us your children's special moments, or thing that they are struggling with... this contribution greatly enriches our observations. (See noticeboard).

POLICY SUMMARIES

Full policy documents are available to access on our website www.laurelfarmkindergarten.co.uk and hard copy available on the request. Please speak with the teacher or the administrator.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Laurel Farm Kindergarten is committed to developing creative and positive ways for the child's voice to be heard whilst recognising the responsibility to use, hold and safeguard information received. Sharing information unnecessarily is an erosion of trust.

The school is mindful that it is placed in a position of trust and there is a general expectation that a professional approach will be used in all matters of confidentiality.

All information about individual children is private and is only be shared with those staff who have a need to know. Information about children will be shared with parents but only about their child. Parents can't have access to any other child's work at any time especially at parents' evening. However parents should be aware

that information about their child will be shared with the receiving school when they change school.

All personal information about children including social services records should be regarded as confidential. It should be clearly understood by those who have access to it, and whether those concerned have access to all, or only some of the information.

All social services, medical and personal information about a child will be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than school staff.

Parents/carers and children need to be aware that the kindergarten cannot guarantee total confidentiality and the kindergarten has a duty to report child protection issues.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Laurel Farm Kindergarten will ensure that all areas of its undertaking are subjected to a suitable risk assessment to identify potential hazards and to introduce control measures to eliminate or reduce harm.

It is Laurel Farm Kindergarten's policy to make provisions for first aid in accordance with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981. All accidents and incidents or 'near misses' with the potential for injury (whether that injury actually occurred or not) are reported and recorded in the incident/ accident book and parents informed.

Laurel farm Kindergarten has established a fire safety programme with the objective of guarding against the outbreak of fire and to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of persons on the premises in the event of the outbreak of fire or other emergencies.

BEHAVIOUR

Our Setting recognises the importance of positive and effective behaviour management strategies in promoting children's welfare, learning and enjoyment.

The aims of our behaviour policy are to help children to

- Develop a sense of caring and respect for one another.
- Build caring and co-operative relationships with other children and adults.
- Develop a range of social skills and help them learn what constitutes acceptable behaviour.
- Develop confidence, self discipline and self esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

Staff use positive methods of guidance, with anticipation and pre-emption of potential problems, and/or avoidance of difficulties through early intervention, redirecting the children in a non-confrontational way as considered appropriate. The aim of the Kindergarten staff is to have a close knowledge of each child.

All children learn and grow in their understanding of socially appropriate and desirable behaviour. In the Kindergarten the teachers work with social behaviour by endeavouring to be role models worthy of imitation. The variety and sequencing of the daily activities build a firm rhythm that provides a comfortable knowing of what to expect by the child, which further contributes to the intention to support positive behaviour.

Parents are encouraged to discuss and inform any difficulties a child may be facing at home, or any factors, which may affect that child's normal behaviour. Allowance will be made for such things as children's ages & stages of development, family circumstances etc.

Where problems arise that do not respond to our approaches, the Kindergarten teacher will arrange to discuss these discreetly with the parents, so that they can work together in deciding upon and reinforcing, the most appropriate direction for the child

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

In keeping with the principles of Steiner-Waldorf education Laurel Farm Steiner School considers all children as having individual needs and aims to meet those needs as best as possible.

The kindergarten operates under inclusion policies where every child is enabled to be part of the setting and has equal rights. There will not be discrimination when considering an admission request for a child with special needs.

Assessment of the ability to meet the needs of children with special needs will include liaising with parents and other professionals. This will enable us to help the child access and participate as fully as possible in all activities.

Planning will include giving consideration of how new and existing facilities can be improved to include all children, regardless of physical needs.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN-CHILD PROTECTION

Everyone employed or volunteering at Laurel Farm Steiner Kindergarten has a responsibility in relation to child protection (CP). In most cases this will be the referral of concerns to the school's Designated Person for Child Protection. In day-to-day contact with children at risk, staff has an opportunity to note concerns and to meet with parents/carers. Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which someone often in a position of power harms children. It is not the responsibility of School staff

to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of a child are paramount.

ANTI-BULLYING

We aim to create an ethos where bullying behaviour is simply not an aspect of our school culture, and in which our children *freely and unselfconsciously* choose not to engage in bullying behaviour, not because they have internalised didactic instructions that it is 'wrong', but because that sort of behaviour simply does not exist and is *unthinkable* in our school's culture. It is everyone's *responsibility* to bring such behaviour to the attention of a trusted member of staff, who will always listen carefully, and take the matter further, while being sensitive to any confidentiality aspects that are deemed appropriate in each case. Any difficulties, which do arise, which fall into the sphere of bullying or abusive behaviour will be responded to immediately, with firmness, and with the utmost care and sensitivity appropriate to each circumstance. We also ask that all adults treat each other with respect.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

1. General Principles:

The Waldorf movement was inspired by the ideals expressed by Rudolf Steiner and others in the early part of the 20th century. These ideals were based on recognizing freedom and intrinsic value of each human being. Our respect for the spiritual uniqueness of each human being means that we endeavor to respect the dignity of all those in our communities.

Trustees of Steiner Waldorf schools have many legal duties and responsibilities alongside upholding our founding ideals. We wish to encourage all members of a school community to strive to fulfill their role and responsibilities diligently and capably while upholding the dignity of the human being in all their encounters.

Our Concerns and Complaints Procedure is intended to support our core ideals and to contribute to the continual improvement of the education we provide. Accordingly, this procedure seeks to embody the five fundamental attitudes set out as follows in the SWSF Code of Practice:

Respect for the integrity (spiritual essence) of each individual and of the world in general

Interest in and Positive approach towards the potential for development in young people in particular and humanity in general

Recognition of the central importance of lifelong learning

Commitment to the core task of educating children in the light of the above and to encourage, enable and value the **Contribution** of individuals, groups and communities to the improvement of our common heritage

This document is written in the light of these principles.

We are also to take note of the of the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, in particular, Article 1 of the Universal Declaration:

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

2. Principles in practice

Independent schools in England are required by regulation to offer a procedure for complaint as set at the end of this document (see A6). This procedure meets these regulatory requirements in full. In addition, this procedure is intended to help sustain a positive ethos within our kindergarten so that problems can be listened to appropriately and resolved wherever possible. Our core purpose is to offer high quality Waldorf education for all our children and in order to improve our work, we seek to learn from our mistakes and correct them whenever this is possible

2.1 We believe that the education of our children can be most effective when there is close co-operation, mutual trust and respect between all those involved in their upbringing and education.

2.2 We offer the following opportunities for communication: newsletter and parents evenings and encourage all members of the community to contribute to the life of the kindergarten through these and other channels. We also welcome practical suggestions that can help us improve our communication and the way we work.

2.3 Our Concerns and Complaints Procedure aims to deal with issues in a fair and open manner. We intend to respond to questions and criticisms promptly and to do all we can reasonably do to resolve any problems amicably. We are committed to learn from the experiences of members of our community, members of the public or others whether their perception of the kindergarten is positive or otherwise

2.4 This procedure may be supplemented where the issue involves allegations of professional misconduct, criminal offenses, including matters covered by our safeguarding/child protection procedure or others that might result in a member of staff facing disciplinary action. In cases of that sort, an urgent investigation will take place and evidence will be gathered as appropriate from all parties. We are obliged in such matters to maintain confidentiality, without which due process, legal procedure and/or natural justice would be compromised.

2.5 We endeavor take all reasonable steps to resolve complaints via the procedure set out in this document. There may be circumstances where resolution proves to be impossible. On those rare occasions, once all stages of our procedure have been exhausted, the Trustees reserve the right to treat the matter as closed subject only to further steps that may be open to the complainants indicated at the end of this document.

N.B. In rare circumstances where the behavior of the complainant gives reason for it, the Trustees reserve the right to handle a complaint according to its vexatious or habitual complaints procedure.

3. Concerns

We hope that this procedure will help us to listen to and acknowledge your concerns and to treat you fairly and consistently. We are committed to treating your concerns seriously and to finding solutions that work for you and others involved.

N.B. This part of the procedure is available to parents, prospective parents, members of staff or other people affected by the life of the kindergarten.

3.1 If you have a concern about any aspect of the kindergarten, please speak to the person directly responsible for the subject of your concern. Normally this would be:

- Concerns about teaching or aspects of the education – your child’s Kindergarten Teacher.
- Concerns about general administrative aspects of the Kindergarten – the Administrator
- If for any reason you feel unable to speak directly to the person concerned, please contact a member of the board of Trustees, who will facilitate a meeting with the member of staff involved (contact information on website/parents handbook).

3.2 Members of staff have been asked to record the reason for any concern as well as next steps that may be identified during the conversation (i.e. actions arising. Where this is agreed to be unnecessary, the note will state the nature of the concern and “no further action required”). You will be asked to sign the note and this will be filed for review by the Kindergarten’s Designated Person. It is the DP’s responsibility to follow up concerns and to ensure that agreed further action is implemented. The DP may contact you to check that your concern has been dealt with.

3.3 If concerns remain, the DP at your request, will arrange a further facilitated meeting and/or meeting with a neutral note-taker to help explore your concern informally.

3.4 If the concern is complex, or cannot be resolved in this way, the matter will be referred to the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and they may decide to appoint a mediator if appropriate.

3.5 Mediators will not retain notes of matters discussed during the process of mediation, except in the form of any agreed outcomes, which we do in order to ensure that these can be followed up.

3.6 While we would not wish to put a fixed timescale to matters of concern, we are aware that concerns should not be allowed to prolong. We would normally expect any informal concerns to be resolved speedily. If mediation is used, the entire process would normally be completed within 21 working days. You will be consulted and your agreement sought for an extension (e.g. in order to ensure that sufficient time is given to the process of resolution).

4. Complaints

It is our aim to deal with any issues that may arise through our Concerns and Complaints Procedure. However, if the matter cannot be resolved informally you should raise it as a formal complaint by putting it in writing. You should also use this procedure immediately if the issue is one of grave seriousness (e.g. a question of serious abuse of any sort).

N.B. We will do everything reasonable to manage your complaint within the timescales set out here. In the interests of accuracy and natural justice, however, the procedure may sometimes take longer. If this happens the DP will contact you in order to discuss an extended timescale.

Complaints at this stage will be registered for the purposes of inspection. General information will be provided to school inspectors when they visit. We are required by regulations to do this. Your details however will be kept confidentially.

4.1 You should put your complaint into writing addressed to the DP **and for attention of the Chair of Trustees**, who will register that a formal complaint has been received (Trustees will not be involved with handling the complaint at this stage).

Please use the Formal Complaint form 5, where possible. If you need help in setting out your complaint the DP will assist you in this.

4.2 You should receive acknowledgment of a formal complaint within 24 hours and we aim to offer an investigative meeting within 5 working days.

4.3 The DP will ensure that a full investigation is carried out into the circumstances of the complaint and once the DP is satisfied that all the relevant facts have been established, you will be informed in writing of their judgment. All parties will receive copies of the relevant documents.

4.4 This process will normally take no more than 10 working days.

4.5 Although informed that there has been a formal complaint, the Trustees will take no part in dealing with the matter up to the panel stage.

4.6 If you do not agree with the report or recommendations of the DP, you can call for a **Review Panel Hearing** by writing directly to the Chair of Trustees. The Trustees will then appoint the panel. Normally two members of the Panel would be Trustees who have not been involved in handling the complaint. The third member of the panel would be a suitably qualified person independent of the kindergarten's management or governance. The appointment of the panel is the responsibility of the Trustees.

4.7 Once appointed, the Panel Chair will contact you within 48 hours to inform you of the procedure and composition of the Panel, this will include –

- The date and time of the hearing - normally within 14 days
- The process and aim
- Members of the panel will review the complaint confidentially, with objectivity and without fear or favor
- The Panel will hear your concerns and may call for the staff members against whom the complaint has been made
- The role of the panel is to verify whether the kindergarten has acted appropriately and to judge whether there is a need to change any of its procedures in the light of this complaint
- You have the right to be accompanied to a panel hearing by one other person, who may be a relative, friend or supportive acquaintance (legal representation will not normally be accepted)
- If you want to supply any further information you should do so within one week of the date of the panel hearing. All further information will be made available to all those involved. Any new information supplied at the time of a Panel Hearing may result in a delay of a final decision or the need to reconvene the meeting at a later date
- The decision of the Panel will be final. The Kindergarten offers no further appeal to the decision of a Review Panel

4.8 The panel will make themselves familiar with the procedure and information relevant to the complaint and convene a Panel Hearing as soon as possible.

4.9 Following the hearing, the Panel Chair will inform you and the subject of the complaint of their decision in writing, normally within 10 working days.

4.10 The same basic procedure applies where the complaint is of a more general nature, e.g. about some aspect of the operation of the Kindergarten.

N.B. No part of this procedure should be understood in the nature of a staff disciplinary or grievance procedure. As employers, the Trustees are constrained to act under rules of confidentiality in such cases.

5. Complaints Records:

5.1 We keep the following records of complaint:

- The complaint will be listed with the date it was first raised

- The nature of the complaint
- Dates of meetings, communications and those attending them
- Whether the matter was resolved
- Copies of all documentation

5.2 Complaint records will be kept confidential and secure.

5.3 The Kindergarten will publish the number of complaints dealt with each year, as required by regulation. This record will be made available to school inspectors when they conduct inspections in accordance with the law.

6. Non-Parental complaints:

At the discretion of the Trustees, this procedure will also be used in an adapted form, as appropriate, for concerns or complaints from neighbors or members of the general public affected by some aspect of the operation of the Kindergarten.

7. Other agencies:

Ofsted publishes a booklet, available online at

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Footer/How-to-complain> which explains the process if you decide to take your complaint to the regulator

7.1 Parents of children aged between 3 and 6 years old can contact Ofsted, quoting the EY Reference Number at:

Address: Early Years Ofsted
 Field House
 Station Approach
 Harlow
 CM20 2FS

Phone no: 0845 601 4772

List of Policies

Anti bullying policy
Anti -radicalism policy
Behavior policy
Concerns and complaints policy and procedure
Child Protection Policy
Discipline and grievance procedures
Equal opportunities policy
Educational Framework
Food standards and safety statement
First Aid, injuries, staff illness, reporting accidents
Fire safety procedure
Food and Hygiene policy
Grievance procedure
Health and safety policy
Health and safety procedures manual
Incontinent incident policy
Leaving and collecting children
Lost children policy
Medication policy
Outdoor policy
Kindergarten operational plan
Safeguarding policy
Settling in policy
Smoking policy
Special needs policy- SEND
Staff Behavior Policy
Safer Recruitment Policy