

MICHAEL PARK SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN POLICY

SPECIAL CHARACTER

Rationale

As a State-integrated Rudolf Steiner School, Michael Park has a special character which is aligned to Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of Education. Michael Park works in the spirit of this education within the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the changing culture and diversity of Auckland. This policy gives the framework through which Michael Park can align its governance, management, curriculum and pedagogy to its special character while meeting its requirements as an integrated school under the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 and subsequent amendments.

Purpose

- To describe what our special character means to Michael Park School
- To constitute a relevant filter through which governance and management ensure our special character is delivered, visible and reflected in all that we do

Special Character Description

Kia rangatira ai te tamaiti

In order to revere the child

Tohua ki te aroha

We must guide with love

Tukuna tōna mana, kia rere

And allow the child's own authority to flow

The curriculum and pedagogy in Steiner schools is based on the ideals and practices of education described by Rudolf Steiner and the continuing research of Steiner teachers and other compatible pedagogical approaches. This curriculum and pedagogy is then localised and informed by the unique context of Aotearoa, New Zealand¹.

The enactment of this policy is expressed in all the educational aims, curriculum and content delivery, teaching approaches, as well as the social, cultural, spiritual and physical environment. It is essentially and integrated approach with all aspects interconnected in a mutually supportive way.

Steiner pedagogy is informed by anthroposophy in that it holds at its centre the question of what it means to be a human, and strives to honour the unique developmental pathway of each child.

In line with this, Michael Park School recognises the resonance between the pedagogical approaches of Rudolf Steiner and Te Ao Maori. Michael Park School will work to honour and celebrate this symbiosis where possible, as both are inseparable from a picture of the child as a human individual of body, soul and spirit in a gradual and purposeful process of growth and development often called the process of incarnation. Our task as educators is to facilitate the removal of hindrances and support the individual to realise their inner potentials and aspirations.

Steiner education is based on the understanding that the human being is a spiritual being on a purposeful earthly journey and during this life journey distinctive progressive phases of development

unfold. Child development is seen as a process of gradual incarnation and individualisation. While the child grows up in its physical body it also grows down from the spiritual world and creates in this meeting ground its own world of soul. Approximately every seven years a new soul faculty emerges which matures during the following period. A healthy education will make best use of the opportunities for development that the different phases present. Our curriculum is oriented towards facilitating this process.

Teaching is fundamentally a human experience and the art of Steiner pedagogy has at its foundation the education of the child with reverence, warmth and acceptance:

Ratified by Board/RSST:  _____

Signed for BOT/RSST

Date: 09/03/20

ⁱ Further elaboration on the school and kindergarten's Special Character can be found in (1) The School charter (2) The Essential Principles of Curriculum and Pedagogy in the Federation of Rudolf Steiner Schools in New Zealand Curriculum Guidelines (2011, p7), the Special Character review tool and the kindergarten philosophy statement.