



EDINBURGH  
STEINER  
SCHOOL



## A Bold Education for a Fast-Changing World

We may not know what the future looks like, but we know our pupils will be ready to meet it.

Edinburgh Steiner School offers a bold and innovative education that encourages imagination, resilience and a sense of social responsibility. It is a perfect education for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

## Rudolf Steiner's Vision for an Art of Education

In 1919 Rudolf Steiner opened the first Waldorf Steiner school in Stuttgart. He described his ideal of a comprehensive education as one that encompasses everyone regardless of social or religious background. The basis of this 'art of education' was – and still is – a deep understanding of the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual needs of the developing human being.

From Kindergarten to the final year (Class 12) all subject matter is linked to a child's developmental stage, and each lesson integrates academic work with fine arts and practical arts, so that a child is not only intellectually engaged, but emotionally and aesthetically invested in their learning.

This holistic approach to education, something which Curriculum for Excellence is striving to achieve, provides our pupils with a number of key benefits.

- The curriculum spans 12 years meaning secondary education naturally flows from what has been taught before.
- Our curriculum addresses all the multiple intelligences, develops analytical, logical and reasoning skills as education always has done, but it also focuses on the development of imagination, creativity, memory and flexible thinking – 'soft' skills highly prized in today's society. Our young people understand how to make connections, to interpret information and to innovate.
- Main Lessons, which continue up to Class 12, are topic blocks which are studied daily by all students for around four weeks and include subjects such as Astronomy, Mechanics, Farming, Philosophy, Surveying and Building. This ensures that, irrespective of their exam choices, all pupils receive a broad education.
- Our academic performance is consistently above the national average and features in the top ten Scottish independent schools.





# Early Years

## Parent & Baby Group

### From bumps to walking

We welcome expectant mothers, carers/parents and their babies, to share food, sing and craft together.

Many babies move on to our Parent and Child groups once they have reached walking age.

## Parent & Child

### Walking – 3½ years

Our parent and child sessions welcome up to nine toddlers with their parents, grandparents and carers (siblings also welcome), to share fun together in a warm, friendly and relaxed environment.

Activities such as baking organic bread and biscuits, arts and crafts or preparing for a seasonal festival are as much for the adults as they are for the children.

Many of the children who enjoy this group move on to our Kindergarten.

## Playgroup

### 2½ Years & Over

Attended without parents/carers, the Playgroup welcomes up to eight toddlers, and enables them to develop independence, meet new friends, learn social skills and have fun!

This group provides a stepping stone before children make the progression into Kindergarten at the age of 3½ years.

## Freedom to Learn

In line with mainstream education in the rest of Europe and most countries worldwide, the start of formal learning in Steiner Waldorf schools is delayed until the age of six years.

This allows pupils to develop literacy, numeracy and social skills through play-based learning in the Kindergarten and ensures that they are fully ready for desk based learning.

## Kindergarten

### 3 1/2 – 6 years

Water-colour painting, hand-crafts and baking awaken creativity, while the imagery of fairy tales, poetry, plays and songs encourages the child's language skills and feelings. Circle games and outdoor play increase physical strength, agility and grace, while seasonal festivals develop a meaningful connection with nature.

Since young children learn by imitation, our Kindergarten teachers lead by example. Pupils discover the importance of watering the plants or feeding leftovers to the birds simply by observing and joining in. Each child has a daily job such as sweeping, washing the plates or taking peelings to the compost heap. The tasks repeated daily serve to integrate the individual child into their community.

This encourages our youngest children to be at ease with themselves and to be eager, creative and responsive when they begin their formal education in Class 1.







## The Lower School (6 to 14 years)

In most instances the same teacher will remain with their pupils from the start of formal education in Class 1 to Class 8 . In our rapidly changing world, this provides a haven for continuity and stability and allows the teacher to develop a thorough understanding of the needs of each child.

It is the Class Teacher's responsibility to bring each Main Lesson to the pupils in a vivid, pictorial way so that their imaginations are touched and their enthusiasm is fired. School trips expand and reinforce themes taught in Main Lessons. Each class also enjoys the experience of a wide range of specialist subject teachers on a daily basis.

During this period, learning is structured in a way that enables the pupils to develop emotionally and physically, while laying down the foundations for the development of intellectual and abstract thought during the Upper School years.







## Making the Transition to Upper School

Class 8 acts as a year of transition. Throughout this defining year, our pupils work on a major project of their own choosing. Examples have ranged from a full scale handcrafted harp and a beautifully stitched replica dress from 1900, to a refitted camper van and an animated cartoon.

Throughout Lower School, Modern Languages form a key part of the curriculum. This culminates in the Class 8 Exchange when up to six weeks are spent visiting a Steiner school in a German or French speaking country. They adopt the timetable of their host class and enjoy many subject lessons in the foreign language.







## Upper School

One of the unique aspects of the Steiner curriculum is its breadth. Nowhere is this more evident than in the four years of the Upper School. At a time where most young people become specialised as a result of their exam choices, pupils at Edinburgh Steiner School continue to study a broad spectrum of arts, sciences, crafts and humanities in addition to their national exam subjects.

They are able to do so because of the Main Lesson programme which includes the study of Ancient, Medieval and Modern History; Philosophy; Organic Chemistry; History of Art; Economic Geography; Surveying; Physics; History of Architecture; and Geology. Artistic and practical subjects also continue to be timetabled for all pupils.

As a result, irrespective of whether pupils veer towards the arts or the sciences in their exam choices, they continue to receive a valuable grounding across all subjects.

## Guardians

Each class is assigned a Guardian who looks after their overall well-being throughout their time in the Upper School. He or she carries a deep knowledge of the Steiner curriculum, as it relates to the Upper School program, and guides the pupils knowledgeably through the crucial stages of adolescence. The Guardian is many things: mentor, confessor, authority figure, bank manager, diary secretary, curriculum manager, go-between, arbiter, and trip organiser. The ultimate aim of the Guardian is to evolve from manager and authority figure into partner; someone who works with an independent and self-motivated group of young adults to help them achieve their potential and contribute in a lasting and positive way to the school and wider community.





## Examinations

National exams are taken in Classes 10, 11 and 12, with a mixture of English GCSEs, Highers and Advanced Highers (Art) being offered. The particular mix arises from the teachers' study of which exam will best fit into the Steiner curriculum and allow the most latitude for study.

To enable the broad curriculum of Main Lesson content to continue, exams are taken a year later than in mainstream. Exam Results are well above the Scottish average and compare favourably with other independent schools in Scotland.

## Careers & Life After School

Throughout their final four years, pupils are helped to choose their path beyond school. Each pupil receives targeted, individual support from the Careers teacher to help them prepare their UCAS and college applications and for any university interviews. They also have interviews with the ISCO (Independent Schools Careers Organisation). If a pupil decides to leave before his or her final year, the school arranges interviews with Skills Development Scotland.

The career paths followed are as individual as our curriculum. Ninety per cent of our pupils continue on to further education. Our former pupils have gone on to excel in a wide range of careers from doctors, lawyers and business professionals to artists, academics and entrepreneurs.





A unique aspect of our curriculum is the integration of the arts into all academic disciplines. This encourages the pupils' emotional engagement with their learning, as well as develops their imagination and freedom of thinking.

## Art

Pupils work in a wide variety of techniques, including painting, and drawing, sculpture, metalwork, woodwork and handwork.

## Music

Music has always been integral to the Steiner curriculum and its ability to raise academic standards is now becoming increasingly documented. Singing forms a key element of each Main Lesson as pupils learn songs related to the topics they are studying or that reflect the season. All pupils in Lower School are taught to play the recorder. Class orchestras are formed and, where possible, timetabled as part of the curriculum. The school orchestra provides the accompaniment for the many school productions while the Lower School and Upper School choirs regularly perform at school events.

## Drama

Drama is a medium that can empower children on an individual level as well as encourage greater social cohesion as a class. From Kindergarten to Class 12, all pupils work on and perform pieces that range from fairy stories and myths to Shakespeare. Performances take place in a range of Modern Languages including English, French and German to further develop language skills.









## Eurythmy

Eurythmy is an art of movement unique to Steiner Schools. It seeks to express the sounds of speech and music, while awakening artistic sensitivity and good coordination within each individual. It also promotes social awareness within the group. As well as being practised throughout the school, eurythmy is used curatively as a therapy and is performed as a stage art.

## Religious Education

Religion in the Edinburgh Steiner School is non-denominational and broadly Christian in its essence, although individual lessons draw content from a wide variety of cultures and faiths. In the Lower School, the weekly lessons on religion underpin the rest of the curriculum, strengthening the sense of reverence for the divine in nature and the spiritual in humanity. In the Upper School, a formal study of world religions takes place.

## Gardening and Farming

A respect for the environment is woven into the curriculum at every stage. Lessons in gardening and farming help our pupils learn how their work has a direct and a visible impact on their environment. We have a dedicated Gardening Teacher and pupils tend their own plots and choose what to plant. They can sell their own organic vegetables to raise class funds or make soup and salads for their class. In Class 9 pupils spend a residential week at Garvald Home Farm near West Linton.





## School Ethos

The Edinburgh Steiner School was founded in 1937 on qualities of care, attention and respect which remain central to the school community today.

All Steiner Schools strive to embody this ethos. They are non-hierarchical, with major decisions being taken by the College of Teachers, a group of experienced teachers who meet once a week in the evening to discuss the running of the school. A management group (which is part of the College of Teachers) ensures that decisions are properly implemented. Because every teacher has contributed to the decision-making process, they are committed to upholding the outcomes. This presents a strong example of a close-knit working community to our pupils.

Relationships between teachers, pupils and parents are positive and caring within a strong community in which each family and child can find a place.

## Festivals and Events

As often as possible, we come together as a whole school community to celebrate key seasonal festivals. At Michaelmas, for example, children from each class help to prepare a meal which we then share together.

Each week there is a Friday Market on the school grounds, during which pupils and parents can browse and buy from the various stalls, as well as catch up with one another.

Our Spring Fayre and Christmas Market are both opportunities to invite the wider community to visit us and share song, food and the crafts produced by our talented staff and parents.

## The Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship

The Edinburgh Steiner School is a member of the SWSF, a membership organisation for all the Steiner schools and independent Steiner Early Years settings in the UK and Ireland. Each year Class 5 pupils from a large number of Steiner Schools from across the UK come together for a three day Greek extravaganza – the “Steiner Olympics”.

## Creating International Citizens

Steiner schools form the largest group of independent non-denominational independent schools in the world and there are currently over 1,200 Steiner schools worldwide.

The school welcomes children from all social, religious and ethnic backgrounds and a multicultural community is encouraged through an active exchange programme.

Each year a number of pupils from abroad attend our Upper School for up to a year or more. They are allocated boarding places with families closely connected with the school and are quickly absorbed among their peer group. This helps all our pupils to develop a wider understanding of the world in which they live. In the same way, our pupils have the opportunity to attend Steiner schools worldwide to broaden their horizons and improve their Modern Language skills.

Visiting pupils enjoy a minimum of five English Foreign Language lessons per week and can – if they meet the required standard – go on to sit the internationally recognized Cambridge First Certificate.





## Join Us

The School accepts admissions all year round, allowing pupils to start at any point in the academic session.

Prospective pupils and parents have a chance to visit the school 'in action' during Open Tours. These run one Friday each month during term time.

Admission is by interview by the Kindergarten Teachers, a Lower School Class Teacher or an Upper School Class Guardian depending on the age of the child. A second teacher will attend all interviews. Parents may request after interview that their child has a 2 or 3 day trial in the class they are applying to. This may be granted at the Teacher's discretion and is not available prior to a formal application. Applications will be presented to the College of Teachers, who meet every Thursday evening during term time and a decision is generally made the same evening.

## Book an Open Tour

Book at: [www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk](http://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk)

Our Admissions Officer will also be happy to answer your questions:

TEL: 0131 337 3410

E: [admissions@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk](mailto:admissions@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk)

## Settling In

The school is experienced in helping new pupils and their families to settle in both socially and academically at all educational stages. When pupils join the school, they are assigned a buddy from their class who helps them to settle in while academically, additional support and classes are offered to new pupils to enable them to reach the same level as their peer group. This is particularly important for pupils who join midway through the school and who have not had the opportunity to study Modern Languages previously.

## Learning Support

Our school offers a small team of qualified and experienced teachers who provide both individual and group support. Children with a wide range of abilities may need extra help during their school career. This support is carefully devised to suit the needs of each individual and is agreed with the Class Teacher, Guardian and parents.

## After School Care

After school care is available Monday to Thursday until 5pm by a dedicated Early Years specialist for our youngest pupils. There is a facility for the care of Class 1 pupils to those aged 12 years Monday to Friday until 5.30pm. Spaces are offered dependant on availability.







[www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk](http://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk)