



EDINBURGH
STEINER
SCHOOL

Trustee Handbook

2022

*During 2022 and 2023 it is possible that certain practices and procedures outlined in this handbook will be subject to change, depending on any new or continuing restrictions which are required in response to Covid-19. It is hoped that if there are restrictions, they will be more limited than in recent years. As far as possible, this handbook describes the Board of Trustees as it would function in a 'normal' year.

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Introduction

Welcome to Edinburgh Steiner School.

This handbook has been prepared to give prospective and current trustees vital information about the role the Board and each individual Member plays within the School.

By familiarising yourself with this, we hope that you will be able to properly consider the role; and - once elected - navigate your responsibilities seamlessly with this toolkit.

We are always open to feedback, so if you have suggestions or recommendations for improvement, please contact the Communications Department directly on 0131 337 3410 Ext 3; or by emailing communications@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk.

Section 1: Structure, Governance and Management

The School

Edinburgh Steiner School Trust Limited is a registered charity with the Scottish Charity Regulator, charity number SC002109; and is subject to the provisions of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 including supervision by the Office of the Scottish Regulator (OSCR).

Edinburgh Steiner School is a registered collective mark of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

It is a company limited by guarantee, registered company number SC025744, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which established the School as a 'limited trust' in 1947. The Articles were updated in May 2015. The School is therefore a company limited by guarantee and the Trustees are its directors.

Board of Trustees

The School Board of Trustees are responsible for meeting the charitable aims of the School (to deliver education in line with the principles and ethos of Rudolf Steiner).

The Trustees determine broad policy direction for the School, Kindergarten and Early Years provision, particularly in regard the legal, financial and employment matters of the School

See [Our People](#) to view the current Trustee Members and their short biographies.

How the School is Financed

The primary funding of the school is through fees. The continued existence and wellbeing of the school depends on its financial and material needs being met by the School community. Fees are due monthly by direct debit. The School reserves the right to charge unpaid fees at 10% per annum to cover costs. If parents wish to withdraw a child from the School following successful completion of the trial period, written notice is required one full term before the last day the child attends school.

Section 2: Joining the Board

Interested in becoming a trustee?

Do you think you could be a trustee of the school or do you know someone who you think would make a good trustee? We are looking to replenish and increase our numbers (the School's Articles of Association allow for a maximum of nine trustees).

Trustees provide their time pro-bono as a voluntary contribution to the School. The Trustees meet every two months during term time and the College of Teachers meets weekly. To stand as a Trustee, any member of the Trust can be nominated and elected at the Trust AGM. Trustees can also be co-opted mid-year (see below) and then confirmed at the Trust AGM. The Trust is open to anyone who has the welfare of the School at heart.

Skill set

An analysis of skill sets currently held by trustees indicates that the Board would benefit from gaining experience and skills in the following areas (and in the interests of diversity we're keen to increase the number of women and to attract younger members as well as ethnic minorities):

- Legal expertise/legislation/regulations/government
- HR
- Estates/property/sustainable development
- Marketing/PR/media

However, if you do not have skills or experience in these areas but would be interested in becoming a trustee we would still like to hear from you. Mike Palmer - the Chair of Trustees, would be very happy to chat to anyone who is interested in joining the board and wants to find out more about what the role entails. He can be contacted at michael.palmer@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk or on 07788564830.

Chair of Trustees, Mike Palmer

Section 3: Trustee Members

Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are elected by majority by the Membership of the Trust at the Trust's Annual General Meeting. The Board of Trustees may at any time co-opt any person duly qualified to be appointed as a Trustee to fill a vacancy in their number or as an additional charity trustee.

The charity trustees, when complete, consist of at least three and not more than nine individuals.

At each AGM a third of the charity trustees must resign but may stand for re-election.

Governing Body

There is currently a Board of six serving trustees:

- Michael Palmer (Chair)
- Roderick Grant
- Tobias Emonts-Holley
- Thomas Moore
- Juan Carlos Soto
- Corinna Tebbutt

Trustees Training

New trustees are inducted into the workings of the Trust as necessary according to their personal needs through engagement with the Chair, other trustees and staff of the Edinburgh Steiner School. Trustees are encouraged to attend training events and seminars organised by the Scottish Council of Independent Schools.

Board Meetings

The Trustees meet every two months during term time.

Section 3: Trustee Members

Transparency

The members of the Board are visible on the School's website (www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk) under Our People: Trustees. This includes a brief bio of each Trustee and their motivation for joining the Board.

There is also a Notice Board outside the School Office that has a profile of all current trustees..

Related Parties

None of the Trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their role as a Trustee with the Trust. Any contractual relationship must be disclosed and notes of interest are retained in written form.

Some Trustees have children attending the school or kindergarten. Generally this does not affect their capability to make independent and fair decisions but, if there is a specific situation where there may be a conflict of interests, the affected Trustee will not take part in the discussion and decision making.

Details of related party transactions are shown under note 19 to the financial statements.

Section 4: The School

A Unique Curriculum

Edinburgh Steiner School is part of an international network of over 1,200 Steiner Waldorf schools and some 2,000 Kindergartens, all of which offer a similar curriculum with a distinctive local element. Of the 26 such schools across the UK, we are one of the most established, founded in 1939.

Globally it is the largest and fastest growing non-denominational educational movement, based upon the internationally-recognised principles of Rudolf Steiner. Present in some ninety countries on every habitable continent bar the Antarctica, in Scotland, we are the smallest independent school in the Capital; composed of up to 380 pupils daily from a wide variety of families, homes, cultural and religious backgrounds. What we experience as a group is the international Steiner Waldorf curriculum.

From Kindergarten to the final year (Class 12) subject matter is linked to a child's developmental stage, which both inspires and motivates the pupils. Teachers teach to the whole child – and each lesson is revealed in a three-fold manner: through the intellectual capacities (thinking), artistic and emotional capacities (feeling), and practical skill-building capacities (willing).

All subjects are linked, 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. The Main Lesson Programme is the cornerstone of the broad education.

Our school is unique in the way it is structured and administered: non-hierarchical working environment where there is a College of Teachers in place of Headteacher; formal schooling starts in a child's seventh year; low-media approach in the younger years; no entrance exam; child-development centred curriculum;; Centre for the delivery of the Integrated Education Suite; striving to foster pupils with vision and purpose, instilling a sense of principled agency.

Section 4: The School

A Unique Curriculum

A conscious effort is made to honour the cycle of nature as part of school life, through festivals, seasonal recognition and social events on the School calendar. In a society where many of the natural rhythms of life have virtually disappeared, this is now vital in addressing the basic human need for rhythm and repetition, so that they can feel safe and secure knowing what's coming next; whilst strengthening the community spirit integral to the School..

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

The philosophy (Anthroposophy) behind the education can be applied to all walks of life and it is out of this that the teachers work. The philosophy itself, however, is not taught to the children.

Section 4: The School

An Overview: where to source information about the school

More detailed information about the different aspects of the School can be found here:

- **[School website](#)**

The School's website has a wealth of information. To navigate the site there is a useful search bar. There is also a [School Website Handbook](#) informing users what they can expect to find on this platform.

- **[Parent Handbook](#)**

The Parent Handbook, updated each academic year, is published on the School website under [Publications & Policies](#). It is linked to directly above.

- **Campus Notice Boards**

Edinburgh Steiner School is an all-through school for children aged 2 - 18, situated on a three-acre campus within Merchiston's Protected Conservation Area.

The School gates at 60 Spylaw Road, EH10 5BR lead you to a Marketplace, where the weekly Friday Market is hosted. There is a School Notice Board promoting events that are coming up; and other important information.

The School Office is situated in the Edinholme Building on the right of the entrance on the ground floor. Here, a Notice Board exhibits the current members of the College of Teachers (including the Co-Chairs), Management and, Mandate Groups, as well as the Co Chairs of the Student Council.

In the hallway of the same building there is a full gallery of all members of ESS staff.

Section 4: The School

- **Isams**

Pupil records, school roll data, medical reports and image permissions are securely stored on the Schools Isams system.

- **School Office**

The School Office holds the School Diary. It is located in the Edinholme Building - the one to your right when entering the gates on Spylaw Road.

- **School Bursar**

The School Bursar, Donna Ewing, attends Board Meetings,, proving financial reports, school roll numbers and circulates the agenda. bursar@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk

- **Management**

Members of Management attend the first part of the Board Meetings.

Management of delivery of the education is delegated to the College of Teachers, who in turn delegate day-to-day management to the Management Group.

Working with the School's College of Teachers and the Management Team the Board seek to guide the strategic direction of the school and, among other aspects, address financial and regulatory matters (including decisions on annual fees and salaries and responding to regulations which affect the school), major programmes such the 'Growing Spaces' project to modernise the School estate and priorities such as responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **Parent Teacher Association**

By invitation, the newly formulated PTA will present issues to the Board from time to time through the PTA Chair attending Board Meetings. The Chair of the PTA can be contacted by email at pta-chair@edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk.

Section 5: Trustees Report

Trustees Report

The trustees report is part of the Company Accounts for Edinburgh Steiner School Trust Limited, published by Company House annually; and therefore becomes publicly accessible.

The Trustees (who are also directors of Edinburgh Steiner School Trust Limited for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP FRS 102
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware: there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Section 5: Trustees Report

Risks and mitigations

The current risk register is:

• Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The impact of the pandemic on families' personal finances creates a risk that the school roll will drop with a resulting reduction in fee income.

The key mitigations are to provide tailored financial support to families financially impacted by the pandemic in order to stem attrition rates and effective marketing to attract a flow of new applications.

The pandemic also presents a risk to the resilience of the school, given potential impacts on staff and pupil health.

The mitigation for this is to apply the school's policy for infectious disease plus any further guidance to schools received from the Scottish authorities.

• General school roll

The primary funding of the school is through fees, so we are vulnerable to an unexpected fall in the overall school roll.

The key mitigations are good marketing to ensure a steady flow of new applications, retention of pupils and working closely with current parents to resolve any issues.

• Class One size

Exploring class sizes over the years highlights that class size does not vary hugely as the cohort progresses through the school.

The risk is that a small class one will cause low numbers for the next 12 years.

The key mitigation is maximising the numbers in kindergarten to ensure a large flow through into Class 1.

Section 5: Trustees Report

• Brexit

A significant number of the pupils are from families of continental European origin, reflecting the wider awareness of Steiner education in continental Europe.

The risk is that Brexit concerns threaten their stability as residents of Edinburgh.

The key mitigation is to stay closely in touch with the families affected and ease their situation as far as possible through whatever support the school can provide.

• Teacher training

Under The Education (Scotland) Act 2016 the school needs to ensure all its teachers are GTCS registered by the required deadline, a requirement successfully met by the development of the school's improved teacher training course (ESTEC).

A risk remains that ESTEC can be sustained to enable the school to secure a future flow of recognised teaching staff.

The key mitigation is working with ESTEC to help it bed in and sustain it into the longer term, bearing in mind affordability and ESTEC student numbers.

• 1140 Programme

The Scottish Government are introducing free pre-school provision for all children from 3 to 5 years old (introduction delayed for a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.)

The school has decided to become a provider of pre-school education under this scheme (with a set fee per pupil paid by the council to the school).

The risk is that this may impact negatively on the school's finances, on the operation of the kindergarten and on the wider market for pre-school education among the school's prospective parents.

The mitigation for this is to work closely with the Marketing Department, with parents, with the Early Years part of the school and with Edinburgh Council to prepare well for introduction of the scheme from Michaelmas Term 2021 and to keep the programme under close review to gauge its impacts, ensuring that the school can respond to those impacts as necessary.

Section 5: Trustees Report

• Buildings

Our buildings are increasingly showing their age and requiring substantial maintenance.

Overall, with increased pupil numbers the school would struggle to fit classes in to the existing rooms.

The risk is that there is further significant deterioration of buildings which leaves us unable to house all the classes.

The mitigation is the development of a strategic campus development plan - the Growing Spaces Project - which encompasses a series of building projects to bring the buildings back up to a good state.

• Key Staff

As a small school, we are dependent on key staff performing their functions well. We can mitigate the risk by regular rotation of roles so that experience and knowledge are more widely spread.

• Regulatory Requirements and Inspection

Inspections of Steiner Waldorf schools in England have raised concerns about structure, governance and accountability.

We have worked with the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship to understand these concerns and apply any lessons learned.

We have also made efforts to review and update school policies and improve child protection procedures.

The school's policies on drugs and alcohol and on school trips have undergone fundamental reviews. The risk register is reviewed regularly by the trustees.