



MELBOURNE
RUDOLF STEINER
SCHOOL



2024

PARENT
HANDBOOK

Wominjeka | *To come with purpose / welcome*

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which our school stands and upon which we work, learn and play. We offer our respect to elders past, present and emerging, and honour them through our care of the land.

Ancestors have walked this country and we acknowledge their special place in our nation's historical, cultural and linguistic identity.

We warmly welcome you to the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School. We are an independent, co-educational, non-denominational school and we welcome all students and their families regardless of race, ethnicity or religious background.

Our school has a population of around 500 students and 100 staff. We have a single-stream primary school and a double-stream secondary school. The Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School is separate and independent from other Steiner schools.

This Parent Handbook has been compiled for parents to read and keep as a reference guide and it aims to give a basic overview of the workings of our school. If you require more detailed information on any of the topics covered, please feel free to contact the Office, your Class Teacher/Guardian or visit our school website at mrss.com.au.

More detailed information about our curriculum and the philosophy that underpins our unique style of education can also be found on our website.

Our school years are such an important time in our lives and we are grateful that you have chosen our school to educate your children. It is a joy and a privilege to work with each young person as they journey to meet their destiny in the world.

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GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The Office

The Office staff are available for parents and students between 8.30am and 4.30pm and will direct any enquiries. All fee enquiries will be directed to our Bursar. Any one of our Office staff can assist if your child needs to phone home, has forgotten their lunch money/myki card, needs a band-aid, doesn't know where their class is, has forgotten their musical instrument, etc. Please let your child know they can always go to the Office for help.

Office Phone: 03 9876 2633 | Office Email: office@mrss.vic.edu.au

School Hours

RING-A-ROSIE

Drop-off: 8.30am

Pick-up: 12pm on half days and 3pm on full days

LINDEN AND PEPPERCORN

Drop-off: 8.20am

Pick-up: 12.30pm on half days and 3pm on full days

Please note: For the first 2 weeks of Term 1 all Kindergarten and Prep children attend half days ONLY, which finish at 12pm.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

8.45am First bell – we ask that children arrive between 8.30am and 8.45am so they can greet their friends and have a short play before final bell (8.50am).

Classes 1–3

Pick-up: 3.00pm

Please note: Wednesday is a half day for Class 1, finishing at 12.15pm.

Classes 4–6

Pick-up: 3.15pm

SECONDARY SCHOOL

First bell is 8.45am (Class Assembly) – Main Lesson commences at 8.55am sharp.

Classes 7–10

Pick-up: 3.25pm (classes finish at 3.15pm)

Years 11 and 12

Pick-up: 3.15pm or 4.00pm – depending on subjects taken

Teachers are present from 8.30am and there are teachers on duty until 4.00pm. We ask that children do not arrive before 8.30am and are collected by 4.00pm. The Office is staffed until 4.30pm if your child needs to phone regarding pick-up.

Assembly

Secondary-School Class Assembly

Secondary-school students begin and finish the day with a Class Assembly with their Class Guardian(s). A morning and afternoon verse are spoken, the roll is taken, and notices and other relevant messages are shared. In the afternoon, students are required to complete specific jobs in order to leave the room clean and tidy for the next day.

Secondary-School Singing Assembly

On Tuesday and Friday mornings students from Class 8 upwards join together for communal singing, led by Teachers and Guardians, after Main Lesson.

Monday Morning Primary-School Assembly

On Monday mornings, Classes 2–6 attend the Primary-School Assembly (Class 1 joins later in the year) accompanied by their Class Teacher. The assembly begins at 9am sharp. Children who arrive at school after this time will need to wait in the Office until the assembly is over.

Main Lesson

Throughout our school, from Class 1 to Year 12, each day begins with an extended Main Lesson of one and a half hours' duration. For approximately three weeks, a particular subject is studied in great depth. The objective of Main Lesson is to 'wake up' the students as new ideas and dimensions are presented in a variety of ways – artistically, descriptively and academically. Such intense immersion in a topic gives every opportunity for students to become fully engaged with the subject matter at hand.

Importantly, Main Lesson offers time for a deep digestion of concepts and ideas. We work hard to minimise disturbances and interruptions to classrooms during this time. Messages for students and teachers will be passed on at morning tea after Main Lesson has ended.

Dropping Off and Collecting Your Child

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Morning Drop-off – Children in Lower Primary (Classes 1–3) need to be walked to their classroom by a parent or guardian.

Children in Upper Primary (Classes 4–6) can make their own way to their classrooms in the morning.

Afternoon Pick-up – Children in Lower Primary (Classes 1–3) need to be met by a parent or guardian in the playground outside the Office and taken home.

Children in Upper Primary (Classes 4–6) often make their own way down to the Big Oval or Northern Rotunda before heading home. At this time the children understand that their 'bounds' extend only to the flat, visible area of the oval. We request that children do not play anywhere beyond the fenceline bordering the Big Oval, with or without parental supervision.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Morning Drop-off – Secondary-school students can make their own way to their classrooms in the morning.

Afternoon Pick-up – Secondary-school students can meet parents in the Northern Carpark or make their own way home via public transport, etc.

Please ensure that students DO NOT WALK through the Therapy Centre's carpark, property or gardens on the way to and from school.

Bicycles, Scooters, etc.

Bikes and other student transport vehicles are to be taken directly to the bicycle storage area located across the Little Oval under the Hall/Annex deck upon arrival at school, and should be ridden directly out of the school grounds when they are retrieved after school. Riding is allowed only on the road beside the Big Oval at designated times.

Dogs

Dogs on or off lead are not allowed on the school grounds during school hours – 8.30am to 4.30pm.

MRSS Bus Services

MRSS offers two school bus operations for our students that travel on a fixed route during school terms.

BELGRAVE BUS

The Belgrave bus route is a chartered service through a local family-owned and accredited bus company called McKenzie's Tourist Bus Services.

MORNINGTON BUS

The Mornington bus is operated privately by the school. We use our own school bus and have three nominated teachers who take turns driving the daily routes. We adhere to all relevant acts including the Bus Safety Act 2009 (Vic), Bus Safety Regulations 2010 (Vic) and Victorian Transport Regulations.

ELIGIBILITY/ACCESSIBILITY

MRSS bus services are only for MRSS students and teachers and have been put in place as an extension of support for our students and families in the school community. All MRSS students from Class 4 onwards can access these services. If students younger than Class 4 would like to use the bus, parents have to contact their Class Teacher with a special request, which would then be considered. For example, special consideration may be granted if a child has an older sibling who also travels on the bus. Primary-school children travelling on either bus service will be seated together towards the front of the bus, generally immediately behind the bus driver.

APPLICATION PROCESS

A parent or guardian needs to contact the Enrolments Coordinator (enrolments@mrss.vic.edu.au) and fill out an application form for the bus they are hoping to secure a seat on (TR-1 form for Belgrave bus and TR-2 form for Mornington bus).

COST AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

Bus service prices are reviewed annually.

For more details on the specific bus routes, including drop-off and pick-up points and cost details, please see the bus policy found on our website.

Traffic Safety and Parking Within School Grounds

NORTHERN CARPARK

This is the main designated parking area for all parents.

There are parking bays available for use in the Northern Carpark. School is accessed via the walking path from the bottom of the carpark or via the footpath along the front of the school.

CENTRAL DRIVEWAY (Including Drop-off Zone)

- There is limited parking for prams and disability in front of Oak Hall. When using these spots, families are encouraged to reverse out of parking bays and drive up and around the roundabout in order to exit the school. **There is a boomgate installed after the roundabout. The area after the boomgate is for staff parking, deliveries and emergency vehicles/contractors ONLY.**
- Drop-off and pick-up zones along the Central Driveway are NO PARKING ZONES. These are signposted. Please do not park your vehicle in these zones 8.00am–4.00pm as they are designated drop-off/pick-up ONLY and are not to be used for parking. For safety and traffic flow please drive as far forward as possible before stopping and allowing children to exit the car.
- NO RIGHT-HAND TURN out of the Central Driveway onto Wonga Rd during peak times (8.00–9.30am and 2.30–4.00pm). This is per Road Rule 91. MRSS has a “No Right-Hand Turn” sign in place, with the prohibited times displayed. Please be advised that as Road Rule 91 is an enforceable road rule, Victoria Police and Maroondah Council officers will be monitoring the area for vehicles performing illegal right-hand turns. Penalties will apply for non-compliance.
- Please DO NOT STOP on the roundabout. It is designed to turn around to access the Drop-off Zone. Stopping is very dangerous and blocks the flow of traffic.

SOUTHERN DRIVEWAY

- This area is for staff parking, deliveries and emergency vehicles/contractors ONLY.
- Access to this area is blocked by a boomgate.
- There is a disabled carpark available upon request. Please phone the Office for details.

DISABLED CAR PARKING

Designated disabled parking bays are located outside Oak Hall on the Central Driveway. Drivers must display the appropriate disabled sticker on their car window.

SPECIAL PARKING PERMITS

If a situation arises that requires a special parking permit, please contact the Office to obtain the permit to display on your car window. Parents with newborn infants (up to 3 months) can apply.

LEARNER DRIVERS

Parents must ensure that young people learning to drive (L-plates) DO NOT DRIVE INSIDE THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.

P-PLATE DRIVERS

Students who drive to school are allowed to park in the Northern Carpark ONLY.

MELBOURNE THERAPY CENTRE

We request that parents DO NOT PARK in the Therapy Centre’s carpark and that students DO NOT WALK through the Therapy Centre’s carpark, property or gardens on the way to and from school.

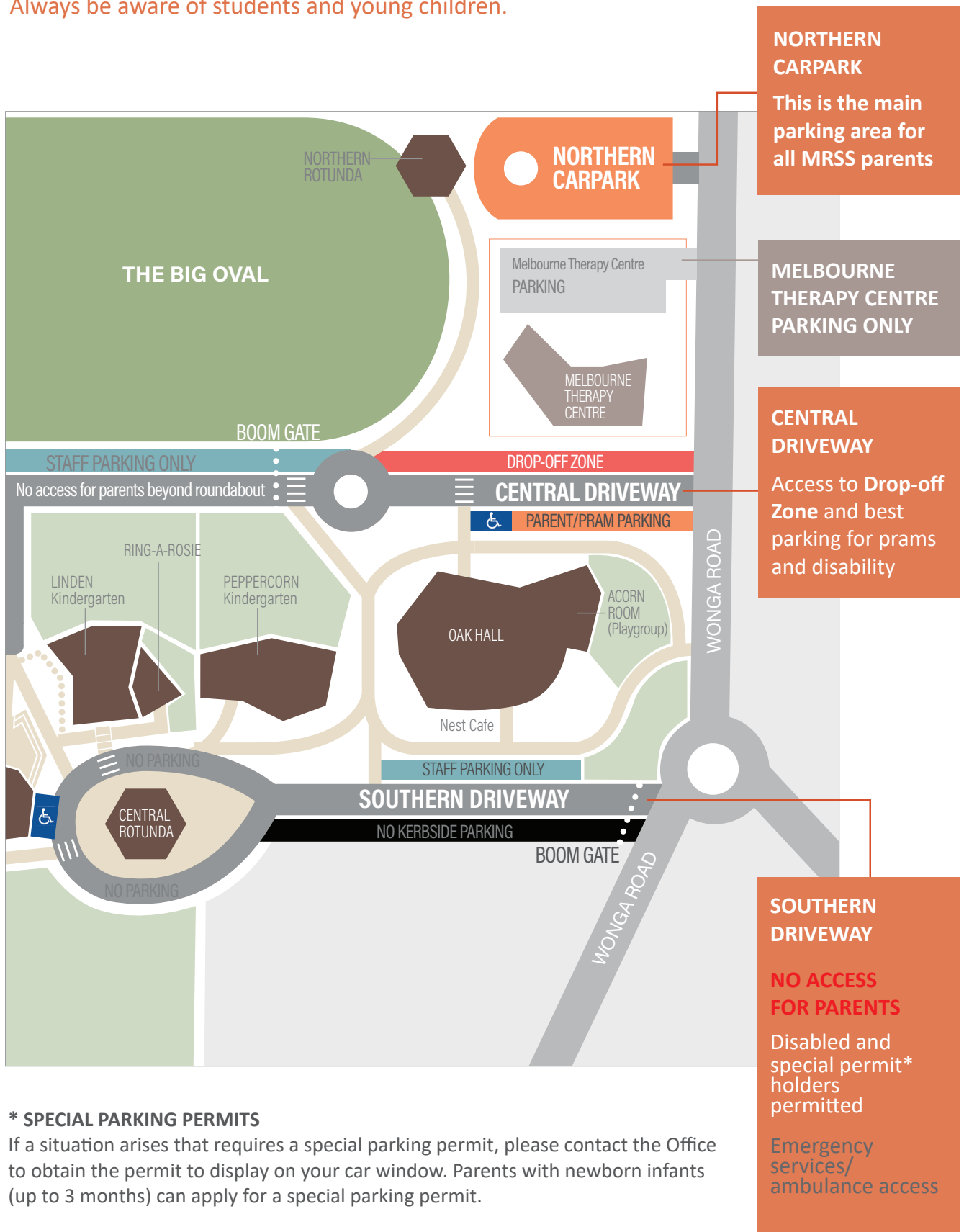
PARKING FOR CAMPS

When a class is leaving for camp the boomgate in the Central Driveway will be temporarily left open to allow closer access to the bus parking area for drop-off and collection of students.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The **SPEED LIMIT** is 10KM PER HOUR within the school grounds **AT ALL TIMES**.

Always be aware of students and young children.



Absences

For both Primary and Secondary-school students we have a system of texting both the parents of students who are not at school and for whom we have not received a notification of the reason from parents. We start sending these texts at approximately 9.15am. If you receive a text from us we would appreciate your prompt response.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Please send a note to your child's Class Teacher after an absence for any reason. We ask you to phone the Office in the morning before 8.30am if your child will be away from school and please advise if they were scheduled to have a music lesson.

Leaving school during the day (dentist appointment, etc.) requires that the student bring a note of explanation for the Class Teacher before the planned departure.

For extended absences please notify the Class Teacher and the Office.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

Absences are to be called in to the Office before 8.30am where possible. Please leave a clear message on the answering machine stating your child's name, class, and reason for absence. Please also advise if they have a music lesson or ensemble that day, including their music teacher's name.

For extended absences please notify the Class Teacher/Guardians and the Office.

Anticipated late arrivals should also be phoned through to the office before 8.30am, including the child's name, class, expected arrival time and reason for lateness.

All Secondary-school students who arrive late (after 8.45am) must sign in at one of the following locations:

- Classes 7–10: the Office
- Years 11 and 12: the Library

For a predictable absence during the school day appointments, etc. a note beforehand from the parent is necessary. **A student may leave school only with the Guardian's/Class Teacher's permission.**

All Secondary-school students must come via the Office and sign out before leaving the school premises (Year 11 and 12 students sign out in the Library).

YEAR 11 AND 12

The school timetable for VCE students includes Period 7 (3.15–4.00pm), so VCE students have a longer day at school. All students are expected to attend Morning Assembly at 8.45am before they go their separate ways. Because of the lengthened school day VCE students are permitted to sign out when their last lesson for the day has finished (if they finish before 3.15pm). Occasionally a class at the end of the day (Period 7) may be cancelled. Years 11 and 12 sign out in the Library.

Signing out when there are no further classes is a privilege and may be withdrawn if this privilege is abused. When students' timetables are finalised, students are expected to convey times and days to parents so that all are aware of the varying finish times.

If a class is cancelled, students are also expected to communicate with parents upon leaving the school grounds. This is seen not just as a responsibility, but also a common courtesy and valuable training for life beyond school.

Another important aspect of VCE is study skills and making proper use of time. When students do not have Main Lesson, they will still be expected to attend school to maintain a healthy rhythm and work ethic. Those students without a scheduled Main Lesson will be expected to work on homework or study in the Library.

If a student is going to be absent a notification from a parent before school starts is much appreciated. Any significant absences will require a medical certificate (particularly for Year 12 students).

Taking Holidays During Term Time

When a student is ill they are absent from school, but as they are convalescing at home they are in a quiet place and still able to 'dream' into what may be happening with their peers in class. When they return it is as if a place has been held for them, buoyed by their wondering and longing.

A student returning from a holiday is in a very different space. Unlike when they are ill, students returning from a stimulating holiday often find it very difficult to reintegrate into the social life of the class and to enter into the work. To adjust back into a healthy rhythm with the class can take many days, weeks, or even months. Students who fall behind in work activities such as craft can easily lose heart and find it difficult to summon the will to fully engage with their own creativity. Students in such a state not only weaken their own will forces, but can also act in such a way that distracts other class members from their work.

We understand that from time to time situations arise in families that necessitate students being absent. We request that you seriously consider whether any absence from school is absolutely necessary.

Messages from Parents to Students

When parents phone the Office with a message for their child changing pick-up or after-school arrangements, it presents logistical problems. It is at best extremely inconvenient, and sometimes quite impossible, for Office staff to leave their duties to search for your child. When the message is passed on or left for the relevant Class Teacher or Guardian, it can be overlooked or forgotten, especially if the Teacher or Guardian does not cross paths with your child again that day.

Students should know at the beginning of their school day what has been arranged at the other end, especially if there is to be an unusual pick-up time or altered after-school arrangements. This is particularly the case for younger children, who feel more secure when they know of any irregularities in the day's rhythm before leaving home.

For older students, if you know in advance that you may need to alter or confirm arrangements, please follow either of the following procedures:

Tell your child they must ring you from the Office during their recess or lunchtime to confirm arrangements

OR

Phone through a message to the Office after having told your child before school to call into the Office at lunchtime to collect it.

Please do not seek to communicate via mobile/text with your child during the school day, as this puts them in breach of school rules.

Of course, in the case of emergencies and unforeseen contingencies, by all means phone the Office on 9876 2633. Your cooperation in this matter will greatly assist in the smooth running of the school.

School Rules

Our students are entitled to spend their time at this school feeling valued and supported by all who study, work or otherwise attend here. In order for their individuality to flourish, their lives need to be free from all forms of abuse, oppression and humiliation.

All forms of violent behaviour, including habitual bullying, will not be tolerated and respect should be shown at all times towards the teaching and learning environment. There is no prescribed school uniform, however dress should be decent and non-provocative. Smoking, vaping, alcohol and other drugs are not permitted at school or in the immediate neighbourhood and no student should participate in any form of illegal activity. The use of electronic devices, including mobile phones, MP3 players, iPods, etc is not permitted at school.

A more detailed *Secondary-School Rules* document and accompanying policies, including our *Student Code of Conduct Policy*, are available on our website and are circulated periodically throughout the year via email and/or the Information Sheet.

The school is subject to National and State Laws and supports the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including a commitment to elected government, the rule of law, equal rights for all before the law, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association, and the values of openness and tolerance.

OFFENCES AGAINST SCHOOL RULES

There are prescribed penalties for some offences (e.g., smoking/vaping) which Class Guardians explain to their students. Most other offences are dealt with according to the individual situation by Teachers and Class Guardians or a combined group. Parents are informed of the offence and/or penalty.

Mobile Phones

PRIMARY SCHOOL

We do not believe it is appropriate for Primary-school students to engage with digital technology, including mobile phones. We ask that parents respect our policy that students in Primary-school do not carry a mobile phone to school, own one, or bring one into their peer group.

There may be very rare instances when a Primary-school student may need a phone, such as when a student has a serious medical condition. If this is the case, phone use may be permitted after full consultation between parents and the Class Teacher.

CLASSES 7–10

MRSS recognises that many students feel a need to carry a mobile phone and accepts that there are genuine reasons for their use (e.g., contacting parents after music, sports practice, or while

travelling to and from school). Therefore, the College of Teachers has developed a set of expectations relating to the possession and use of mobile phones.

Phones are not to be used at any time by students on school property unless under staff supervision. This includes before and after official class times of 8.45am–3.25pm.

Students in Classes 7–10 will have their mobile phone collected at the beginning of the day and stored in their classroom, in wooden locked boxes. Phones will be handed back during afternoon verse time.

When communication with parents becomes necessary during the day, students may have access to a telephone in the Office with teacher permission. However, a Class Guardian may give permission for a student to use their mobile phone when there are exceptional circumstances.

VCE STUDENTS

Students in Years 11 and 12 are required to keep their phones and earbuds/earphones in their lockers at all times. Students are not permitted to carry their phones or earbuds/earphones with them during school times. On rare occasions a teacher may authorise students to use their phone, for example to document experiments in a science class or photograph a record of folio work in art. At these times the subject teacher will be responsible for the phones being returned to the lockers.

PARENTS

Parents are asked to refrain from using their mobile phones in the school grounds, especially around the Kindergarten, Primary Playground and Dining Room. Please step into the Office or use the carparking areas to make or return calls if they are urgent.

A copy of our *Mobile Phone Policy* can be found on our website.

Clothing

In Kindergarten and Primary school we request that the students wear plain clothes of pure colour (use the colours of the rainbow as a guide to what is most appropriate) with no logos or advertising.

The world of fashion and advertising does not belong in childhood and it is far more desirable to greet a student's smiling face than be struck by a slogan or logo. While children are young, play and movement are essential and we do not wish this to be limited in any way. Nail polish is not permitted in the Kindergarten or Primary classes.

In the Secondary school we request moderation in clothing and hairstyle to bring a due respect to the daily workplace, and we hope torn clothing and inappropriate slogans will not appear. Dress should be decent and non-provocative (e.g., not too revealing, with no offensive or illegal messages). For safety and hygiene reasons, proper footwear must be worn to school and in class.

Sun Protection

In the warmer months during the school day, students need to have adequate protection from the sun. Sun hats are an essential piece of clothing and must be worn at all times when students are outside. Please ensure that the hat your child wears serves the purpose of casting shade rather than being fashionable. Caps are not permitted for Primary-school students. Because of the intensity of the sun in the middle of the day, teachers feel it is wiser for children to remain inside if they have not brought their own hat.

Please be mindful that shoulders also need protection. Singlet tops or t-shirts with very narrow straps leave students at risk of sunburn. If your child wishes to wear a singlet on a very hot day, please ensure they also have a light cotton shirt to cover them when they are outside.

Sun cream is provided in the classroom for those who wish to use it, or you may send your child along with their own supply.

Lost Property

Parents/students can check the lost property rack located in the breezeway below Classes 1–3 – ask the Office staff for its exact location. At the end of each term items not collected are sorted and donated to a local op shop. Please name your child’s clothing, camp equipment, lunchbox, backpack, etc. and there will be a much greater chance that the item will be returned.

School Photos

MRSS engages a professional photographer to come to the school each year and take class, individual and family photos. Forms are sent home with students and it is generally easiest to make payments online via the photographer’s website. The dates for photos are communicated through the Information Sheet.

School ID Cards

PTV/Identification cards are issued to students in years 9 to 12. Photographs for these cards are taken early in the year so cards can be issued to students as soon as possible.

The Library

Our Library is a wonderful resource for our students and teachers. During the day the facilities are in high demand and need to be available solely for the use of teachers and students. Although it cannot operate as a public library, it offers borrowing facilities to parents of the school when a child enters Kindergarten.

Students begin independent visits to the Library sometime in Class 3 after the class makes its first special Library visit. Class Teachers prefer younger students to not attend the Library until then, but still enjoy the lovely selection of picture books that parents may borrow.

Secondary-school students may use the photocopier in the Library. Please see one of the librarians before use.

Library times for parents are Monday to Friday, 3.15–4.00pm, during the school term.

Emergency Management Procedures

PRACTICE DRILLS

The school conducts fire and emergency practice drills with students and staff throughout the year.

BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Many of our families and staff live in areas prone to the risk of bushfires. MRSS will close on Extreme and Catastrophic fire danger days. Please refer to the school’s *Emergency Management Policy* on our website or contact the OH&S Officer for more information.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The College of Teachers

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School is overseen by a collegial group known as the College of Teachers. All members of the College of Teachers co-operate as equals, rather than having a hierarchical structure of employer and employees or the widely used school governance system of Principal or Headmaster.

The College of Teachers is made up of all teaching, support and administrative staff at the school and guides every aspect of the school's life. The College of Teachers is the final decision-maker in all matters and consensus is used at all times to reach decisions rather than voting. The College of Teachers meets weekly on Tuesdays after school.

Because the College group is large, sub-committees are formed from time to time to research particular areas of school life and report their findings back to College. Matters may move more slowly with this method of operation, but great value is placed on the group working in equality and holding and nurturing the ethos of the school.

The Admin Group

The Admin Group is made up of a small group of staff that acts as a first point of consideration before reporting to College. The current Admin Group members are Yasmin Bak, Sarah Baker, Shane Kendal, Melchior Martin, Ken Peney, Walter Alonso, Jude McGregor and Alison Pritchard.

Policies and Procedures

School policies and procedures are regularly updated and are available to read on our website. When relevant they also may be emailed home to families or communicated through the Information Sheet. Please contact the Office with any queries.

School Executive Council

The School Executive Council comprises a group of staff and parents who meet monthly to provide direction on non-educational matters concerning the running of the school, including finances, buildings and other administrative matters.

Members of the Council are drawn from the College of Teachers, parents of the school who have certain areas of expertise in business and finance, long-standing parents, and a representative of the School Community Association committee. Please contact the Office for a current list of names.

Who Can I Speak to If I Have a Concern?

At MRSS, we understand that every member of the school community values positive relationships with one another.

Maintaining strong, positive relationships within our school community requires open, honest communication. This is particularly true when concerns arise.

We acknowledge that a prompt response to concerns reduces the risk of communications breaking down and relationships being adversely affected.

Having clear, easily understood avenues of communication is vital. We would like everyone in our school community to be aware of the following:

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

Rudolf Steiner

EDUCATION

For all concerns or complaints regarding your child’s education and their experience at the school please contact their Class Teacher or Guardian (first name.last name@mrss.vic.edu.au) directly, as open, respectful discussion is the best beginning.

If you cannot find a mutually acceptable resolution, then you can contact the Admin Group via the Office at **office@mrss.vic.edu.au** or at **admin@mrss.vic.edu.au**

ADMIN

If you have a concern or complaint of an administrative nature regarding the school, then you can contact the Admin Group via the Office or at **admin@mrss.vic.edu.au**

FINANCE

If you have a concern or complaint of a financial nature, then you can contact the Finance Group at **finance@mrss.vic.edu.au** and the issue will be resolved by the group or referred to the Bursar, who will contact you.

OTHER

As a final avenue to have your concern or complaint addressed, you can write directly to the College of Teachers via the Chair of the College at **college@mrss.vic.edu.au**

If you are unsure where to direct your concerns you are always welcome to email the Office at **office@mrss.vic.edu.au** and we will forward your correspondence confidentially to the most appropriate person.

MRSS aims to be open to your concerns and to respond promptly, respectfully and appropriately, and to communicate with you throughout and beyond the process.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Child Safety

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School is committed to the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children and young people, including those with a disability, Indigenous Australians, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, gender diverse and international students, and children unable to live at home. This will be a primary focus of our care and decision-making. Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

A complete copy of our *Child Safety Policy* can be found on our website.

Illnesses and Accidents

If your child becomes unwell at school or there is an emergency we need to be able to contact you ASAP. It is parents' responsibility to ensure the school always has your most up-to-date contact information. Please also ensure that your additional emergency contacts are up to date should we be unable to reach a parent or guardian.

First Aid

The First Aid room (Sick Bay) is located in the Office. All Office staff are trained in administering basic first aid, CPR, anaphylaxis and diabetes management. The Sick Bay is well stocked with wound care products and treatments, and there are also wheat packs, ice packs and sanitary products for use as required.

If a student requires paracetamol, ibuprofen, naproxen sodium (for period pain) or antihistamine this may be administered with consent of the parent/guardian. This permission is collected and stored via Operoo along with any other health information for each child. If your child requires regular medication, parents are required to provide it in a container clearly labelled with the student's name, accompanied by the relevant action plan and instructions, which must also be kept up to date via Operoo.

All treatment administered is recorded by staff. Homeopathic remedies may also be used to supplement first aid. Ambulance cover is recommended for families not covered by private health insurance or Health Care Card.

Covid-19

As we are learning to live with Covid-19 the safety of our students, staff and community remains paramount. We have added a few precautionary measures into our daily practices at MRSS to ensure the potential risk of transmission of Covid-19 remains low. Our classrooms are well ventilated and equipped with air purifiers, and we have masks and rapid antigen tests readily available.

We continue to ask that if your child does test positive to Covid-19 that you keep them home while they are unwell and inform the school. If a child becomes unwell with symptoms of Covid-19 at school, we will ask that they are picked up. We appreciate everyone's cooperation with these measures.

Infectious Diseases

Please inform your child's Class Teacher/Guardian and the Office should your child contract an infectious disease. They will give you details of exclusion periods.

Immunisations and Vaccinations

It is a government requirement that the school hold immunisation records for all Primary students. As such, all families must provide at the time of commencement (acceptance of enrolment) an Immunisation History Statement regarding their child's immunisation status. This document can be obtained from the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809.

This does not mean that your child necessarily has to be immunised, but that the school must hold a record of your child's immunisation status.

Maroondah City Council offers vaccinations for students in Year 7 against HPV, as well as a booster for Diphtheria, Tetanus and Whooping Cough and for students in Year 10 against Meningococcal infections. Details are sent to all parents at the beginning of the year and parents provide consent for their child(ren) to be vaccinated. The council conducts the vaccinations at the school, usually late in Term 1.

Student Welfare

Student welfare is primarily maintained by the Class Teacher (in Classes 1–6) and Class Guardians (in the secondary school). Teachers strive to establish teacher–parent relationships based on openness and trust. In the early years, parents and Class Teachers have regular opportunities to share concerns and discuss issues. Parents are welcome to contact Class Teachers, Class Guardians or Subject Teachers to arrange interviews if there are concerns. Teachers may also contact parents where it is felt to be necessary.

Rudolf Steiner gave different meditative verses for the teacher to consider. Many teachers use these as a source of inspiration and support in their work with the students.

Families and staff can access support from the school's Student Welfare Officer via Class Teachers and Guardians. If it is felt a student may require counselling or further assessment from a child psychologist or other therapists, the Student Welfare Officer can give advice on the best course of action.

Support Education

The school is aware that some students need support across a range of areas of development – physical, social, artistic and intellectual (covering language and numeracy).

Students can be referred for extra support by Class Teachers/Guardians or Subject Teachers, or parents may request assistance for their child through consultation with the teachers.

The programmes are implemented in a variety of ways: individual lessons – one to one with a specialist teacher; small groups with usually two to six children removed from class to work with one teacher; in the classroom – a special education teacher goes into some class lessons to support one or more children with special needs in the subject. We have had several students for whom government integration funding has been granted. Work with these students may include classroom support, an individual program and assistance from an aide.

If appropriate, children may be referred to private therapists for other specialist assistance. These include Extra Lesson, Motor Development Therapy, Psychologist, Speech Therapist or Doctors.

The Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School and Early Childhood Program works within the parameters of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Disability Standards for Education (2005) in working with enrolment applications from, and teaching children with, special needs in our school.

Along with all schools Australia wide, our school is required to collect and report data on students with a disability, as part of the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). The NCCD requires our teachers to make professional judgements to ascertain whether a student has a disability as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act. We also must evaluate the level of adjustment that needs to be made for each student, and collect relevant data and report on how many students we have with disabilities. We endeavour to provide adequate and appropriate support and provisions for each student with a disability.

Student Lunches

Morning tea and lunch need to be brought to school every day for Classes 1 and 2. We ask that parents provide balanced, healthy food with minimal packaging. From Class 3 the Class Teacher will allow gradual introduction to the Dining Room.

The Dining Room

Our school canteen is known as the Dining Room. The Dining Room serves delicious organic and biodynamic food during morning tea and lunchtime for staff and students, prepared daily by our professional chef Connie Pititto and her wonderful staff and student helpers. The weekly menu is updated each term and published in the Information Sheet.

Primary-school students normally begin to access the dining room in Class 3 (1 day per week) after the completion of their Main Lesson on money. In Classes 4–6 student access to the Dining Room is determined by the Class Teacher, who will communicate directly to families about this.

Secondary-school students can access the Dining Room for morning tea and lunch.

Student Borrowing

If your child has left their lunch or lunch money at home they may borrow money from the Office to purchase lunch from the Dining Room (from Class 4 to Year 12). We ask that this money is paid back by the student the following day, if possible, so students learn that if they borrow money it is their responsibility to pay it back. At the end of term, if money has not been paid back then it will be added to school fees.

AVENUES OF COMMUNICATION

Class Meetings

Class Meetings are conducted for all classes from Kindergarten to Year 12. Held in the evening, this is an important opportunity for parents to gather together with the Class Teacher or Guardians for an informative discussion about happenings in the classroom and beyond.

The teacher provides an overview of what the students have been learning, as well as information on broader aspects of the curriculum. This will often involve presenting samples of the work the students are doing. The teacher may also give insight into the consciousness of students at a particular age, as well as cultural, developmental, emotional and physical shifts they are observing in the students or class more generally.

Class Meetings are a wonderful opportunity for information sharing between Class Teachers/Guardians and parents, as well as helping to strengthen the social fabric of the class community and help to develop strong connections. It is vital that each student is represented by at least one parent at each meeting.

Class Liaisons

Each class in the school has parent helpers known as Class Liaisons. The main task of the Class Liaison is to facilitate communication between teachers and parents, organise class dinners and other get-togethers, organise support for families in the class in times of need, and attend to other matters that may come up from time to time. Often in the early years the Class Teacher may approach parents to fill this role, or sometimes people simply volunteer or are nominated through the parent body.

The Information Sheet

The school's weekly newsletter, known as the Information Sheet, is sent out on Thursday afternoon each week via email. It is one of the main sources of regular school communication and contains a lot of useful information about classroom activities and upcoming events.

Parents are welcome to advertise the sale of musical instruments and current booklist text books in the Information Sheet. For all other items we encourage you to pin up your advertisements on the physical noticeboard located in the Central Rotunda.

School Website

Our school website is mrss.com.au. You will find information about the curriculum, fees, term dates, camp dates, and policies.

Social Media

The school has a Facebook and Instagram page which you are invited to follow. Although the Information Sheet is our primary source of communication, upcoming events and job vacancies are also sometimes advertised on social media too:

facebook.com/melbournrudolfsteinerschool/

instagram.com/melbournrudolfsteinerschool/

Student Media Permissions

At MRSS we seek permission from parents around sharing images of their children and their children's work. This information determines whether images of the students can be shared in the Information Sheet, on the MRSS website, and on the school's social media accounts.

We take the autonomy and privacy of our students very seriously, and any imagery of students will only be used with the utmost respect for the child and only in the context of highlighting the beautiful and creative aspects of our curriculum.

While every effort is made to identify and carefully check the media permissions of each child before publishing an image, occasionally a child's permissions may be overlooked. If an image of your child or their work appears in a place or way that you feel uncomfortable with, please do not hesitate to contact the office (office@mrss.vic.edu.au) and we will take immediate action to rectify the situation.

School Database Systems

ENGAGE

The main database/school management system used at MRSS is called Engage. This is a digital platform used for communication with parents, attendance marking, academic reporting, personal information storage, enrolments, administration and fee payments for staff, teachers and parents. Parents can log in to the Engage portal to access their school fee invoices.

At the beginning of each year **Family and Student Data Collection forms** will be sent via the Engage portal for your completion. Prompt completion of these forms is vital to ensure that the school has correct information about parents and emergency contacts of each student. Collection of this data is also a government requirement and any omissions could adversely affect our school's funding.

OPEROO

At MRSS we use a platform called Operoo to collect, manage and communicate vital information about our students, including essential medical details, emergency contact information, excursion and camp management, and parental consent. Staff/teachers have access to this information via a secure mobile app and occasionally send important notices to parents via the platform.

Permissions for Excursions and Camps

In order for your child to attend excursions and camps we require the completion of medical release forms specific to the activity, as well as a parental consent form. Forms will be emailed via Operoo and must be completed and signed by parents BEFORE a student will be allowed to go on the excursion or camp.

ASSESSMENTS AND ACADEMIC REPORTING

Primary School

In the Primary school we do not provide written reports for students. Class Teachers deliver a comprehensive overview of each child's progress through interviews with parents. Parents can also contact their child's Class Teacher to request additional interviews or to discuss particular issues if they arise.

Secondary School

INTERIM REPORTS

An interim report is sent home to parents at the end of Term 1. This report contains a brief summary of the progress of the student in each subject.

SEMESTER REPORTS

At the end of each semester, comprehensive written reports are provided and follow-up interviews are organised if required. The reports are descriptive in nature and provide a picture of the student in the particular subject, as well as feedback on assessments.

SECONDARY-SCHOOL PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS

Parent-teacher meetings are conducted on the second Thursday of Term 2 in the afternoon and evening, and teachers will notify you of the dates and times that apply to your child's class. Reminders also appear in the school Information Sheet.

National Standardised Tests (NAPLAN)

NAPLAN is a government standardised assessment programme. The school is obliged, under its funding agreement, to provide these standardised tests to any student in Classes 3, 5, 7 and 9 who has not been withdrawn by their parents (unless they are absent or, in rare circumstances, meet the criteria for exemption). It is an opt-out situation and therefore the parents' responsibility to request and sign a withdrawal form if you do not wish for your child to participate. Withdrawal forms are available from the Office.

FEE INFORMATION

With the enrolment and acceptance of a student in the school, parents are committing to meet fees charged to enable the education of their children. Parents' commitment is essential when the school formulates its annual budget and fee levels.

Fees are determined in Term 4 for the next school year. Fees and charges are subject to amendment by the Company Directors and are payable in advance. Fee statements are sent at the beginning of each term and payment is due within 14 days of the beginning of each term. Only in exceptional circumstances will a pupil be allowed to continue at school if the previous term's fees remain unpaid.

As not everybody is financially able to pay fees in advance, progressive payments are also accepted. If fees are unable to be paid on time in full then please contact the Office. Discounts are available to parents who wish to pay the full year's fees in advance.

Fees can be paid by cash, cheque, direct debit, Visa, Master Card, American Express and by EFT. When making direct deposits to the school's bank account, please include your six-digit Family Code, which you will find on your fee statement.

Please visit our website for a complete copy of our *Fee Policy* and the current *Schedule of Fees*.

Holding Places

If parents wish to hold a place for their child who is absent for an extended length of time (e.g., travelling with parents), full tuition fees will be payable. If full tuition fees are not paid the student will be removed from the class list and placed on the waiting list. Long-term absences will need to be considered carefully in consultation with the Class Teacher/Guardians and the Bursar.

Exit Procedure

A full term's written notice must be given before removing a pupil from school. Should this period of notice not be received, a term's fees will be payable in lieu.

Fee Relief

The school sets aside a limited amount of funds to assist long-term parents who may be experiencing financial difficulties. Parents should contact the Office for more information and to arrange for a confidential meeting.

Music Fees

Individual music lessons and timetabled ensembles are included in school fees for Classes 3–8. Extra individual music lessons and non-timetabled ensembles are an extra charge.

From Year 9 to Year 12, music is not included in school fees and all individual music lessons and non-timetabled ensembles are an extra charge. Please see our current *Schedule of Fees*.

All music fees are payable in advance and five lessons' written notice, or payment in lieu, is required for any changes to music lessons.

Camps, Sports and Education Fund (CSEF)

The government offers an annual subsidy to all Health Care or Pensioner Concession Card holders with school-aged children (from Prep to Year 12) called the Camps, Sports and Education Fund (CSEF). Primary-school students (Prep – Class 6) will receive \$125 off their school fees, and Secondary-school students will receive \$225 off their school fees. If you are a Health Care or Pensioner Concession Card holder, the relevant form is available during Terms 1 and 3 via a link in the Information Sheet or from the Office.

MRSS Trust Funds

Fundraising for the school can take on many different forms. The School Community Association (SCA) organises community-enriching and fundraising events such as the Open Day & Fair, with the funds raised contributing to the welfare of the school in a variety of ways, such as the Primary-school playground redevelopment, Library refurbishment, outside seating, etc.

During your child's time at MRSS and beyond, you may want to consider a donation to one of the school's trust funds. These donations are tax deductible and are focused on raising funds for more specific areas. They include:

<h3>Bursary Fund</h3>	<h3>Library Fund</h3>	<h3>Building Fund</h3>
Assisting longstanding senior students in completing their education at MRSS, when the family is experiencing serious financial hardship.	Assisting in the purchase and maintenance of school Library resources, for use by all students, staff and the parent body.	Assisting with the school's building expansion and maintenance of existing buildings.
MRSS Bursary Trust Fund BSB: 633 000 A/C: 1355 86923	MRSS Library Trust Fund BSB: 013 403 A/C: 4959 79264	MRSS Public Building Fund BSB: 013 278 A/C: 2999 94176

The tax-deductible donations made to each of these funds will have far-reaching benefits and serve to deepen the educational experiences of our children, both now and into the future.

We thank you in advance for your contributions, which can be made directly to the individual bank accounts or in person at the Office via cash, EFTPOS or credit card. Receipts will be issued upon request. Please notify the Office via email of your donation to ensure you receive your receipt promptly (office@mrss.vic.edu.au).

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Open Day & Fair

In November each year the school holds its annual Open Day & Fair. It is a wonderful opportunity to come together and showcase the school's unique style of education, and to cultivate joy and connection within our school and the wider community.

We warmly welcome visitors to view our open classrooms, participate in tours and enjoy the showcase of musical performances, student work and art displays.

Parents at the school work hard to prepare the 'Fair' aspect of the day, which includes organising food and refreshments, children's activities, craft activities, preserving and baking.

It is a day of celebration and fun, and a highlight of the school's calendar year after year.

The 2023 Open Day & Fair will be held on Saturday 18th November.

Talks, Craft Groups and Parent-Led Initiatives

Throughout the year there are many opportunities to participate in fun and creative projects guided by the needs of the community, such as the Open Day & Fair Produce Stall and Children's Tent (e.g., clay creations, felting, preserving, etc.), SCA fundraising, and providing family meals for the community's 'Giving Freezer'.

Informative talks are held periodically on various aspects of anthroposophy and/or the Steiner curriculum, as well as more practical hands-on workshops, such as workshops teaching simple and effective anthroposophical treatments for illness to use in the home.

From time to time there are also evening events where the rich and diverse gifts of community members can be exchanged and supported. Past events have included yoga classes, crystal healing, talks on biodynamic gardening and cooking classes.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to get involved. Details of upcoming events can be found in the weekly Information Sheet.

MRSS Alumni

The wider alumni community includes former students as well as former staff, parents and friends of the school. It is our wish that those who have left the school can maintain an active interest in the school and continue to participate in the Open Day & Fair and other community events.

We also invite our alumni to offer their skills and knowledge for the benefit of current students (e.g., advising students about aspects of study and career paths) and to contribute to a skills database to support the school.

We are very grateful that many of our alumni members continue to contribute to scholarships, the Building Fund and other opportunities for donating to the school, as well as offering voluntary time to the school by organising events such as reunions.

INDEPENDENTLY RUN PROGRAMMES AT MRSS

MRSS After-School Care

Our after-school care service runs Monday to Friday, from 3.00pm till 6.00pm. We provide a warm and friendly environment for Prep to Class 7 students.

Primary-school children are collected from outside the Office, and Prep children from Linden and Peppercorn will be collected directly from their rooms and signed out by Valme.

Contact: Valme Jacobs

afterschoolcare@mrss.vic.edu.au

Melbourne Steiner Playgroup

Melbourne Steiner Playgroup offers a play-based program in a beautiful setting, with seasonal songs and stories, craft and parenting support. These independently run playgroup sessions are facilitated by Kim Roche, an experienced playgroup leader, and are held on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings in the Acorn Room (located in the Oak Hall Building) from 9.30–11.30am.

Contact: Kim Roche

melbournesteinerplaygroup@gmail.com

Phone: 0413 331 262

COURSES IN STEINER EDUCATION

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner Seminar is based on the grounds adjacent to the school at The Michael Centre, 37A Wellington Park Drive, Warranwood.

The Seminar offers a range of different courses for interested members of the community wishing to know more about the philosophy and educational principles underlying Steiner education.

For those who can make the commitment there is also a full-time Advanced Diploma in Rudolf Steiner Education.

For information on full and part-time courses visit their website at www.steinerseminar.com.



“The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility – these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education.”

Rudolf Steiner



MELBOURNE
RUDOLF STEINER
SCHOOL