



Enrolment Policy

RATIONALE

Rainbow Ridge School for Steiner Education aims to embrace children and their families irrespective of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, sexual preference and marital status and integrate them into our school community. The School endeavours to provide children with age-appropriate learning experiences as well as an environment that serves the freedom of the human spirit by emphasizing the balanced and disciplined education of the child as a whole being.

The school's vision statement is as follows:

“Rainbow Ridge School offers a universal education in balance and harmony with the environment, embracing Rudolf Steiner’s philosophies and growing with the changing needs of time.”

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to outline the enrolment policy and procedures at Rainbow Ridge School.

POLICY

Information about the school

We encourage parents to inform themselves about our educational approach before proceeding with the enrolment process. An information package describes the School and can be obtained from the school or the website. The school website address is: www.rainbowridge.nsw.edu.au

Application for Enrolment

Parents obtain an application for enrolment form as part of the school's information package from the school office, the website or by post. The Enrolments Officer will acknowledge the application within two weeks.

Enrolment at Rainbow Ridge School is dependent on the outcome of the enrolment procedures including an interview and additional assessment (if required) to determine whether the school can meet the child's needs.

Priority will be granted to:

- Children registered on the school's waiting list
- Teachers' children
- Siblings of current enrolments and
- Transfers from other Steiner schools

Interview

After Rainbow Ridge School has received the Application for Enrolment Form and all the required information, an interview will be arranged, if a vacancy exists in the appropriate class. If a vacancy does not exist, the applicant is invited to have the application put on the waiting list and will then be informed when a place becomes available.

The purpose of this interview is to:

- Enable the parent(s) and the child to meet the Class Teacher;
- Ensure parents are fully aware of what a Steiner Education at Rainbow Ridge School offers and how this may differ from other educational options;
- Enable parents to gauge if Rainbow Ridge School is the appropriate school for their child;
- Determine whether Rainbow Ridge School can meet the child's needs;
- Inform parents of administrative arrangements: i.e. school structure, fees, community involvement, expectations of parents, parent group etc.;
- Discuss the Parent Handbook and give parents an opportunity to ask questions;
- In the case of families of a child with additional needs, another school support staff member will also attend the interview, as appropriate;
- If a place is available parents will be advised and the enrolment process will proceed to the next steps.

The school may accept children for enrolment when it considers that:

- It is in the best interest of the child;
- The school can meet the educational needs of the child (including children with additional needs) within resources available;
- The family understands and is prepared to actively support the ethos of the school, including signing an Enrolment Agreement form that contains the conditions of entry into the school;
- The teacher considers they can develop a working relationship with the parents and the child;
- There is a vacancy in the class in accordance with enrolment policy.

The school may not accept children for enrolment when it considers that:

The school is not able to meet the educational needs of the child. This decision can only be made after guidelines have been followed for students with additional needs. (See Guidelines for Applications for Enrolment of Students with Additional Needs below).

- Families do not support and/or embrace the school ethos and policies.
- The enrolment is part-time and/or short-term.
- The class is full.

Additional Needs and/or Disabilities

Parents must disclose their children's additional needs e.g. physical, emotional, behavioural, sensory, learning difficulties or other relevant information at the time of application. The school will require reports and assessments in order to determine whether it can meet the child's special needs. The selection criteria are not intended to discriminate against students with special conditions. However, as an independent school, resources that can be made available to support children with specific learning difficulties are limited, affecting the provision for such students.

The school follows the Disability Standards for Education introduced by the Commonwealth Government which have been formulated under the paragraph 31(1)(b) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Age of School Entry

Children shall turn six during their kindergarten year. Every child is individually assessed by the Kindergarten Teacher to determine the child's 'readiness' to enter Class 1.

Occasionally, a kindergarten child may not be considered ready to progress to Class 1 and will be recommended for another year in kindergarten. Parents and/or Guardians are included in this process.

Offer of a place and acceptance by signing the Agreement Form

The final steps of the enrolment process are taken after the interview with the teacher. The application is referred to the College of Teachers, or its designated representative, for approval.

If a place is to be offered a letter of offer will be sent along with the **Family and Child Enrolment Contract** to be returned completed before the next step in the process.

The child is formally enrolled when the signed enrolment contracts have been received, administrative requirements are met and processed by the office. The Class Teacher will make contact to arrange the child's first day at the school.

The Term's Trial System

All students enrolling at Rainbow Ridge School are initially accepted for one term, until both parents and teachers have had the opportunity to see how the student is settling in. This allows the school to evaluate whether the child is benefiting from what the school has to offer and is responding well to their new school environment. It also gives the parents the opportunity to evaluate whether this is the right choice of school for their child. In some cases, and in consultation with parents, this trial period might be extended; if the situation requires it, the parents or the school may terminate enrolment before the completion of the term.

Follow up

The Class Teacher will contact the parent to arrange a meeting within the first few weeks of the term to see how the child is settling in. The teacher and the parents will meet again before the end of the term to determine the outcome of the trial period at which time the child's enrolment is fully accepted or extended.

Guidelines for Applications for Enrolment of Students with Additional Needs

All students applying for enrolment will be considered in line with the Enrolment Guidelines. These guidelines are intended to be applied flexibly, to suit the circumstances of each application.

When considering any application for enrolment, the school will consider whether the school is able to cater for the student's individual needs (including any additional needs). This will be achieved by working through an individual planning process to identify any reasonable adjustments and the school's ability to meet the student's needs.

Where a child is considered to have additional needs as perceived by the parents, the Principal or Class Teacher, or a diagnosed disability, these will be explored and documented throughout the enrolment process. The nature of the additional needs or disability will be clarified through consultation with the parent or guardian in the interview process, contact with previous school (where appropriate) and available reports.

If the decision is taken to enrol a student with a disability, any strategies that need to be put into place to accommodate the student's additional needs – including ongoing needs – should be identified before communicating/announcing the enrolment decision.

The College of Teachers and the Principal supports the Class Teacher throughout this process.

Individual Planning Process

Document that the following has been completed:

- The family's views have been heard and the school can demonstrate it has seriously considered relevant issues regarding their child's enrolment.
- Identify student's additional needs or disability – this should be a collaborative approach with the family and school and possibly relevant experts. The Principal may seek advice and consultation from the Association of Independent Schools (NSW) (AIS).
- Request the family to provide information about the student's needs as part of the individual planning process. Relevant information will assist in identifying any adjustments and could include:
 - previous school or preschool reports, noting current achievements and areas of need
 - psychologist's report documenting functional skills and recommended strategies for working with the student
 - speech pathologist's report documenting receptive and expressive language skills and any recommendations for programs or technology in the classroom
 - occupational and physiotherapy reports documenting self-help skills and mobility, including assistive technology reports recommending equipment and access audits regarding access to premises
 - medical specialist reports identifying issues which need to be considered by the school
 - vision and hearing reports documenting level of functioning and recommended strategies
- The teacher and the Principal prepare a detailed analysis of the student's additional needs for the initial years of the student's schooling and considers potential needs in the years following enrolment, being flexible about solutions to potential difficulties.
- Request feedback and suggestions from relevant staff in the school and external special educators about the possible impact of the student's enrolment on the school and possible adjustments.
- If the school makes an enquiry of a third party, care will be taken to protect the privacy of the applying student and their family. Parental permission in writing will be sought if needing to speak to preschools, other schools or specialists.
- Identify the adjustments necessary for the student to access and participate in the school before determining what is **reasonable**. Advice from an independent expert may be obtained.
- Developing a **reasonable adjustment** requires an **informed judgement** using input from the student, student's specialists, school staff and possibly special education advice to support the school.
- Objective notes and records will be taken of all discussions and interviews with parents and kept on file. Documentation will be kept outlining the people involved in the process, the issues raised, objective notes on possible adjustments, agreed actions and a timeline.
- The family will be kept informed about the progress of the application.
- As part of the planning process, it is possible to consider all options available to the student. This could be sensitive and is best addressed through the planning process by the collaborative team.
- After assessing whether there are other appropriate options and whether the adjustment may need to be changed over the period of the student's education, the Principal will decide, in consultation with teacher and relevant experts, **whether to make the adjustment. A school does not have to make a reasonable adjustment if by doing so it would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the school.**

- **Provide the adjustment within a reasonable time.** The school is entitled to ask for relevant information in considering a reasonable adjustment. This should be provided by the family in a timely manner.
- If the school accepts the enrolment, an ongoing process will be implemented to manage issues which might require further adjustments. The ongoing use of a collaborative team approach will be used.
- It will be determined if the student meets the requirements for Integration Funding from AIS.
- Determining whether there is an unjustifiable hardship involves a similar balancing process and should be done in consideration of AIS advice.
- If the school considers that it may have to decline the enrolment, the Principal will be involved, seeking advice from AIS and communicate the preliminary decision to the family. The school must be able to demonstrate that it is unable to meet that student's needs without unjustifiable hardship, having regard to the student's current condition and prognosis.
- Before making a final decision about adjustments to be made, or declining an application for enrolment, the Principal must have communicated the preliminary decision to the family and invite their input to the school.

Adjustments are measures/actions that identify the type and level of support required by the student with a disability or additional needs to **access and participate** in all aspects of school life.

An **adjustment is reasonable** if it **balances the interests of all parties affected**. Issues which are relevant to the balancing exercise include:

- the impact of the disability itself on the student
- the views of the student or parents/guardians of the student
- the effect of the proposed adjustment on the student
- the effect of the proposed adjustment on others including students and staff
- the costs and benefits of making the adjustment