



WHANAU HANDBOOK

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WWW.FOURSEASONSKINDERGARTEN.CO.NZ

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WELCOME

By the time you have opened this handbook you will have taken your first steps towards becoming part of the Four Seasons Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten community.

The purpose of this handbook is to help you understand what you can expect for your child's education, as well as a better understanding of Rudolf Steiner's early childhood philosophies.

OUR GUIDING VISION

“Nga tamariki nga rangatira mo apopo.
Our children are our leaders of tomorrow”

- At Four Seasons Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten, we offer an unhurried approach to childhood, providing a natural and secure environment that is homely, nurturing and sustainable.
- At Four Seasons Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten, we respect that each stage of a child's development has unique qualities and that these should be fully experienced before embarking on the next stage of education.
- At Four Seasons Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten, we create an environment that supports our whanau, our community and builds the foundation of who our tamariki will become as adults. We endeavor to provide an environment that supports our future community and the future of our environment.
- At Four Seasons Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten, we value the contribution of parents and whanau, and see their input as an integral part of our curriculum and daily practice.
- At Four Seasons Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten, we value, embrace and honour the bicultural nature of Aotearoa.
- The curriculum is inclusive, equitable and culturally appropriate.
- We strive to incorporate te reo and te au maori into our daily practice.
- This education, developed by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) is based on an Anthroposophical understanding of human individuality, as a being of body, soul and spirit.
 - Body, soul and spirit in this context means:
 - Te Taha Tinana – the active physical and physiological organism
 - Te Taha Hinengaro – the thinking, feeling and willing human soul
 - Te Taha Wairua – Self/Identity - the spiritual core of each human being
- Anthroposophy is not taught to children, but stands behind the teacher as an impulse that invigorate, renews and inspired the whole of the education.

ORGANISATION OF THE FOUR SEASONS KINDERGARTEN

The Kindergarten is run by an independent group of people passionate about offering children in Taupo an unhurried approach to early childhood education.

Traceylee Hooton

Dineen Grantham

Shawn Vennell

Fenella Tinworth

Our teachers are

Retha Janse van Rensburg

Fenella Tinworth

Laurie Newman

Melissa Warwick

We have a kindergarten manager & kitchen helper; Traceylee Hooton and from time to time, kindergarten volunteers.

ENROLMENTS

Our enrolment procedure begins with your initial enquiry and completion of the enrolment form. This is followed with an introduction to the rhythm of the day, the kindergarten, and its special character.

Once your child's enrolment has been confirmed, an orientation and settling in schedule will be set up to meet the needs of your child, this period is fluid. We find that 3 or 4 visits prior to a child's first day allows us to get to know you and your child and for you all to begin to feel comfortable in our environment.

After approximately 4 to 6 weeks at kindergarten, one of our teaching team will set aside some time outside the kindergarten day to meet with you to talk about how your child is settling into kindergarten life.

RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION

A growing international network, Rudolf Steiner/Waldorf Education is the largest independent school movement in the world, with now over 1000 schools and kindergartens established in 6 continents.

The first Steiner school was established in 1919 in Stuttgart, Germany. It based its teaching on methods developed by Dr. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian teacher, philosopher, scientist, artist and architect.

There are 10 schools and 24 kindergartens currently operating in New Zealand. The Four Seasons Kindergarten is affiliated with Steiner Education Aotearoa New Zealand ([SEANZ](#) and also known as the 'Steiner Federation').

CURRICULUM

We follow an emergent curriculum, based on Te Whariki, the Early Childhood curriculum, which acknowledges the bi-cultural nature of New Zealand, and reflects the partnership of the Treaty of Waitangi.

We also follow the 'Rudolf Steiner Essentials' as a supporting curriculum document. Both Te Whariki and the Rudolf Steiner Essentials curriculums are available for reading in our Whanau Library.

Play is valued as the centre of learning at the kindergarten, teachers work alongside children, on activities and projects where they have initiated an interest.

ABOUT OUR KINDERGARTEN – WHAT WE DO AND WHY

Learning is natural for a child and education at the Four Seasons Kindergarten seeks to keep each child's innate qualities of adventure, curiosity and imagination alive. Steiner Education calls for an emphasis on **how** the child is taught as well as **what** the child is taught. We work with the developmental principle that the young child learns in two ways; the first is imitation, the second is activity.

Our programme is designed to provide your child with daily opportunities to actively imitate and practice

Updated July 2018

quality interactions and work habits through the medium of play. Through play, the children develop cognitive and problem solving skills, creativity, imagination, self-expression, concentration, investigation, language, numeracy, physical and social skills.

Storytelling is an important part of the curriculum with a great deal of learning and memory development enabled in the kindergarten through song, art and movement.

Children are encouraged to put things down rather than drop them, pick up things which fall over and treat the dolls as if they are human. We mend objects that get broken. While inside, children are encouraged to walk and use 'inside voices'.

Toys are tidied away to the same places every day to instill in the children a sense of order and independence in the awareness of where to find things the next day.

During this first period of life the young child is constantly physically active. We work with this rather than against it, seeing the child as an "adventurer and explorer" and providing experiences for him or her to learn and develop naturally at his or her own pace.

Literacy and numeracy skills are developed in the same way as other learning, through self-directed free play and exploration.

We view environmental awareness as a vital connection for the young child, and thus Bush Kindergarten is a regular program within our week.

RHYTHM

In the kindergarten we work with the rhythm of the year, the seasons, the weeks, and the day.

The yearly rhythm is marked by the celebration of the seasons; we sing songs, tell stories, complete crafts, all related to the seasons.

We celebrate seasonal festivals; in winter we light lanterns, in spring we make flower garlands, in summer we celebrate with a community fair or picnic, and in autumn we celebrate the harvest.

Fairy tales and nature stories related to the season, or the current interest in the kindergarten, are told and are further enlivened through puppet plays and simple drama.

We also work with a rhythm to the week, each day having a specific meal for lunchtime. The young child may not yet know what 'Monday' means; yet can soon learn what 'rice day' means. Monday is rice day, Tuesday is soup day, Wednesday is hummus and salad day, Thursday is pasta day, and Friday is pizza day. We have copies of our recipes available for whanau, check in with kaiako for a copy to take home.

OUR DAILY RHYTHM

This is the basic rhythm of our day (content of songs, rhymes and stories will vary throughout the year).

- Arrival - 8.30am – 9.00am. We ask that your child arrives and is settled into the kindergarten day by 9.00am.
- Child initiated play begins outdoors in Spring and Summer. During Autumn and Winter the day begins with indoor play.
- Morning Circle – Seasonal songs and finger rhymes.
- Morning Tea. Children and teachers say a karakia/blessing, and then food is shared.

- Child initiated play. This is indoors during Spring and Summer seasons and outdoors during the Autumn and Winter.
- Lunchtime for children and teachers.
- Story time and circle time led by a teacher.
- Quiet time. We call this our 'camping time' where children have a 'camping bag' with a pillow, sheet and blankets. The children set up their camping space and rest for half an hour.
- Child initiated play either indoors or outdoors.
- Pack away time.
- Closing circle and afternoon snack.
- The kindergarten day finishes at 2.30pm. Parents are welcome to join us for closing circle and afternoon snack from 2.10pm.

NUTRITION

We eat a healthy lunch that the children and teachers have prepared together. Often the food has been harvested from our own vegetable garden, which the children and teachers tend together. This gives daily opportunity to discuss the growing and eating of healthy food. All food is largely organically grown. Please let the teachers know if your child has a food allergy or sensitivity. We are a nut free space due to allergies.

VEGETARIAN

All food at kindergarten is vegetarian thus enabling all children from varied religious, health and ethical beliefs to participate and enjoy the meals equally. Please be respectful of this when bringing food to any kindergarten event.

BREASTFEEDING

We are a breastfeeding friendly kindergarten. Please feel free to breast or bottle feed your babies or child at kindergarten. We have a comfortable couch in the main playroom or in the office.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents are invited to read our policies and procedures that are available from the Office.

Early Childhood Education regulations are also available. Please contact the teachers, who can help you access these.

Please let us know if there are any changes to address, phone or email details as soon as possible.

PARENT EVENINGS AND EVENTS

These are held quarterly in the Kindergarten. We encourage and welcome all parents and caregivers to participate in these occasions. They allow for parents to have a greater understanding of early childhood development and Rudolf Steiner philosophies. You will find notes from some past parent evenings on our website. Please take the opportunity to familiarize yourself with these. They are also available in our Parents Folder on our whanau library bookshelf in the office.

CRAFT GROUPS

Towards the latter part of the year we endeavor to hold fortnightly craft evenings in preparation for the end of year fair. These are enjoyable evenings and a good opportunity to get to know other parents.

SEASONAL FESTIVALS

These festivals are usually held on a Saturday so that all family members may attend. The festivals are held at differing parks around town and are an opportunity for whanau to come together for a shared meal.

ATTENDANCE

We are an **All Day** (not Sessional) Kindergarten, open from Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 2.30pm. A settling in period with a shorter day is available, 8.30am-12.30pm, for the first 4 weeks of enrolment.

We have a minimum enrolment of 3 sessions per week and build up their attendance to full time gradually. This allows for child to fully experience what kindergarten has to offer, as well as to have days at home or the freedom to do other activities. We will always take into consideration the needs of the family situation and sessions will be subject to space available.

We do recommend that children attend only one early childhood centre if at all possible. We believe in building strong relationships with and between children. Children need the time and continuity of care to make this possible. In our view it can be confusing for children to attend more than one centre.

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child from the Kindergarten then a three week written notice of intention is required.

FEEES

All children aged 3, 4 and 5 years are eligible for 20 hours funded by the Ministry of Education.

Enrolment Fee: \$50 to confirm child's place once a child's enrolment has been confirmed.

For children under 3 years:

\$40.00 per day (6 hour day)

For 3-6 years:

\$8.00 per day (6 hour day, using 20 ECE hours)

\$10.00 per day from **1st July 2018**(6 hour day, using 20 ECE hours)

For children exceeding 20 hours free or more than 6 hour day: \$ 5.00 per hour

To participate in the Bush Kindy programme \$6.00 per enrolled bush kindy day

Casual Attendance outside normal enrolment: \$40.00 per day

Fees are payable weekly or fortnightly via internet banking and are payable based on enrolment and not on attendance. See our full fee policy for further details.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN IN THEIR KINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE

- **COMMUNICATING WITH US**

The quality of the partnership between the teachers and parents/caregivers will be a factor affecting your child's kindergarten experience.

We aim to communicate effectively and with confidence, while acknowledging and respecting everyone's values, needs and aspirations.

Please tell us anything that you feel will help us to understand your child better. Inform us if your child is upset or has experienced something that may affect their attitude or wellbeing at the Kindergarten. We prefer to communicate concerns away from the child.

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact the teachers immediately to arrange a suitable meeting time if required.

Another good way to communicate is to write a note. There is a communications box on the sign in desk for parents to leave a message if required, or if the message is a delicate one, please ask the teacher to make contact with you.

We do request that sessions are not unnecessarily interrupted during session times, as children are deeply involved in their play.

- **COMMUNICATING WITH YOU**

A weekly newsletter is sent on Tuesday's, notices and parent evenings are communicated through email to each family. Please let us know if your preferred method of receiving news is in a hard copy and we will ensure notices are left for you.

Please check the black board, and notice boards in the entrance way along with your child's 'whanau pocket' each time you are here.

Journey books are available for you to look at, contribute to, and take home to share with the family. Journey books are collections of learning stories that are gathered over time, recording the learning that is taking place for your child at kindergarten, at home, and as part of the community.

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Children must be left in the physical presence of a teacher on arrival and contact needs to be made with the teacher when children are collected at the end of sessions. Please insure you sign your child in on arrival, and out on departure. In line with requirements from the Ministry of Education and our enrolled sessions, children need to arrive and be signed in between 8.30am-9.00am and out at 2.30pm.

When parking in the Kindergarten grounds, please be aware of children, parents and cars around you. If our carpark is full then please use the side of the road. Please do **NOT** park on the berm.

For the younger child who is in their first month of settling into kindergarten and finishes their day at 12.30pm, please wait quietly outside until the teacher releases the children so as not to disturb the story or circle time. You are welcome to join us for story time, this begins at approximately 12.15pm. You are welcome to come in and join us for afternoon snack when you arrive at the end of the kindergarten day at 2.30pm. This is a lovely opportunity to connect with your child at the close of their day with us.

SETTLING INTO KINDERGARTEN LIFE

The journey to beginning your child's time at kindergarten is a time of getting to know their new surroundings, their peers, the teachers and rhythm of the day. The team here at Four Seasons Kindergarten are here to support you, your whanau, and your child through this process.

Through experience we have gained an understanding that short 'drop-offs', rather than lingering works better when supporting a positive transition into the kindergarten day. Ensure your child is aware of what is going to happen. This is done through powerful intent. "I will read one book, and then mummy/daddy is going to go". A teacher will be there to provide support with this process. Then follow through, wave/say your goodbyes and make your way out of the kindergarten. We understand that this journey maybe a challenging time for you as you share the responsibility of nurturing and educating your child with others. It is important for your child to see that this is a positive experience for them. When mum and dad are happy and positive in the morning, the young child takes their cues from this. You are welcome to phone us at any time to check in on how your child has settled.

Being one of the first families to arrive at 8.30am provides an opportunity for the teachers to support your child as other children begin their day. It is a much quieter and gentler space to transition into when you are one of the first children to arrive. Furthermore, the relationships of children already playing have not been formed for the morning. This creates opportunities for your child to choose who he/ she would like to play with or alongside.

The beginning of the kindergarten day starts with making bread rolls and cutting fruit, please feel free to sit with your child and the teacher and make a couple of bread rolls before you leave. Doing purposeful work helps to settle children into the day's rhythm. In the outdoors we rake the sandpit, leaves and bark, dig over the mud-pit, and sweep the deck and tree stumps around the sandpit. These are all jobs that the children loved to be involved in.

To support the foundation of a positive transition into kindergarten, we recommend whenever possible that your child attends all of their enrolled days. We recommend not planning an absence; i.e. holiday or other activities that would stop them from attending all their days during the first month. Of course in the case of illness, your child will remain at home with you until they are well and ready to return to kindergarten.

The transition into a new environment can be unsettling for the young child. It is normal for a child to experience high emotions during this time as a new rhythm is established. Any queries please do not hesitate to talk to the teachers; we are all here to support you, your whanau, and your child through this process.

REVIEW CYCLE

We value your input into our regular review cycle, of policies, procedures and practices. We share any policies that have gone through a review in our weekly newsletter and place draft copies for feedback on our whanau noticeboard.

CLOTHING

It is supportive to the children if we are consistent in our approach to clothing.

All children will need to have a hat (either winter or sunhat), a jacket, outdoor pants, and outdoor shoes – preferably gumboots in the winter. You may leave this clothing at the kindergarten if you wish.

Warm, hand made slippers will be provided by the kindergarten.

Wool and other natural fibres are encouraged, and **plain coloured clothes are preferred**, free from pictures, as this encourages peers to relate to the child, rather than the character portrayed on the picture.

When your child comes to Kindergarten, please dress them in practical clothes so that he/she can enter play fully without worry of getting dirty. We encourage independence with clothing and helping your child to be successful with this is wonderful. Buttons, belts and tight clothing can be tricky for the young child.

Please ensure that all clothing including hats and footwear are named. Lost property is held for one month, laid out on the front porch for you to check daily. After a month, it will be passed onto a charity store.

THE DAILY BACKPACK – ACCORDING TO THE WEATHER & SEASON

At least two spare set of clothes **named please**, including underpants, socks, jersey, t-shirt and pants.

Sunhat / beanie – you are encouraged to leave a named hat at kindergarten in our hat box.

Raincoat / overalls / Gumboots – you are encouraged to leave a set of these here at kindergarten.

SUNSCREEN

Will be provided by the kindergarten throughout the day. Please ensure that your child has sunscreen applied before arriving to kindergarten during the warmer months.

HEALTH CONCERNS

As part of the natural growing up process children may pick up small ailments. Sick children need rest and to be cared for away from Kindergarten until they are well enough to fully engage in the play and work of a normal session.

If a child's temperature rises to 38 degrees, or the child has vomiting or diarrhea, then the kindergarten will call the parents and require the child to be picked up immediately.

Following a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, you are required to keep your child away from Kindergarten for 48 hours after symptoms have ceased.

ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS

Teachers are First Aid trained. In the event of an illness or an accident the necessary first aid measures are carried out and; where appropriate Weleda natural remedies are given.

If your child has had an injury whilst at kindergarten, an 'accident and injury' form will be filled in and one of the teaching team will connect with you at the end of the kindergarten day to talk you through the injury and for you to view and sign. Please let us know if you would like to talk further about any incident that occurs during the kindergarten day.

If the accident or illness requires medical attention, then the parent or caregiver will be contacted. If medical attention is urgent or the parents cannot be contacted, a member of staff will take the child to the Taupo Medical Centre or Taupo Hospital.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Parents are asked to take a collective approach to health and safety issues by reporting any potential hazards to the teachers.

DENTAL CARE

By the time your child starts Kindergarten, you are encouraged to enroll your child at a Dental Clinic. You can approach the clinic directly.

Updated July 2018

WHANAU LIBRARY

You are welcome to borrow books from our Library, which can be found in the office. Please return borrowed books within two weeks. We recommend that you read the following books:

- You are your child's first teacher – Rahima Baldwin Darcy
- Beyond the Rainbow Bridge – Barbara Paterson
- Work and play – Freya Jaffke
- The Genius of Play – Sally Jenkinson
- Simplicity Parenting – Kim John Payne
- The Soul of Discipline – Kim John Payne

HOME TOYS IN THE KINDERGARTEN

As a rule, we ask that the children's own toys are kept at home and do not come to the Kindergarten. Of course there may be exceptions from time to time, such as in the case of a new child who needs a soft toy as a comforting companion in a new situation, but generally it is best if home toys stay at home.

If toys are brought to kindergarten, they are placed in our taonga (treasure) basket and accessed during camping time and again at the end of the day when it is time for your child to be collected.

SCREEN TIME

In a Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten we view active play as the most important work for early childhood, thus television, computers and screens will not be part of the curriculum at the kindergarten.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent from Kindergarten, please notify us by ringing or emailing before 8.30am. This allows us to meet our ethical obligation to you with regard to your child's safety.

If your child will be absent for 5 days or more, then please email the office. Please note that in line with our fee policy, fees are payable based on enrolment and not on attendance.

For a planned absence longer than 21 consecutive days, the Ministry of Education requires us to remove a child from our daily roll for the duration of the absence and so for anticipated long-term absence, please arrange a meeting with the Kindergarten Manager.

CHILD SUPERVISION

Children on the Kindergarten grounds outside of session times are the responsibility of their parents and/or caregivers.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

A safe and harmonious environment is vital to the provision of a sound learning environment.

Behaviour management in our Kindergarten therefore begins from a positive standpoint in respecting the autonomy and individuality of every child.

It operates firstly through positive guidance and 'showing the way'. This includes praise and encouragement and precludes blame, harsh language and belittling degrading responses. If you are interested in learning more about our approach, please ask one of our teaching team for a copy of *'The Soul of Discipline'* by Kim John Payne, we have copies of this book in our whanau library.

SMOKE FREE POLICY

The Kindergarten and grounds are all smoke free environments. Anyone found smoking will be asked to leave.

DOG FREE POLICY

It is requested that all dogs be kept off the kindergarten grounds at all times.

HIRING OF THE KINDERGARTEN HOUSE

The Kindergarten may be hired for any activity which supports the special character of our Kindergarten. Please contact the Office if you wish to enquire about the hiring of the Kindy House.

RECYCLING

We teach our children to be aware of their special environment. We have established a recycling procedure with all biodegradable waste, paper, plastics and glass. Please take care of our environment by correctly recycling waste products.

Updated July 2018

A LAST WORD

Thank you for taking the time to read this parent guide. It is an essential part to all new parent/caregivers as part of your enrolment process.

It is designed to be a part of your orientation to our community and we hope that it will help you and your child/ren find your way in the exciting new journey you have embarked on.

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