

The Perth Waldorf School

High School Prospectus

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“The true aim of education is to awaken real powers of perception and judgment in relation to life and living. For only such an awakening can lead to true freedom”
Rudolf Steiner

The primary aim of the Perth Waldorf School is the provision of high quality education based on the insights of Rudolf Steiner. In essence, Waldorf Education recognises the three soul faculties of the human being, namely, Thinking, Feeling and Willing, which emerge and develop during childhood, adolescence and young adulthood.

Our curriculum and methodology address the unfolding of these qualities in children by providing content which parallels the developmental stage of the children. Our teaching method, by recognising that these faculties emerge in a specific sequence in a child’s life, is in harmony with the consciousness of the child. Taught in this way, each subject serves to strengthen and balance these innate human qualities.

The Perth Waldorf School aims to:

- Provide an education of the highest quality so our students become balanced adult individuals, having developed clarity of thinking, sensitivity of feeling and strength of will.
- Inspire within the children a love of learning, a morality that strives for goodness, an appreciation of beauty and a pursuit of truth.
- Provide our students with knowledge, skills and means to work competently in the world.
- Provide our students with values that will enable them to find their path in life.
- Inspire in our students, a sense of wonder at and a healthy positive connection to the world, arising from a knowledge of and responsibility toward the individuality of themselves and others.
- Inspire a sense of the spiritual dimension of life as well as a healthy respect for the physical.

These aims are held throughout the child’s schooling but implementation of them will vary according to the development of the child.

The High School

The developing human being is the basis for both the content and practice of our teaching in the Waldorf High School.

Ideals of Waldorf Education –

- Firstly to educate a young person to be a free human being, able to discern what is happening in the world and deal with those situations skilfully, responsibly and with enthusiasm.
- Secondly, we want students to love the world, other people and themselves.

In the Kindergarten the young child is a being of will. During the primary school years, feeling is the emerging soul faculty for the child. In the High School the curriculum is designed to meet the development of the third soul faculty – thinking. The capacity for pure abstract thinking emerges and can be approached directly. Students are led to develop independent and creative thinking based on the formation of independent judgements.

The bringing of will into thinking is a necessary precursor to freedom and the bringing of thinking into will leads to an awakening to the world and our activities in it. This is a forerunner to connecting to the world in a caring and loving way.

The High School aims:

- To bring to the students a knowledge of the forces that have shaped modern life.
- To foster, as objectively as possible, the latent idealism of the students.
- To orient students in contemporary society. Through a bigger emphasis on learning through real life experiences along with classroom teaching. In the High School the subject, more than the teacher, is the authority.
- To provide a balanced education that fosters free human beings who know how to direct their own lives and play a responsible role in today's fast-changing world.

The Curriculum

Our students will inherit a rapidly changing and surprising world. The best preparation we can give them is to provide a multi-dimensional schooling that develops the full range of human potential. The philosophy of the Perth Waldorf High School is to educate all students in all possible subjects. Therefore boys and girls participate in every curriculum area.

The Perth Waldorf High School curriculum aims to give students:

- An education that promotes academic excellence, artistic expression and practical skills.
- An education that develops independence, responsibility and strength of character.
- An education that prepares them for a dramatically changing world.

The traditional Waldorf curriculum exposes students to a wide range of subjects, all of which are sequentially developed from Class 8 through to Class 12. Students are taught how to do research, to work with original sources and to articulate their thoughts clearly and expressively.

The Perth Waldorf High School curriculum aims to equip the individual to fully participate in and contribute to society. It is not driven solely by learning outcomes. Such outcomes are merely subject, or skills, orientated. Our rich curriculum provides an education for teenagers that inspires love of learning, develops freedom of thought, and fosters self-confidence in an atmosphere of academic rigor and artistic fulfilment.

"My past three decades (of teaching) have been marked by change. From time to time a unique stabilizing influence would appear in my classes: a Waldorf graduate. They were different from the others. Without exception they were, at the same time, caring people, creative students, individuals with indefinable values, and students who when they spoke made a difference."

*Dr. Warren B. Eckelberg
Professor of Biology and Director of Premedical Curriculum
Adelphi University*

"By the time Waldorf students reach us, they are grounded broadly and deeply and have a remarkable enthusiasm for learning. They possess the eye of discoverer and the compassionate heart of the reformer, which when joined to a task, can change the planet."

*Arthur Zajonc Ph.D.
Professor of Physics
Amherst College*

Adolescence and the High School Curriculum

Adolescence is a time of powerful physical changes and corresponding intellectual awakening. The vivid impressions of the subject matter in Primary School now serve as a foundation for further studies. What has once been experienced with great intensity of feeling can now be re-examined with the newly awakened faculties of personal judgement and critical thought.

The beginning of adolescence marks the birth of the thinking faculty as an independent capacity of the individual. The world previously experienced through the first two stages of will/play and imagination/feeling, is now seen in a new way, one of intellectual and conceptual thinking. Our High School curriculum meets this new way of experiencing the world by encouraging students to use observations, research, conclusions and judgements across the various subject areas. Students are guided in developing the ability to find resolutions and answers to rational questions and problems present in phenomena or subject matter. The students now meet a range of experienced and passionate specialist teachers who can bring the full depth of the subject matter in an enlivened and extended way.

The Great Disciplines Of Humanity

The task of the High School is to help the students create their own path into the great disciplines of humanity – art, geography, history, language, literature, mathematics, music, physical culture and science. The students are brought to these areas of human striving by people who love their subjects and are avidly exploring and developing them. So the young people come to share enthusiasm for the broad disciplines of human culture. A broad range of subjects is taught in each year level with the conscious aim of avoiding overspecialisation.

Artistic and practical activities are seen as being of equal value to the provision of knowledge. The curriculum seeks to engage the whole human being. The students are encouraged to connect with their studies through artistic activity: painting, sculpture, drawing, acting, speaking, moving and making music. Through such artistic efforts an enthusiasm permeates thinking and cynicism is kept at bay by a love of the world.



The task of the curriculum is to maintain a sense of the power of GOODNESS and the reality of BEAUTY in the world around us. The student's direction is now towards TRUTH and understanding of the world around them.

Behind the Curriculum

“Human beings are not built up bit by bit, human beings grow
and we must convey to the students concepts, ideas
and feelings that will also continue to grow.”

Rudolf Steiner

Throughout Classes 8 to 12 the Main Lesson structure continues and themes for study are selected which will enhance the students’ growth and development in each year level.

CLASS 8

Class 8 is seen as a transition year into High School. It is the aim of the Class 8 teachers to bring the student “up to date” as regards world history and the progress of science in a manner that still engages the feelings. Class 8 students seek not only information but also insight – they learn “how it is”. Above all, the students want to know how facts relate to them personally; how they are related to their daily lives.

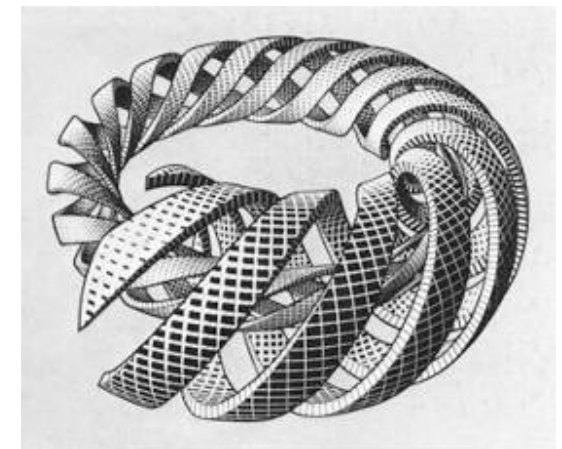
In Class 8 the study of historical change parallels the turbulence the students are experiencing through early adolescence. The revolutions in agriculture, industry and politics assist the students to understand the transformations both in themselves and in the modern world.

CLASS 9

Class 9 students think in polarities; the world is black or white. Contrasts interest them and they seek to define, summarise and form opinions about the here and now of the modern world. They are fascinated with power and beauty, especially in their thinking.

The Class 9 curriculum offers tragedy and comedy, permutations and combinations, revolutions and art history, thus supporting the changes occurring in the students’ bodies and in their ability to think in new ways. It is in the Waldorf High School curriculum that the thinking of the pupil must be addressed. During Class 8 and 9 the students are introduced to cause and effect.

All subjects follow the route of observing first, characterizing the observations and lastly to formulating definitions (rather than having definitions first).



CLASS 10

In Class 10 the students' thinking capacities begin to loosen and become more flexible. They gain the ability to compare and find similarities where once they saw only differences. They grasp the process of transformation, and wonder how the world around them – language, laws, culture, the earth itself and even their own capacity to think – developed into what they experience today. The curriculum meets this with subjects that compare and contrast phenomena: eg. in chemistry, the study of acids and bases; in mathematics, trigonometry and geometry.

Students experience a surveying/navigation camp, which is an ideal opportunity to experience, on a very real basis, the question, "How do I use my standpoint to relate to another standpoint? How do I work in a team?"

In classes 11 and 12, students undertake a course of study that 'rounds off' and consolidates learning in preparation for meeting life and higher learning beyond school.

CLASS 11

Class 11 is the year of comprehension. The ability to view the world from another's perspective becomes fine-tuned this year. In the sciences, the search for explanation of the unseen is met in the study of the atom in chemistry, in the invisible phenomena of electricity in physics and in projective geometry. The students' quest for ideals is met in the literature studies of Parsifal.

CLASS 12

The Class 12 students come to know themselves in the context of the world in which they live. In this year there is a full appreciation of the journey through the great disciplines of humanity. They have opportunity to look at themselves as individuals against this backdrop of learning during the process of undertaking and presenting to the public a Major Project of their own crafting.

At the outset of their final years at the Perth Waldorf High School the students discuss their aspirations for further education beyond school. Previous graduates of the Perth Waldorf High School have moved easily into diverse fields of tertiary study and a range of work places.

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."

Albert Einstein

Pastoral Care

“The great thing is to enable the human being to find his place in the world with due confidence in his own power of judgment.”

Rudolf Steiner

Perth Waldorf School employs a Pastoral Carer – similar to a Chaplain in some schools - whose role is to provide an ear and support, guidance and referral where necessary to students, class groups, teachers and parents in need in our community. This role is considered essential to back up the support systems in place in the school. In adolescence the students develop their rational thinking. Their healthy idealism needs to be nurtured and protection offered, as sensitive inner feelings and experiences unfold. Teachers in Waldorf high schools consciously nurture the idealism and individuality emerging in the adolescent. Rudolf Steiner holds that adolescents want above all to find meaning in the world and to sense that they can affect the world in a positive way. These aspirations must be nourished for adolescents to develop into mature, healthy adults.

The Class Guardian

The students in the High School no longer have a Class Teacher. Each class is appointed a Class Guardian who has the overall responsibility for the wellbeing of the class and the individuals within it. The Class Guardian acts as a mentor, coordinates class activities and is a liaison between home and school. The Class Guardian makes a commitment to remain with the group for 5 years, up to the end of Class 12 and meets formally with the class for nearly ninety minutes each week. This new relationship is formed when everything is new and changing for the young person, especially those changes of a bodily and soul nature. In essence, at about 14 years of age a new being emerges. Other High School teachers that the students meet are respected as friendly guides but also for their love of their subject and integrity with which they present it.

The social life of the High School is very important; it offers students the emotional support they need to cope with the complexities of adolescence. The High School offers a caring community of teachers and peers. The security that results enables the students to look to the future with confidence.

For adolescents, life itself becomes largely a question of relationship. In all realms of life, TRUTH is something adolescents sense they must discover for themselves. The teachers and the curriculum provide a rich setting for this discovery of truth, awakening young people to their destiny.

A Day in the Life of a High School Student

“The Arts must become the lifeblood of the soul” Rudolf Steiner

Considerable thought is given to the form of the school day and its effect on the students’ learning. In the High School the weaving between concrete, symbolic and abstract learning activities becomes crucial for the enrichment and deepening of the adolescent. The High School day is divided into 3 sessions – a morning block of 2 hours (Main Lesson); middle lesson between recess and lunch; afternoon lessons until the end of the school day.

The Main Lesson

- The Main Lesson is thematically based and is taught for nearly two hours a day for a duration of three to four weeks.
- The content and the activities are arranged so that the students are required to exercise their powers of judgement.
- The morning Main Lesson can be seen as the time when “outer bodily will” is taken inward and raised up into the thought life, permeates it and makes it alive and active. The students are encouraged to have discussions and arguments with each other. The teacher arranges the lesson’s questions in such a way that differences of points of view are highlighted and guided towards active discussion.
- Each lesson and learning experience involves a balance of primary experience, social interaction (discussion, listening and working together etc) and working alone.
- The Main Lesson structure develops independence in the students’ thought life, which is the basis for freedom.

The Middle Lessons

- The lessons in the middle of the day have a special role in which thinking, feeling and willing are in dynamic movement and exchange. During these lessons the ideal is that this is when the pure arts are practised, which exercises a reciprocal activity between deed and reflection – Balance. The arts provide an area of work where all three areas of thinking, feeling and willing flow and constantly weave together.
- As adolescents develop judgement, the arts are even more important because they bolster abstract understanding by giving it a real and moral basis in the world.
- English, Mathematics and Computer Practice Lessons occur in the middle of the day. Subjects requiring rhythmic repetition and constant practice along with life skills training and Main Lesson work that requires acquisition of new skills, or further extension are taught in these middle lessons.

The Afternoon Lessons

- Such lessons as Woodwork and Physical Education are devoted to activities of the limbs, in particular bringing the light and order of thinking into the adolescent chaos of the limbs.
- The emphasis is on the bringing of conscious thought activity into the more unconscious, ‘asleep’ process of the physical will.

Insight is developed through new powers of judgment. Empathy is awakened through the arts. Hand-skills ground the developing powers of the young people who, with careful guidance will come to understand that there is meaning and purpose in life.

Main Lesson Overview Classes 8 to 12

MAIN LESSONS	Class 8	Class 9	Class 10	Class 11	Class 12
Mathematics	Algebra Geometry	Combinations and Permutations Conic Sections	Trigonometry and Surveying	Projective Geometry, Statistics Levels 2A,B,C & D	Calculus Levels 2C 2D 3A 3 B
Physics	Mechanics (fluid and aero) Heat, Steam, Electricity	Transport and Communication	Mechanics	Atomic Physics, Electricity and Magnetism	Light, Optics & Colour
Chemistry	Food Chemistry Inorganic	Organic Chemistry	Inorganic Chemistry (Acids, Bases, Salts)	Periodic Table, Atomic Theory	Biochemistry Modern Technology- Industrial, Medicinal
Biology/Human Biology	Muscular System Skeletal System The Ear and Acoustics	Anatomy, Senses or Blood Circulation	Reproduction, Metabolism, Nervous and Hormonal Systems	Botany & Cell Biology	Zoology & Evolution, Ecology
English	Introduction to Poetry, Novel Study Introduction to Shakespeare Play	Aust Literature & Autobiography Play	The Odyssey Play	Romanticism Parsifal Dramatic Literature	Faust Poetry World Literature Play
History	Industrial Revolution	Modern History	Meeting of the Cultures – Australian History Ancient History	Medieval History & Renaissance	Modern History History of Ideas
Society and Environment	Meteorology, Lifestyle and Climate, Physical Geography, Trades and Resources	Geology, Vulcanism and Sedimentation	The Living Planet – Atmosphere, Climate, vegetation, Fluid Process of Earth	Cartography	Earth History Palaeontology Ethnography Environmental Science
Art	Prehistoric and Egyptian Art	History of Art - Greece to Renaissance	History of Art - Vermeer to Van Gogh	Australian Art Art Exhibition	Art Exhibition
Aesthetics		History Through Art	History Through Poetry/ Language	History Through Music	History Through Architecture
Other	Camp	Camp Farming Experience	Camp Work Experience	Camp Community Service	Class 12 Individual Projects

Practice Lessons and Electives

Class	Core Practice Lessons	Other Practice Lessons
Class 8	Maths, English, Art, Japanese/German, Music, IT, Physical Education, Guardian	Sculpture, Craft, Woodwork, Ecology, Lifeskills, Drama
Class 9 and 10	Maths, English, Art, Japanese/German, Phys Ed, Guardian Music & IT – Class 9	Sculpture Craft, Woodwork, Metalwork, Ecology, Drama, Photography, Music, Lifeskills IT & Blacksmithing – Class 10
Class 11	Maths, English, Speech, Politics, Project Preparation, Guardian	ELECTIVES: Physics, Chemistry, Cell Biology, Art, Sculpture, Music, Photography – manipulating digital photos, Drama (Play), German, Japanese, History, Politics, Literature, Geography, Craft, Music, Physical Education
Class 12	Maths, English, Speech, Philosophy, Project Preparation, Guardian	ELECTIVES: Physics, Chemistry, Human Biology, Art, Sculpture, Music, Photography, Drama, German, Japanese, History, Literature, Geography, Craft, Music, Politics and Physical Education.

The culmination of the Waldorf Curriculum is the Class 12 Project and the Class 12 Play. Both of these are major undertakings.

Class 12 Project: Students have the opportunity to look at themselves as individuals against a backdrop of learning during the process of undertaking and presenting to the public a major project of their own crafting. The Project involves four components: Practical, 3000 word essay, Journal and 30 minute public Presentation.

In the final Main Lesson of their school life, Class 12 produce and perform a play as a gift back to the school community – preferably in a professional theatre. Past productions include “Cloud Street” and “Stories from Suburban Road” and were performed at Nexus Theatre at Murdoch University.

Post Secondary Studies

The students graduate with a Steiner School Graduation Certificate, a Steiner Class 12 Examination Report and a detailed Class 12 Project Report.

Perth Waldorf School graduates have been given permission by the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) to sit the Special Tertiary Admission Test (STAT). STAT is used by many Tertiary Institutions in Australia as part of their admissions procedure. It is usually for mature age students but our students have been granted special permission to sit this test immediately upon graduation. Please see the Post Secondary Information pack for more details about Perth Waldorf School graduates and their pathways into tertiary studies and life after school.



“After 30 years, thinking back on my experience in the Waldorf School, only fond memories come to light and a deep respect and thankfulness for the teachers who taught me so much more than academic skills. I learned to develop a genuine interest in the world, a readiness to learn things new and unknown, and a flexibility to meet unknown challenges willingly, with courage and creativity.”

A Waldorf Graduate

