TRINITY GARDENS P – 7 SCHOOL

STATEMENT

OF

OPERATING PROTOCOLS

for a

Steiner Education Stream

at

Trinity Gardens P – 7 School

30 September 2005
INTRODUCTION

Trinity Gardens P-7 School is a government school, where both the mainstream and the Steiner Education stream are subject to the Education Act of 1972 and abide by all rules, regulations and instructions that apply to all government schools. The school implements the DECS curriculum as outlined in the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA) as approved by the Chief Executive (Director General of Education).

This document is a statement of intended operating protocols for the Steiner Education stream at Trinity Gardens Primary School (TGPS). The purpose of the document is to provide information about the Steiner Education stream to members of the TGPS school community and to potential parents/caregivers of children enrolling at TGPS.

Background

The Adelaide Steiner Education Association (ASEA) first approached the Department of Education and Childrens’ Services (DECS) in May 2003 with the intent of establishing a stream of Steiner Education in a mainstream public school in Adelaide. Through a long process Trinity Gardens School was selected as the preferred school.

Following an extensive investigative and consultative process the Governing Council formally voted to request permission from the Minister of Education to implement a stream of Steiner Education. This process involved community meetings, information sessions and a working party visit to public schools in Melbourne that were running Steiner streams. Staff at TGPS were involved at all stages and also formally voted to support the introduction of a Steiner Education stream. It was felt by staff and Governing Council that a Steiner Education stream would further emphasise the uniqueness of TGPS, where the diversity of preschool education, inclusivity of students with multiple and severe disabilities and children from non English speaking backgrounds are valued.

In February 2005 a working party, named the Steiner Education Reference Group (SERG), was established to develop and document intentions in the implementation and maintenance of the Steiner Education Stream at Trinity Gardens Primary School. This group comprised equal representation from the Governing Council and ASEA. DECS representation included the District Director, a curriculum officer, the school principal and elected staff members.

The statement of operating protocols is the result of the working party and has been endorsed by Governing Council and staff. This statement will be reviewed annually, and as needed, by the SERG and may be amended to reflect any changed understandings regarding the Steiner Education Stream at Trinity Gardens Primary School.

School Vision Statement

Our school community is committed to creating an environment conducive to learning. We recognise the uniqueness of every child and support them as a learner to develop resilience, optimism, skills, confidence and social responsibility to achieve their full potential.
Section 1 SCHOOL ORGANISATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Attendance protocol for all children attending TGPS
It is the responsibility of parents/caregivers to notify the school if a student is to be absent from school. In the case of sickness a phone call early on the day of absence is appreciated. The school will contact the family after three consecutive days of unexplained absence. It is a DECS requirement that reasons are provided for all absence and lateness. These are recorded on the class roll, which is an official document. Students late to school are required to report to the office where the time of arrival and reason for lateness is recorded. In the event of a proposed family holiday during term time of up to 4 weeks, a letter needs to be written to the school principal seeking permission for a child to be absent from school. Over four weeks permission needs to be sought from the District Director.

Home –school communication
Two-way communication between home and school is encouraged at all times. Class teachers set up a communication book at the beginning of every year. Parents/caregivers are asked to let the class teacher know of any disruptions in the home life, so that due consideration can be given to the affected students as there is sometimes a change in behaviour. School staff will use the book to communicate with parents. The acknowledgement of notes is appreciated. Parents/caregivers are always welcome to meet with the class teacher at a mutually agreed time. Appointments can be set up through the communication book or by phone.

A school newsletter is provided fortnightly and is available as a hard copy, by email or through the school website.

Break times
Recess and lunch break times will be the same for both streams.

Canteen
The school canteen, available to all students, offers a variety of food and endeavours to promote healthy eating habits. All parents are welcome to participate by acting as volunteers and/or joining the Canteen committee. It is recognised that parents adopting a Steiner approach at home are particularly aware of the potential negative effects of some foods on children’s behaviour and concentration and are therefore keen to limit their children’s access to sweet/treat foods both inside and outside the home. The onus is on all parents to monitor the food their children bring to or buy at school.

Classroom environment
In every classroom there is an attempt to create an aesthetically pleasing classroom environment. Student work is expected to be displayed and equipment appropriate to age groups will be available. There is usually a quiet area and another set up to support literacy. It is acknowledged that in Steiner Education there is a preference for natural materials where possible.

Classroom location
The intention is for school buildings to have a mix of Steiner and Main stream classes throughout the school, and every attempt will be made to co-locate parallel classes of both streams. TGPS staff will discuss and determine suitable classroom locations for both streams. In subsequent years Steiner staff and mainstream staff will determine class locations.
Enrolment priority
Children who have turned 5 by the start of the school year are eligible for Steiner Reception. Children who have turned 6 years of age by the start of school year will be eligible for enrolment in Steiner Class 1. Enrolments will be in line with DECS guidelines for class sizes being 24 in Junior Primary and 30 in Primary classes. In the event of a demand beyond the vacancies available the following priority of enrolment will be used.
Preference will be given to:
1. Children living in the local area
2. Children meeting the age criteria who are currently enrolled at TGPS (reason: commitment to school)
3. Children currently attending TGPS Preschool.
4. Children currently attending the Steiner Metropolitan Kindergarten and who meet the age criteria.
5. Siblings of students currently attending the Steiner Stream at TGPS will be given priority of enrolment.
6. Children currently attending any other Steiner Kindergarten or School.
Preference is given to families living in the local community and meeting the above conditions. If vacancies exist after the above steps have been followed children from out of the school local area may be accepted following an interview with the school principal.

Expectations of Steiner Stream parents
Steiner Stream parents will be expected to fulfill all roles and duties expected of any parent at TGPS and will be welcomed to integrate their families into the social structure of the school. Parents and families from both streams will form the school community and it is not expected that there will be division amongst students and their families.

Fees
It is requested that fees for the year are paid in full upon receipt of an invoice from the school unless an alternative payment plan is negotiated with the Principal. As agreed and minuted by Governing Council non-payment of compulsory component of school fees by the due date without any negotiated arrangements are referred to a debt collection agency. Governing Council, in line with DECS guidelines, sets the materials and services. Families who are eligible may apply for financial assistance through the Government sponsored School Card scheme.

Finances and budgets
All finances in relation to the Steiner Education Stream form part of the school’s global budget and are managed by the Finance Committee of Governing Council in conjunction with the school principal. Teachers of both streams will have a classroom budget. This is generated through the payment of school fees. Each teacher is responsible for managing this budget and is able to determine expenditure of the budget.

Fundraising
All parents will be encouraged to participate in TGPS fundraising activities and invited to be part of the Fundraising committee, so that they can have direct input into choosing and supporting fundraising events. The Steiner philosophy encourages all parents to actively support all aspects of school community life, including fundraising ventures. Parents of the Steiner Stream may be asked to do extra fundraising to cover specific art and craft needs.

Governance
The role of Governing Council is to ensure the participation of the school community in important decisions about the school and the education services it delivers. School governance is
a shared responsibility of the Governing Council and the Principal who, with parents, staff and community representatives, is a Governing Council member. The TGPS Governing Council operates within its constitution and includes a code of practice. The Governing Council of TGPS has 12 members, including the principal and one elected staff representative. There are up to 10 parent members. All members of the school community are entitled to nominate for Governing Council. Elections are held at the annual general meeting. In 2006 Governing Council will address the matter of future membership balance if it deems it necessary to do so.

Information

• for prospective parents of both streams
All parents applying for enrolment at TGPS will be made aware of the dual stream education offered at TGPS. An information pack is available and will provide general information and links to further information. An introductory parent information evening will be held on a regular basis with both new and existing parents welcome to attend. Classroom visits by prospective parents will be carefully managed and kept to a minimum per term to minimise disruption.

• for existing Steiner Education stream families
Each class will host one teacher/parent information evening every term, during which relevant information for each term’s activities and the curriculum will be discussed, demonstrated and explained.

Additional information sessions on Steiner Education for the whole school community will be organised and advertised as required. Details of meetings will be available from the school administration office.

Newsletters
The school newsletter is published fortnightly. Information about the Steiner Stream will be included in the school newsletter on a regular basis. Classes from both streams publish newsletters regularly and at the discretion of the teacher.

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)
The existing Out of School Hours Care and Vacation Care will be available to all children attending TGPS, regardless of which stream they attend.

Partnerships between streams
At TGPS the integrity of Steiner Education Stream will be maintained alongside that of the Main stream. Within this framework there will be opportunities for active collaboration to learn from and with each other. Both streams will participate in the school’s special events i.e. Sports Days and Festivals and will continuously work towards deepening a mutual understanding of the two streams of education offered at Trinity Gardens Primary School.

Physical environment
The long-term aim is for students in Mainstream and Steiner Stream Reception Classes and Year 1 and Class 1 to have separate play areas from the older classes. Possibly graded areas – such as one area for Mainstream Reception, Steiner Reception Class 1 and Year 1 and another area for Years 2, 3 and Class 2, 3
Both streams at TGPS will continue development that is currently happening to beautify the school environment and encourage care and respect for the school grounds. Parents and families will be encouraged to work on this aspect of the school, to plant trees and landscape the grounds, and help create shaded areas. These activities lead to community cohesion and enhance the whole school.
**Principal’s role**
The Principal has overall responsibility for effective and efficient running of the whole school inclusive of both streams. This includes physical resource management, financial management, Occupational Health Safety Welfare (OHSW) practices, human resource management and deployment and curriculum.

**Promotion of Steiner Stream**
A brochure on the Steiner Stream is available for circulation to interested people. Information sessions and school tours will be offered to prospective parents once or twice per term. Bookings are made through the school office. The Adelaide Steiner Education Association will continue to promote the Steiner Stream at TGPS as part of its ongoing functions.

**Pupil Free Days**
Two days per year will be dedicated to the professional learning of staff from both streams. The school community is advised of the focus for staff learning and is given advance notices of dates for pupil free days.

**Review**
The Statement of Operating Protocols will be reviewed annually and or as required.

1. Any changes to this Statement of Operating Protocols must be approved by Governing Council, the Principal and staff.
2. After a period of 2 years a review of the impact of the Steiner Education Stream at Trinity Gardens Primary School will be undertaken and reported back to Governing Council and the School Community. Governing Council in conjunction with the Principal will consider the review and make decisions about any action to be taken.

**School Card**
The School Card scheme is a government strategy to support low income families. Steiner parents who meet the criteria are eligible to apply for School Card funding. Forms are available at the office and the school’s finance officer will support families in the application process. Refer to fee structure.

**School uniform**
Steiner Stream students will wear the TGPS uniform available for purchase from the uniform shop. TGPS is a Sun Smart School and so hats are worn during outdoor activities and break times in terms 1 and 4, the first half of term 2 and the last half of term 3. School uniforms are worn on excursions.

**Teacher appointments**
Traditionally, in Steiner streams, teachers take their classes from year 1 to year 7. It is intended to appoint teachers to the Steiner Education stream through using the Open School Choice process. Positions will be advertised and a selection panel comprising the Principal and an elected staff representative will make the decision of appointing new staff.

**Waiting lists from 2006 onwards**
A waiting list will be established at the beginning of each new school year for students intending to enrol in the Steiner Stream in the following school year. This will be prioritised according to calendar date and in accordance with the enrolment protocols of priority. Siblings of existing Steiner Stream students will have priority of entry as is customary at TGPS.
Section 2  CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Assessment of learning
Staff within the Steiner Stream will use the same assessment strategies as for the mainstream. These include:

- Teacher observation
- Analysis of student work samples.
- Assessment of student work samples
- Participation in class by student
- Focused child studies conducted by teaching staff
- Teacher reflection over time
- Informal classroom interactions

All students in will be expected to complete the DECS Literacy and Numeracy (LaN) tests that are conducted annually.

Behaviour Management
The Trinity Gardens Behaviour Management Policy applies to both streams and is in place to enable students to learn in a safe and supportive environment. The code is fully explained to all students. The behaviour management practices are based on an in depth knowledge of a child and founded on a basis of mutual respect. Behaviour management processes are set within a Restorative Practices framework.

Class teachers are responsible for the behaviour management practices in the classroom.

In the schoolyard students from both streams are expected to follow the school’s behaviour code. The code includes explanations of out of bounds areas and safe play. Teachers are on duty in the yard during all play periods. Teachers from both streams will support the current school practice in regards to the behaviour code.

Any extreme or ongoing challenging behaviour requires involvement from school leadership staff. Parents/caregivers are informed if there are behaviour concerns regarding their child. If inappropriate behaviour continues a conference will be called with the family to address the concern. At times it may be necessary to involve DECS support personnel.

Cooking
Cooking is an integral part of many class programs. As part of the cooking process, students are encouraged to harvest, prepare and cook simple meals as well as to learn about the importance of healthy eating.

Curriculum
Curriculum for South Australian public schools is described in the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework (SACSA).
A traditional Steiner Education stream uses some nomenclature which differs from mainstream, such as main lesson, however the Steiner Education curriculum addresses the Essential Learnings of:

- Identity
- Futures
- Interdependence
- Thinking
- Communication
The curriculum for Steiner stream classes meets the standard outcomes as described in the SACSA framework. It is the intention of the Steiner stream at TGPS to maintain the integrity of the methodology of Steiner Education through the implementation of the curriculum that has an emphasis on the arts and the creation of an aesthetically pleasing classroom environment. The curriculum is rigorous and has the following learning areas:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Design and Technology
- Studies Of Society and the Environment (SOSE)
- The Arts – Visual Arts, Drama, Music
- Languages Other Than English
- Health and Physical Education

Documents addressing curriculum alignment with the SACSA framework are available on request.

**Environmental education**

Awareness of natural life cycles, seasons and the environment are central to Steiner Education, and find their practical expression in regular gardening lessons. TGPS already has class gardens and will continue to allocate resources for land-care and gardening activities.

**Equity**

Education is central to the making of a fairer society. The flexibility of the SACSA framework and the Steiner Curriculum enables programs to be devised which do not privilege or exclude particular groups, and which encourage all learners to reach their potential and achieve success. In addition equity is made a central curriculum consideration through the Learning Areas (described above) and cross-curriculum perspectives. In this way learners come to recognise the nature and causes of inequality, and understand that these are socially constructed and can therefore be changed through people’s actions.

**Excursions**

Excursion procedures will follow DECS and TGPS requirements, for example adult: student ratios. Parental permission is required for any excursion. Steiner Stream classes will participate in excursions as appropriate to the curriculum in the same way as mainstream classes. Children from both streams will have the opportunity to participate in in-school performances, for example musical performances and plays.

**Festivals**

Seasonal festivals may be celebrated by individual classes or collectively with both streams, or they may be celebrated with the whole school, according to the decisions made by the TGPS staff in general.

**Homework**

Homework is not required for students in Junior Primary although reading of a text at a child’s reading level is encouraged. Homework in the higher year levels encourages children to engage in extending their learning, rather than finishing class work. At home children are encouraged to be physically active and creative.

**Languages other than English (LOTE)**

Traditionally in Steiner Education two languages are offered, chosen to differ in their structure and grammar. One language would be from the same language group as English e.g. German,
Italian, and the other from a different language group such as an Asian language e.g. Japanese, Indonesian.

As Italian is the existing LOTE offered at TGPS, Steiner Stream classes will learn Italian. In order to enhance the integration process, the Steiner Stream class teacher could work with the TGPS Italian teacher in this subject.

In the future when enrolments have grown a second language may be introduced.

**Learning Difficulties**

If a child presents with a learning difficulty, parents will have the choice of accessing DECS service providers or private specialists (at their own cost). If a child verifies as a student with a disability under the Students with a Disability Policy a negotiated education plan will be developed and monitored in conjunction with the child’s parents, the school’s teacher in charge of Special Education, the class teacher and relevant support personnel.

**Movement between streams**

Movement between streams is not encouraged, as a continuing commitment to the chosen learning stream is expected. Movement will only occur after extensive consultation with the Principal and parents where it is deemed to be the most appropriate option for the student.

**Music**

Music plays an important role in Steiner Education, singing and instrumental music being integral to the daily program. Children in Class 1 learn the pentatonic recorder, Class 2 children learn diatonic recorders, and string instruments are introduced in Class 3.

In order to enhance the integration process, the Steiner Stream class teacher could work with the TGPS music teacher towards a modified music program, to underpin the Steiner approach in these subjects, which would include school choir and orchestra for the older children.

**Physical Education**

One component of physical education is Eurythmy, a form of dance, and is taught to all classes of the Steiner Stream at TGPS. Eurythmy involves movement exercises to bring spatial awareness, coordination and physical control. Other components of physical education are the same as mainstream.

**Preschool**

Trinity Gardens Preschool is located on campus and offers a quality preschool program for children aged four years. A Steiner Education Preschool currently operates on a private basis. Children from either preschool are welcome to enrol either in either mainstream or Steiner stream.

**Professional learning of staff**

It is an expectation that teachers from both streams engage in ongoing professional learning and support school priorities as outlined in the school’s Learning Plan. Some in-school professional development opportunities will include a Steiner approach for the benefit of all teaching staff.

The aim is for mutual respect and professional collegiality between staff regardless teaching stream.

**Reporting to Parents**

Reporting student achievement to children and families follows DECS recommendations. In the Steiner stream, an end of year written report is provided to parents by the class teacher, reflecting the child’s personal growth throughout the year. Parent/teacher interviews are arranged once a term. Beyond this, regular and ongoing two-way communication is encouraged between parents and teachers.
Each Steiner class will host one teacher/parent information evening every term, during which relevant information for each term’s activities and the curriculum will be discussed, demonstrated and explained. Parent education on the Steiner approach additional to class meetings is open to all parents.

**Site Learning Plan**
It is a DECS requirement that every school has a site learning plan which outlines school priorities and is endorsed by Governing Council. The Steiner Education Stream will be expected to set improvement strategies each year and to participate in the process for identifying school priorities and the implementation of action plans.

**Special events**
Teachers and students from the Steiner Stream will be involved in the special events of the school including sports, assembly, choir, performances, celebrations and swimming.

**Special needs students**
Students with special needs are welcome in the school community and endeavours are made to accommodate the children and families that apply, without discrimination. Refer to section **Learning Difficulties**

**Sport**
Games and physical exercise are included in every class curriculum. However, competitive sport is only included from Class 5 for Steiner Stream students. In order to enhance the integration process, the Steiner Stream class teacher could work with the TGPS physical education teacher, to underpin the Steiner approach. All students are invited to participate in out of hours sport organised by the school and coached by parents.

**Television**
Steiner Education cites research on the negative effects of TV, videos and computers on young children, so parents of children in the Steiner stream are encouraged to reduce TV, videos and computers to a minimum, and to set out clear guidelines for these activities.

**Timetabling**
The Steiner Education Stream teacher’s program reflects an understanding that the day’s schedule is in keeping with the children’s biorhythms, ie. to program academic learning earlier in the day, with creative/practical/social activities from 1pm onwards.

**Well-being strategies**
Student well being is a priority for all children attending TGPS. It is important that children see themselves as successful learners, become resilient and have a sense of optimism about the world. The Virtues program is one program used in the mainstream and in the Steiner stream holistic approaches offer students’ emotional and physical well-being. Consultation with parents is an integral part of this approach.

**Whole School Assemblies**
Students from both streams will attend school assemblies. Each class takes turns to host an assembly and children have the opportunity to perform an item, such as singing a song or playing a musical instrument.