



Steiner Education at Ghilgai

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Chilgai strives to sustain our School as a sanctuary for childhood.

We hope you will share this Handbook with your friends. We often have vacancies.

See our website for monthly tours.

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Epilogue

Photos

At times in this handbook we have used the pronoun ‘he’ for ease of reading. This does not reflect gender bias.

Ghilgai espouses and adheres to the following principles and practice of Australian Democracy:

- Elected government
- The rule of law
- Equal rights for all before the law
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech and association
- The values of honesty and tolerance

These principles are implicit in our policies and procedures and are embedded in our Code of Conduct. They are implicit in our curriculum.



The importance of Creativity in education

“Our Education systems don’t need a change.
They need a revolution to allow creativity to thrive.
Education reform begins by accepting that creativity is as important
as Literacy and Numeracy.”

Sir Ken Robinson Professor Emeritus-University of Warwick, UK
-in his address to the Australia Council’s symposium on National Education & the Arts. Sept 2005

The place of Creativity in Steiner Education

- An artistic approach to learning permeates the Steiner curriculum and methodology at all levels and across all subject areas.
- Each child is seen as an artist, and as an individual with creative ability which can be used in adult life to awaken new ideas, new solutions, new modes of thought and levels of consciousness.

- from Contemporary Steiner Education – produced by Steiner Education Australia (SEA)

1. Introduction



Our Name

Ghilgai is an aboriginal word meaning 'water hole' in a dryish country. We interpret this image broadly and hope our school may indeed be a watering hole for Students, Teachers, Parents and the wider School Community, recognising that in each one of us there is a place - a hole - that is able to receive the nurturing rains that replenish body, soul and spirit.

**“Steiner Education strives to ennoble the mind
and to fire the imagination;
to fortify the will
and to quicken the initiative for life;
to sow such seeds as may produce new vision and discovery
in the years to come:
not to mould the mind
but to enable it to grow to new dimensions.
Thus it serves the present for the future
and awakens the motivation for lifelong education
and self development.”**

Our Vision Statement

Ghilgai Steiner School practises Steiner Education. We endeavour to educate the children wholistically via a balanced curriculum in a safe and nurturing environment, which fosters clarity in thinking, depth in feeling and strength of will, so that as adults they will be able to contribute to society as creative, ethical and responsible citizens.

We strive to build confidence, initiative and responsibility, seeking to maintain a balance between the growth of the individual and that of the Community. We actively work towards an accepting and compassionate School Community which is founded on an harmonious union between school and home.

Communication Pathways

- **Education/Wellbeing Coordinator – 9761 8369 edadmin@ghilgai.com.au**
 - The Education Coordinator represents the College of Teachers Executive and nurtures the ethos of the School.
 - Supportive conversations regarding student learning, behavioural matters, Community wellbeing and Steiner Education.
 - Enrolment conversations/interviews.
 - Monthly tours for interested parents.
- **Bursar – 9728 3996 bursar@ghilgai.com.au
Monday, Tuesday and Friday.**
 - Fee Policy and Fee payments
 - Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (Government subsidy to eligible parents)
 - All things monetary
- **Reception – in Library – 9728 5819 ggs@ghilgai.com.au**
 - General enquiries
 - Notification of School absences/lateness
 - Liaison for School photos
 - First Aid
 - Facilitator of written communication addressed to College of Teachers Executive or Directors.
 - Newsletter
- **Enrolment Coordinator – 9761 8369 enrol@ghilgai.com.au**
 - Enquiries regarding enrolment – School/Playgroup
 - Facilitates the enrolment process.
 - School/Playgroup entry administration
 - Immunisation matters
- **Phone Trees** – in necessity the School is able to communicate quickly with parents via our Class Phone trees. The School messages 2 or 3 parents who pass on the message according to the Class plan – all parents are expected to participate.

- **Class Teachers**

- Put a note in the basket at the classroom door to give the Class Teacher some pertinent information for the day or to convey briefly information regarding concerns you have. You can also request a conversation via a note.
- If you've forgotten to write your note beforehand, there is paper and pencil in the basket on the sink bench near the door.

Ghilgai teachers 'live' with the children; this is an integral part of their commitment to this education. They do not retreat to a staffroom before school and during breaks and there is no protocol for classroom access via an office, such as some schools have in place.

Teachers are out and about before school and in breaks. In the morning they are in the midst of preparation in their classrooms. Some of this preparation is practical - paper/books, etc. Another part entails the preparation of a quiet inner space before the rich Main Lesson period which lasts from 9.00-10.45am. We are happy to greet you in passing, but we're asking you to refrain from engaging with us, to be supportive of our complex teaching roles and the time and energy we wish to preserve for our lessons and the child.

Our school structure means ongoing contact with the children for most of the day and so we need interludes of down time in order to remain fresh. We also need space to relate to our colleagues.

We seek your support in this. Thank you.

Tell us of behavioural concerns right away

- Please hand your note to your Class Teacher before school.
- You may speak to the Education Coordinator right away if the matter is urgent.
- If the Education Coordinator is unavailable, the Reception person will ask you to write a short note to inform a College of Teachers Executive member of the incident so we can be proactive during the day.

- **The College of Teachers Executive – a sealed note left at Reception**

Please try and speak to your Class Teacher before you bring classroom matters to the College of Teachers Executive.

- Concerns
- Feedback/Reflective proposals.
- Written Complaints (pto)

- **The Parent Seed Group – notes placed in wooden box under noticeboard.**

- Notes re Autumn Market/Open Day
- Notes re Community activities – eg Bush Dance/Family Picnic
- Feedback/Reflective proposals

- **Ghilgai Organic Food Cooperative**

A group of parents who maintain a monthly food distribution service. Notes to the Cooperative can be left at Reception.

- **Board of Directors – a sealed letter to Reception or Education Coordinator**



- **Voicing Concerns**

There are several pathways to enable you to express your concerns:

- A conversation with your child's Class Teacher - via a note in the class basket to request a convenient time. If it's an urgent matter ask for a phone conversation as soon as possible.
- A helping conversation with our Education /Wellbeing Coordinator.
- A letter to the College of Teachers Executive - given to the Education Coordinator or a sealed note addressed to the College of Teachers Executive left at Reception.
- A letter to the Directors – given to the Education Coordinator or a sealed note addressed to the Directors left at Reception.

We want you to know we take any concern you have seriously. Choose the method most comfortable for you and most suitable for the issue concerning you.

- **Complaints**

Our Complaints policy is on our website www.ghilgai.com.au or you can ask for a copy at Reception.



- **Staffing Overview**

Playgroup Facilitator

Foundation Year Teacher & Assistant

Class Teachers Classes 1-6

Classroom Aide 4 mornings per week – rostered classes

Specialist Teachers Craft
Physical Education
Music
Eurythmy
German

One on One Support Literacy/Numeracy support & Remedial
Movement/skill development

Visiting Instrumental Teachers Piano, Strings, Guitar

Receptionist First Aid/Library

Bursar Monday, Tuesday & Friday

Education/Wellbeing Coordinator

Enrolment Coordinator

Property Manager

Cleaner



2. Steiner Education

- **Introduction**

There are over 1000 Steiner Schools scattered across the world.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) articulated a philosophy that honoured the spiritual nature of mankind, nourished the soul or inner life and provided for wellbeing of the physical body.

The original Waldorf or Steiner School was founded in Stuttgart in 1919. Rudolf Steiner saw education as a continuum and his educational frameworks link the curriculum with the child's unfolding development; teaching proceeds in sequential stages, education is approached in an holistic way.

Music and the Arts nourish the child. Practical activities ground him.

The Class Teacher accompanies him as he journeys through the classes.

Steiner Education Australia (SEA) unites Steiner Schools in Australia in a common striving.

For further information: <https://www.steinereducation.edu.au/>

In 2019 Steiner Schools celebrated the centenary of Steiner Education.

Enjoy a wonderful video that demonstrates the worldwide application of this modern method of education; visit the website below.



<https://www.waldorf-100.org/en/>

- **Student Learning**



- i. Playgroup**

Playgroup provides a warm and gentle time and space for parents and young children to meet and enjoy each other's company. With beautiful gifts from the natural world for the children's play and songs, rhymes and stories to be enjoyed, children arrive eager and depart content.

Each group is guided by our Playgroup Facilitator.

Playgroup also gives support to parents in meeting the challenges of raising young children. During the session's creative tasks and over a shared cuppa, there is ample time for questions, sharing experiences and helpful hints.



ii. The Pre-School Years – a Solid Foundation

One morning as he carefully filled his cup at morning tea, Morris said to all who were listening, “You know, Founders is the cup to the world.”

It is - what a pearl of wisdom!

- **Time** to leave the familiar home environment to play, to work, to participate in a group, to prepare for formal learning.
- **Opportunity** to develop in body (physical development), in soul (inner life), in spirit (individuality). Accompanied by a teacher who does not merely provide a beautiful room but who knows that he/she is an environment for the child, a climate to him/her, a vital strand in the whole tapestry. One who knows that these early years are formative years, a melting pot for attitudes, behaviour and habits.
- **A place** for music, song, poems and story.

Literature in the pre-school The child is nourished by the rich fabric of imagery in Folk and Fairy Tales. These age old stories have many layers of meaning and through them a young child follows mankind’s striving for Goodness, Beauty and Truth.

Craft activities awaken consciousness in little fingers. Games, dance and drama foster Class Community spirit.

Creative play provides a foundation for life. The child explores his environment in play and he practises responsibility as he builds little houses and cares for the occupants.

Through serious participation in the activity of play he strengthens his concentration. In many a situation he needs initiative, creativity is expressed, practicalness is tested, independence and confidence are called forth.

Play prepares children for the future.

Rudolf Steiner said, “Play works from within outwards, work, from outside inwards.”

iii. Our Curriculum

Ghilgai's curriculum is aligned with the Australian Steiner Schools Curriculum Frameworks which is recognised by our National Education Authority.

Our curriculum is well structured, broad and deep. It unfolds with the child's development and nurtures his inner being. Artistic work enlivens intellectual work and often goes hand in hand with it in order to enrich and deepen the child's understanding. It is a continuum, foundations are well laid and Main Lessons build upon each other as the children journey through the classes.

Literacy moves from the pictorial to the conceptual. In Class 1 the child follows mankind's developmental steps in writing; he masters the symbols of the alphabet in a pictorial way first and relates them to sound. The images may emerge from stories/songs/poems and be depicted graphically in paint or experienced in movement. Words develop, sentences grow. Writing precedes Reading, and Reading foundations are well laid.

By Class 6 we aim to have a student who is a strong, independent reader of diverse texts, able to research projects and present material in informative and detailed ways whether orally or in written form. He is becoming a confident writer, using paragraphs to shape a story or an opinion, a careful editor able to bring his first draft through to completion independently. He understands the structure of language and uses grammatical forms confidently; his writing is detailed, rich in imagery via simile, adjectives, adverbs, etc. He is a discerning listener, able to question, able to contribute to class conversations and debates.

Literature. During the Journey from Class 1 to Class 6 the child has opportunity to savour a treasury of World Literature which ennobles his mind and nourishes his feeling life.

World Literature also provides a deep and meaningful backdrop for development of Literacy skills – Written Expression, Comprehension, Grammar, Handwriting, Spelling, Vocabulary Development, Language Conventions.

The Journey through World Literature

Themes for each year

- Class 1** The imaginative world of Folk and Fairy Tales.
- Class 2** Stories from the Native Americans who experienced themselves at one with nature. Fables, Great Lives, Legends.
- Class 3** Myths of Ancient Egypt. Stories from the Ancient Hebrews.
- Class 4** Norse Myths - The Kalevala, Weland the Smith
Aboriginal Stories, Early Australian stories, Beowulf.
- Class 5** Stories from the Orient - China/Japan. Ancient Indian stories such as the Ramayana. Greek stories of Gods and Heroes like Jason, Theseus, Odysseus, Heracles.
- Class 6** The Arabic World—Sundiata, One Thousand and One Nights.
Stories from the Roman World.
The Medieval World—Robin Hood, Stories from The Round Table.



Numeracy begins formally in Class 1 with stories about everyday numerical happenings. The children use natural materials like stones/nuts and felt people to bring the stories alive dramatically... Granny grew 6 fat pumpkins and she gave 4 pumpkins to her neighbour...

The children's first written Maths tasks are pictorial... draw Grannies 6 fat pumpkins in a basket, draw the neighbour's house and put 4 pumpkins by her door... how many pumpkins does Granny have left? Draw her house and then draw her pumpkins on the table.

Later in the year the children present their mathematical understandings in the usual linear way eg. $6 - 4 = 2$

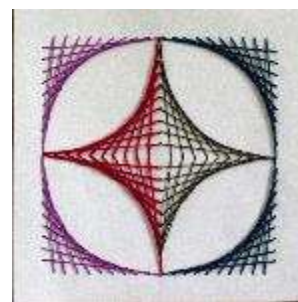
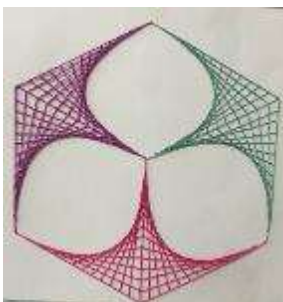
Our Maths curriculum unfolds in a sequential way – each Main Lesson provides a platform for the next Main Lesson. Slowly the children move from mathematical conversations that are centered on everyday happenings and begin to explore the realm of conceptual Maths.

By Class 6 there are many more mathematical strands – percentage, discount, interest, profit and loss and decimal fractions – all of which are worked in meaningful ways.

The need for a 24 hour clock emerges in Geography.

In the Geometry Main Lesson Block the students use instruments to construct a range of geometrical forms and they explore the laws of Geometry. This leads to tessellation, nets, curve stitching, the platonic solids.

By Class 6 the students are becoming mathematically perceptive; persistent and creative problem solvers. 'Thinking tracks' are evident in their written work.



Home Surroundings In **Class 1** the child responds to his environment with wonder as he observes the seasons, the flowers, trees, mountains, animals and birds, insects, the clouds, the sky...

In the **Class 2** Home Surroundings Main Lesson Blocks the children explore the three great kingdoms.

- Earth – the treasures beneath our feet... gold, iron, crystals, coal, silver.
- Ocean – the wondrous creatures and the beautiful plants in its depths.
- Air – the birds, flight patterns, fabulous nests.

In **Class 3** Main Lessons the children explore Dwellings – mankind is challenged to use the gifts of the natural environment to make a home – ice, mud, reeds, timber, handmade felt... worldwide diversity and creativity.

In **Class 4 & 5** Home Surroundings opens out, and the children enjoy new Main Lesson fields – History, Geography, Botany, Zoology.

In **Class 6** the Main Lesson study-fields expand again.

Themes for individual projects emerge from Main Lesson Block, eg. in Class 4 - “Research an Australian animal, make it and create a diorama for it to dwell in. Do a written presentation about your animal and speak to the Class about it.”



iv. The Class Teacher

It is the Class Teacher who daily quickens, in the children, the joy of learning; he/she moves up with the class and leads them on year by year in the Main Lesson Blocks to ever expanding worlds of discovery. The Class Teacher develops a strong ongoing relationship with each student and his/her family.

v. Specialist Lessons

Our specialist teachers enrich us all, they work in all classes in

- Craft
- German
- Music
- Eurythmy
- Physical Education

They encourage our children to blossom.



Craft

Craft has much to offer... *“If we don’t use our fingers in youth, we become ‘finger-blind’, and this rich network of nerves (in the fingers) is impoverished – it represents a huge loss to the brain and thwarts the individual’s all-round development.”* Matti Bergstrom

“If we neglect to develop and train our children’s fingers and the creative form-building capacity of their hand muscles, then we neglect to develop their understanding of the unity of things, we thwart their aesthetic and creative powers” – ibid.

As the children create meaningful articles of beauty, their inner life is nourished.

German

The children who have the opportunity to imbibe a Language other than English (LOTE) enjoy their capacity to converse in another tongue. Learning another language expands the child’s expressive capacities, it develops agile thinking and builds bridges between disparate worlds. Somehow it enhances self-confidence.



Music-making

How barren would our lives become if Music were removed from it. Music uplifts and soothes our soul. It releases tension and seeds joy and self-confidence. Music-making fosters brain agility; expands learning capacity. It also nurtures concentration and deep listening. The Class Community is nourished when students make music together.

Instrumental Lessons

Visiting Teachers offer Strings, Piano and Guitar. These lessons begin around Class 3. If you are interested write a note to your Class Teacher. Once approved, this then becomes a private arrangement between Parent and the Instrument Teacher.

Eurythmy

Rudolf Steiner seeded the art of Eurythmy... it is sometimes called Visible Speech. The child moves with language – verses/poems/alphabet sounds. This is invigorating and uplifting. He also moves with Music – sometimes alone, but mostly with others. Together the class forms complex and beautiful moving geometric patterns – this deepens concentration, increases sensitivity and fosters a sense of belonging. It fosters flexibility, adaptability and resilience. It develops new pathways in the brain.

Physical Education

There are many strands to our PE program it unfolds sequentially from Foundation Year to Class 6.

This program is enriched by external activities – Gymnastics, Karate, Orienteering.

In Class 5, students strengthen their athletic skills and join with other Steiner Schools at a mini Greek Olympic Games.

Each class participates in a Swimming Block each year. Classes 1 & 2 have 2 blocks in order to develop good water skills in the early years.

Our **Camp Program** complements our PE program.

Camps nourish the Class Community and the confidence of each child. They also foster the growth of life skills, practicality, flexibility, initiative, courage and resilience.



vi. Remedial Support

Students who need a little more individual work in Literacy and Numeracy receive one-on-one support via our Support Teachers. Your Class Teacher will liaise with you if your child needs extra support to consolidate skills.

Children leave classes on a rostered basis and work in the 11.15am-3pm time frame. This is a school provision.

Our PE Teacher also works with children who need one-on-one support with coordination and the development of movement skills. Work on these skills often fosters development in Literacy. It can nourish self-esteem and foster better self-regulation.

vii. IT - Information Technology

Steiner pedagogy deems that living learning, led by dedicated teachers using a nourishing and inspiring curriculum, is essential to the unfolding of the full potential of the Primary School child.

Computers are valued for the manifold ways they can enrich student learning. On the continuum of schooling – Class 1 to 12 – we deem them great tools for students around Year 7 or 8.

Ghilgai acknowledges that most Secondary Schools expect students to be computer savvy at Year 7, and to this end Class 6 students visit a local computer lab for a series of sessions.

With support the students gather text and images focused on a theme... perhaps Planets/Weather... and produce a Power Point presentation. Even students unfamiliar with computers do well because they rise to the challenge and use well-exercised problem-solving strategies.

A visiting specialist presents the essentials of Cyber Safety to the students in Classes 4,5,6 – Parents accompany their child. These presentations are age-appropriate.



viii. Our School Day

Rudolf Steiner has gifted the children (and the Teachers) a meaningful, and wonderful curriculum that expands with the child's development. He has also, I think, gifted children (and the Teachers) a wonderful Day Plan, and a wholesome day.

In the conventional setting, teaching is usually done in short periods, mostly of forty-five minutes. Forty-five minutes of this, then forty-five minutes of that and forty-five minutes of something else. As a Teacher, these changing periods are unsatisfying – there's not enough time to teach with depth, and it's harder to foster concentration and deep listening in the children.

For the students... no sooner are you 'in' the zone than you have to get out of it and move on to the next lesson - this fosters fragmented learning as opposed to deep learning.

The Main Lesson forms the core of the day - the first lesson of the day. It is here that Literacy and Numeracy and Home Surroundings are taught in a rich, deep way, utilising the first one and a half hours of the day when the children are fresh and alert. As the child matures, Home Surroundings opens out and new subject strands are formed – Botany, History, Natural Science, Human Biology, Physical Science, Astronomy, Geology... and these subjects are taught in Main Lesson/Blocks across the school year. The Main Lesson Book that is developed during the Block becomes a treasured record of each child's journey to wondrous Lands of Learning.

Of course, Literacy and Numeracy cannot be relegated to a rotating Main Lesson Block. They need ongoing regular practice each week – consolidation, expansion and remediation to meet the needs of each child. This takes place in Practice Time.

Our communal Gong sounds across the School at 9.00am and calls the children into their 'working-day'. When they enter the classroom, they seem to breathe in as they sense their Class Community surrounding them and they open out towards their Class Teacher – their learning-companion/their mentor for the

six-year journey. This beautiful sense of belonging provides nourishment for the day ahead.

The school day in a Steiner School opens with Circle Time. Within the circle-of-becoming the children move rhythmically with verses, songs, tables; they clap and stamp in order to awaken themselves bodily. It's fun, it's harmonising.

Singing/Class recitation/Recorder – the “ingredients” of Circle Time vary from class to class, from day to day but the intent is always the same – an opportunity to prepare the child for learning. For Main Lesson he needs to be awake, ready to concentrate. Both brain hemispheres need to be working harmoniously together. The student needs to be able to drop down into a still inner core and listen. A listener – yes – also an active participant, questioner, a do-er, a creative worker.

For all these reasons the Circle Time becomes a pivotal point in the School day and it is important that the child arrives at School a few minutes early each day in order to shed the constriction of the car journey, in order to go in with The Gong. To breathe in the day with his class and to immerse himself fully in the potential of the Morning Circle – so that he has a calm and solid foundation for the in-depth learning available in the Main Lesson.

The Foundation Year children (pre-Class 1) also have a Circle Time that provides the foundation for their day. They do not have a Main Lesson as such – but – the practical activities and the creative play opportunities, are equivalent to the Main Lesson work and form the backbone of the Founder's day.



As far as is practical, academic work is done in the morning when the child is fresh and strongly incarnated. The artistic and practical activities are placed in the afternoon to balance the day.

Appointments – if you need to schedule appointments in the school day please place them in the afternoon so that your child’s experience of the Main Lesson is not fragmented or weakened.

Practice Time is also foundational in various ways.

Our Day Plan

9.00 – 10.45	Main Lesson
10.45 – 11.15	Morning tea as a class group inside or outside, followed by Recess
11.15 – 12.15	Story Time – 15min Practice Time – consolidation & extension of Literacy & Numeracy skills
12.15 – 12.30	Lunch as a Class group
12.30 – 1.15	Lunch Break
1.15 – 2.00	Afternoon Session 1
2.00 – 2.15	Break
2.15 – 2.55	Afternoon Session 2
2.55 – 3.15	Staggered pick up times

ix. Assessment and Reporting

Reporting

Parents receive two written Reports:

- Mid-Year - targets general strengths and weaknesses and summarises the achievements of the first six months.
- End of Year - a comprehensive and detailed profile of your child and his/her work.

The children in all classes are **unaware of this facet of their school life**. This document is given to parents personally or posted.

We ask that Reports remain a strictly confidential “conversation” between Teachers and Parents in order to foster the children’s developing confidence. Reports can be placed in the folder given to you when your child entered Chilgai. Across the years these reports will build up a profile of your child’s development and you may like to insert annual photos or special mementos to enrich it.

Each student in Classes 4/5/6 receives written feedback from his/her Class Teacher in December. This encouraging ‘letter’ gently touches on areas that need attention and highlights strengths.

An upbuilding nourishing approach to learning

The Steiner curriculum unfolds to meet the child’s developmental stages. Lesson content cannot be arbitrarily placed within a class context. Teaching matches the ‘optimum time’ i.e. when the child is developmentally ready, in both intellect and inner life, to take the next step in learning. This wholistic approach provides fulfilment for the child and engenders confidence.

Our curriculum is carefully structured in the way it introduces and develops Literacy and Numeracy. We do not call upon analytical skills until there is a developmental ripeness. Both Literacy and Numeracy in the early years are grounded in reality, rich language experiences and visual imagery. Abstract concepts are avoided in these early stages.

Ghilgai does not overtly test the children before Class 6 because we are striving to build confidence and joy in the learning itself. Class testing situations imposed in the primary years negate this striving and weaken the confidence of many children, not necessarily via ‘failure’, often just by the comparisons that the child inevitably makes of him/herself with others.

Overt testing moves the child’s focus away from personal growth and personal ‘best’ and promotes a subtle competitive element. No longer is the learning process experienced as a natural process of growth that will continue for life; it is altered by the testing mechanism. Results are valued above experience and striving. Then, as the challenged child struggles towards this new point of external acceptance his/her confidence is eroded. On the other hand, capable children may shine because they have been accepted in a new way i.e. their test results are above the norm and/or above those of other classmates. Their focus shifts then to ‘good results’, and the wholesome learning experience is, for them, subverted.

Assessment underpins student learning

Each Teacher needs to know whether a child has retained previous learning and whether he is independently able to demonstrate particular essential skills. Teachers are also accountable to parents, and schools are accountable to government agencies that need to overview the effectiveness of the education provided in each school, on behalf of future generations and society as a whole. Thus, some form of formal evaluation of learning is necessary.

At Ghilgai, assessment is multifaceted with standardized assessment at Class 3/5 levels in line with Naplan procedures. We also assess Class 1 in order to find gaps early. Students in Classes 2 and 4 are also assessed and progress recorded. This testing is done discreetly in Practice Time and the children are unaware that the task given to them will be formally assessed.

For an overview of our structured approach to assessment see our website under “School Performance Report” or ask for a copy at Reception.

3. An Uplifting Learning Environment

- **Our Code of Conduct**

*the healthy social life is found
when in the mirror of each human soul
the whole community finds its reflection
and when in the community
the virtue of each one is living.*

Rudolf Steiner

Our Code of Conduct provides for all members of the School Community

- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Visitors

It ensures that each member of our School Community can look forward to a safe supportive environment each day.

Acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour is clearly delineated.

Breaches of the Code are followed up by consequence.

Underlying behaviour patterns are addressed and supportive counselling or behavioural therapy are possible follow up actions for transgressors.

The College of Teachers Executive addresses behavioural breaches.

- You will be given a hard copy of this Code upon enrolment.
- It is also on our website.
- You will be asked to sign a Parent/School Behavioural Agreement.



- **Buddies**

The child's self-esteem and confidence is enhanced when he feels comfortable in a place and when he feels that he belongs to a community.

In diverse ways Ghilgai Teachers work to nourish each child's sense of belonging.

Twice each term the children eat morning tea or lunch with their Buddy Class. It is beautiful to watch Buddies sharing Main Lesson Books and Art work together afterwards. Nourishing cross-age friendships develop from these 'seeds'.

- **Parent/School Co-working on Positive Behaviour**

- We ask all parents and guardians to tell us of troubling incidents immediately via a note to the Class Teacher.

Ghilgai has strong student supervision provisions however it is not possible for Teachers to see 'everything'. Parents and Teachers must work as a team.

- If the situation does not change within a couple of days please contact the Education Coordinator so that the College of Teachers Executive can provide further support for the child in need, the class and the Teacher.
- Ghilgai subscribes to the monthly tip sheets written by Michael Grose for School Parents – you can find this in our fortnightly newsletter. Look out for it. He also has regular webinars for parents. You may access articles at www.parentingideas.com

- **A multi-faceted approach to wellbeing**

Steiner Education addresses the whole child, our approach to learning is multi-layered. Our focus is wider than the classroom. Student wellbeing underpins student learning outcomes.

We seek the support of parents in adhering to the following guidelines.

i. Food

- Children need a substantial breakfast in order to provide a foundation for the day's work.
- It is well known that many children are sensitive to sugars and artificial colourings and that foods with these ingredients may foster impulsive behaviour and weaken concentration.
- Exclusions:
 - NO
 - Lollies
 - Chocolates
 - Chips
 - Coloured cordials
 - Fizzy drinks
 - Sugary cakes/biscuits/donuts
- **Water** is important for good physical health. Please send a drink bottle daily – just water – and monitor your child's water intake. Inadequate hydration leads to lethargy, irritability and even aggressive behaviour.
- Nutritious simple lunches please. No packets/tins/noodles to heat. Cake only as an occasional treat.
- Include fruit each day – perhaps for morning tea.
- The children have 'a nibble' / 'brain food' for a few minutes after Morning Circle prior to Main Lesson – this needs to be finger food/easy to manage.

Supporting Allergies

- We ask that children refrain from sharing food at school, to protect allergic children.
- Parents of children with a food allergy must liaise with Class Teachers re special foods for celebrations. This always needs to be wrapped and labelled separately.
- We may, from time to time, have a nut free class in order to support an anaphylactic child and we ask parents to support this prohibition.

- The School sometimes has special lunch or breakfast mornings, fruit, icy poles, etc. You will receive an advance note via your children. We will list all ingredients so you can make an informed choice.
The funds from these occasions are often tagged and we will advise of funds application so you can support the work too.
- **Birthday Cakes**
We encourage parents to send along a cake to celebrate their child's birthday.
May we ask that they be 'simple' cakes, easy to cut and serve. No cream, minimum sugar (maybe use an alternative), no colours in the icing. This will support our striving for nourishing, natural food to support wholesome child development.
Children with allergies should have a treat box in the classroom so they have something special to eat when the cake is not possible.



ii. Dress Code

School is a place of learning and culture. One way we can support children to respect this is to ensure that the way they dress for school is appropriate. Clothing may have a distracting or counterproductive influence on our children's educational experience at school and can become an arena for peer pressure, fashion trends, advertising, messages and slogans. We do not have a uniform because we want to allow room for individuality to flourish. We expect students to wear simple, comfortable clothing in warm, cheerful colours and to keep fashion statements and party wear for special occasions.

- Clothing worn to school must be safe and appropriate for the range of activities students take part in during the school day
- It should offer sun protection
- No logos or characters (film/TV)
- Sandals must enclose the feet and provide safe footwear for play
- Sturdy flexible footwear is needed on Physical Education days
- A warm jacket and woollen hat in Term 2 and 3
- Slippers or oversox for indoor use in winter
- Hair should be tied back in some way so that it does not impede eyesight and concentration
- Only sleepers or small studs- no earrings
- Exclusions: NO
 - See-through or revealing clothing including very short dresses, skirts or shorts, low cut tops
 - Inappropriate clothing - e.g. night wear - underwear as outer garment
 - Boots or shoes with high platform soles. No raised heels
 - Thongs or party shoes, shoes with flashing inserts
 - Black wear
 - Skull and crossbone, skeleton motifs
 - Bracelets/necklaces/chunky rings (small chains with personal talisman are fine)

Hats – Ghilgai is a Sun Smart School

All children require a brimmed hat or legionnaire cap (flap at back) for sun protection. Narrow brims on 'fashion hats' offer no shade to the face and peaked fashion caps are also unsuitable. Hats must be worn in Term 1 & 4. Ghilgai hats may be purchased at Reception – however it is not a requirement that students have the Ghilgai logo on their hats.

iii. Screens

Television

Ghilgai asks that parents keep their child's television viewing to a minimum and that television before school is banned in the home. We recommend that young children in Foundation Year and the early years have none.

Yes, there are inspiring and informative programs available, however when the nature of the medium is deeply considered one cannot say that it has an up-building, nourishing effect upon the child. Many negative effects have been documented.

Computer Games

Game time should be limited and preferably slotted into weekend leisure time. The content of the games must be carefully supervised, and it is worth asking yourself "What is the essential quality of this game?"

A child who spends much time on games often becomes obsessed with the challenge and school concentration is reduced as his mind wanders back to the game site.

The child who plays games before sleep will not enter sleep in a calm way. The residual effect of fast hand movement and eye tracking and sound effects lingers in the body and thwarts relaxation and nourishing sleep.

Senior students can be so full of game images and strategies that their minds are in overload and thus their concentration, thinking capacity and imagination are impaired. They may struggle to take in new content because of the sensory overload that games have caused.

We include excerpts from writings about the media in your entry pack and offer them as a catalyst for your consideration.

Films/Video

Violent images affect student wellbeing and linger in the imagination. We expect parents to monitor film content and ensure that it is age appropriate.

We do not want students sharing frightening images with their peers at school. Our Code of Conduct has a section called “polluting the imagination” and Chilgai upholds the right of each child to have a safe up-building environment whilst at school.

- Pollution = violent/sleep disturbing images drawn from the media





iv. Toys at School

We ask that children leave their toys at home. If a child has something special to share then we suggest you invite 1 or 2 children to your home to see it/share it.

So often the owner of a new toy or a fabulous doll/creature uses this article to demonstrate status and at times it is a tool for exclusion – “You can play with it if you...” “... No you can’t play with it because...”

At times it triggers possession-envy... “I must have one of these... (and when I get it I will be just like Maurice”)

We are striving to foster imaginative play, to nurture social skills and to engender inclusion. To honour the inner riches of each child... “who you are and what you do outshines material possessions.”

v. Dogs

No dogs on school premises please unless you have made a special arrangement with a teacher, in which case the dog must remain on a lead.

vi. Alcohol/Smoke free zone.

Ghilgai is an alcohol and smoking free zone.

4. Home and School Co-Working

i. School Attendance.

Learning is a complex process, and at Ghilgai it is supported by a rhythmic, cyclic approach. Regular attendance is vital for all-round growth.

Please support our commitment to your child's education – it is so much more than learning 'facts'. It's about developing faculties, habits, attitudes, and responsibility. These take time - organised, ordered, rhythmic, healthy time.

- Strive for regular attendance. Everyday life for some families is filled with challenges and difficulties, and on some occasions, it is tempting and easier to 'just stay home' for the day. This pattern can have a subtle effect on the child and he may languish, because he lacks parental support. However, we have seen again and again how when a parent 'comes through' the child blossoms, because he/she senses the family's resilience, motivation, and will-power.
- Sometimes, a child is tired, or there is a niggling 'off-colour' feeling, and maybe then it is a case of keeping him/her home for a day – but the cause of tiredness needs to be addressed. In such circumstances, we would ask that he or she attend Main Lesson if possible (9:00 – 11:00am) to ensure continuity.
- Plan holidays in the term break where at all possible.
- We appreciate a phone call before 9:30am regarding a child's absence – give a reason. Reception – 9728 5819
- A note is required if you have not communicated by phone.
- More than 7 – 10 days absence per semester is rated 'of concern'.
- If we calculate term absences across 1 year and then extend them across 6 years of schooling the result is very sobering and highlights the effect school absence may have upon a child's learning potential.
A child with a term absence of 7-10 days could miss over 1 year of schooling between Founders and Year 10.

Attendance on the Last Day of School

- The last day of Term 4 is a special one for each class.
- The Class Community celebrates with a feast - we ask for a plate of simple, nutritious food to share.
- It is also a gifting occasion, Teacher to Student. The Teachers have lovingly made cards for the children, a pictorial personal message relevant to each child's stage of development. This tradition began in the first Steiner schools.
- Please make sure your child is here to be part of the Classroom Community and to receive this gift personally.
- Please honour this 'labour of love' and see that the card gets home safely – thankyou.
- Collect your children from their classrooms at 12.30pm.

ii. Punctuality

Our day begins at 9.00 am. The solid Main Lesson work starts around 9.20am. The first 20 minutes of the day provide the foundation for this concentrated work. Rhythmic activities, Language exercises, counting and tables work. This group work consolidates many basic skills and at the same time harmonises and centres the child for the depths and riches of the Main Lesson work.

One notices that a child who enters late cannot partake fully in Main Lesson work, that he/she often has a reduced attention span and a kind of superficial participation. Thus he/she is 'below par' in the Main Lesson and this can lead to lack of joy in the learning experience, even to lack of self-esteem. The child can feel, time and again, via lateness, that he/she does not quite 'fit' with what is going on. Patterns form, unnoticed, so quickly.

Mondays are often 'the worst' days, yet Mondays set the tone for the coming week!

It must also be said that latecomers may disturb those who are already preparing for the work ahead.

Children who arrive around 8.45/8.50am have a chance to:

- shed traffic/travel stress
- ‘acclimatise’ to the school ethos
- chat with friends
- anticipate the work of the day

Relationships found at the beginning of the day are an important part of the friendship chain. Please plan to arrive by 8.50am for School, 8.55am for Foundation Year.

We understand and accommodate the unforeseen morning tangles.

iii. School Arrival/Pick up after School

Arrival: Children are supervised from 8.30am onwards. We need to let you know that those children who arrive earlier may be unsupervised and very early birds may even be in the school ground without adults around at all.

- Early arrivals have two designated areas, both viewable areas:
 - the flat
 - the hill

If you have no alternative other than to drop off before 8.30am then please write a note to the College of Teachers Executive regarding your predicament and seek support. It is critical that you come up to the school and check whether an adult is present before you drop children off very early.

Pick up: Pick up times/staggered departures – from the flow through

See area map page 55

Foundation Year	2.50 pm
Class 1.....	2.55 pm
Class 2.....	3.00 pm
Classes 3 and 4	3.05 pm
Classes 5 and 6	3.15 pm from the Bottom Carpark

Late pick up

Students wait in the breezeway.

If you cannot arrive by 3.20pm please phone and let us know. Thank you.

See page 50 for Safe Traffic Procedures and wet day/early pick up procedures page 54.

iv. Homework

Teachers may give homework for the purpose of completing unfinished work, to practise concepts taught in class and to support a child in a weak area.

Homework may be introduced from Class 3 onwards. The content and frequency of homework is decided by individual Teachers according to their perception of class needs. Reading practice at home is not seen as formal homework; teachers may encourage parental assistance with this during the week.

v. Fortnightly Newsletter

Our Newsletter contains snippets from each class, a cover article, an article from Michael Grose, a scattering of photographs, dates to put in your calendar, various Community messages, snippets from here and there....

vi. School Photos - October

You will receive notification in advance. On offer are:

- Class group
- Individual students
- Family groups
- Whole School photo

Payment is direct to the Photographers via their supplied envelope or through their website.



vii. Health Matters

• First Aid

Ghilgai School will, at all times, care for sick and injured children in the best way possible.

We do not have unlimited provision for care of a sick child and therefore ask you to adhere to the following guidelines:

- A child in need should go home as soon as possible. If phoned and asked to pick up your child, you must endeavour to arrive within 30 minutes to do this (unless there are agreed exceptional circumstances).
- We ask that you accept our First Aider's judgement without dispute and do not cause the child's stay in the sickbay to be unduly extended.
- If you know a child will need first aid support during the day, then please choose to keep your child at home. We are unable to provide 'nursing care' for a sick child.

• Medication

Should your child require regular or occasional medication during school hours please give a note to your Class Teacher with the medication and fill in a medication form, available from Reception, and give it to the Class Teacher.

The Class Teacher may ask our First Aider to dispense it.

Do not send children with medication to self-medicate. No medication is to be kept in a child's school bag.

• Colds and Flu - Guidelines

Your child needs to be well at school. Some children return too early from colds and flu and spend a miserable day at school when they ought to be snuggled up at home. They also infect others. We hope these simple guidelines will assist you in deciding upon home or school:

- A coughing child spreads germs with every cough - droplet infection. The coughing is also tiring for the child.
 - A child with a running nose (and a box of tissues) spreads infection by droplets and by hand. They are also miserable/out of sorts and stressed.
 - A premature return to school may also be counter-productive - the demands of the school day drain strength and a relapse often occurs. Rest is important.
- If your child has vomiting or has diarrhoea he/she must not return to School for at least 24hrs afterwards.

- **Contagious Diseases**

The Health Department provides a schedule of exclusions - Please contact Reception for advice.

- **Unimmunised children** must remain at home during an outbreak of a contagious disease - the Health Department directs this process. The School will notify you promptly of any outbreaks.
- It is important for the school to know when these contagious diseases are about. Please tell us so we can notify our Community and protect others.

viii. Parent/Teacher Co-working

Parent/Teacher Evenings

This is an important opportunity for you to hear about the current stage of development of the Class and to receive an outline of the curriculum so that you will be able to share your child's learning journey.

Often specific Class issues are raised and discussed. There is also an important social aspect to these meetings, which helps to build the Class Community. We request that each family please be represented at each Class meeting.

Classroom visits

- Make an opportunity to come up with your child once per week (at least once per fortnight) and share his/her work.
- Enjoy strengths, notice difficulties when they arise but above all confirm his/her efforts, so that School is recognised as a worthwhile place, part of your total environment (not as a place of convenience - dropped off at 9 am, collected again at 3 pm).
- This classroom sharing is just as important as regular Parent/Teacher conversations but is so easily lost in the lather of the days. This should not peter out in middle years; rather grow on to Class 6.
- Make this a time of sharing with your child, not an opportunity to discuss progress with the Class Teacher.
- Check with your Class Teacher – morning or afternoon visit?

Parent Conversations during term 2 & 3

Class Teachers schedule Parent Conversations and actively seek your participation in this opportunity to discuss your child's progress. It is always worthwhile - we don't need 'problems' to discuss, it is important to exchange positives, and important that we consolidate our co-working.

If you cannot make your rostered appointment, then let us know in the morning so that we can rearrange. It is such a waste of time and energy to just wait and wait for nothing. Our Teachers take their responsibilities seriously and inwardly prepare for each conversation. Thank you

ix. Lost Property

- Send a note to the Class Teacher or pop it in the letter box and we're happy to help you find lost treasured items - we'll pass the note around the classes.
- Don't allow students to wear valuable trinkets to school.
- Found clothing is usually placed in a basket on the seat in the breezeway entrance or on pegs outside the toilets if wet. It is stored until the end of term and then it goes to the Op Shop.



x. Parent Participation in School Life.

Ghilgai maintains small classes (max = 20) and to the students it represents an extended family!

When the Parent Community works together cohesively and joyously, it fructifies the children's lives on many levels.

Parents feel supported by others who are striving in the same basic direction.

Your participation is encouraged, it is a vital element to our growing and thriving School Community.

There are a number of ways to become involved within the School Community:

- Attendance at Class Evenings, Whole School Sharing, Class Plays, Festivals
- Education Evenings
- Activity Groups – Children's Tent Craft, Workshops...
- Working Groups – Working Bees
- Festival Working Groups
- Ghilgai Parent Seed Group
- Ghilgai Organic Co-operative (GOC). A small group of parents manage our Food Co-op. Its aim – to supply well-priced nourishing food to families. Ask at Reception for a product list and contact details.



5. Events and Festivals

i. Open Day

Our Open Day in a way has become “our festival” - Ghilgai’s own festival day. A celebration that centres on our children and their education. It nourishes the community of adults who surround them and co-work for their wellbeing - parents and teachers, and grandparents and friends and extended family. It is a day for joy and gratitude. It helps to sustain the life of our School.

Open Day is an opportunity to share ‘the fruits’ of this education. The classroom displays, when viewed sequentially, provide an overview of our curriculum – Founders to Class 6.

Child development ‘unfolds’ as one moves through the classes in sequence. Rudolf Steiner, in a unique way, structured a wonderful curriculum around these developmental stages, a curriculum that nurtures the whole child.

Preparation for Open Day begins early in the year. Perhaps you can join a working group or make articles for the Children’s Tent. Watch for articles in the Newsletter or contact Seed Group.

ii. Autumn Market

Autumn Market usually takes place in Term 1. It is a social occasion – lots of lovely food, busking, interesting adult stalls and children selling lovingly crafted articles. It’s a celebration of friendship.

iii. Weekly morning Sharing

Sharing is held weekly at 9.05am-9.25am in the Music Room. Our Sharing brings all classes together to sing, celebrate birthdays and to share an item. To foster an inclusive environment and positive behavior via illuminating chats from teachers. To share announcements. Parents are welcome to attend and warmly invited to join in the singing.



iv. Whole School afternoon sharings

Held in Wahroongah beginning around 2pm.

These are joyous occasions in Term 1/2/3 to which families are warmly invited.

Each class has a time slot and presents a-little-something...

songs/recorder/poem/rhythms/work samples...

The children enjoy the offerings of their friends across the classes.

v. Festival of Learning

Held in late Term 2/early Term 3 (3.15 to 6pm). This is essentially Open Classrooms - with a warm welcome to everyone – parents/friends/relatives. The students' work is displayed on the walls and their Main Lesson books on the desks. Visitors go to their child's classroom first and they may browse the other classrooms too.

vi. Other Festival Celebrations

Celebration of the festivals gives depth and meaning to the changing seasons. Each celebration has a different format and all have now become loved traditions in the School Community. Parents and families are welcome.

- Easter - near Eastertide
- Winter Solstice - around June 21st
- Spring - second last week of Term 3
- Christmas - last week of Term 4

vii. Our Mid-Winter Chamber Concert is always a highlight of the year.

The instrumental students share their achievements joyfully – individually and in groups. Hosted by the Instrumental Teachers.

viii. Giving to Others

Ghilgai strives to foster the growth of empathy and to nurture kindness. The School facilitates several Giving Occasions each year.

- On Pyjama Day – a chain of donated gold coins & notes is laid out along the walls of Wahroongah and then donated to charity.
- In Term 2/3 we have our major fund-raising drive for Others – our goal is \$1000 plus ... we've bought sleeping pods for the homeless, supported an African Orphanage, fostered children via the Smith Family.
- At Christmas, non-perishable food is collected and donated to our local Salvation Army for distribution.

ix. Yoogali—Our School Community Room

Many hands have worked lovingly to create this beautiful room. Its dynamic shape is enhanced by rich earth colours that sing together and bond with the outside landscape which enriches the overall experience of 'the deep peace of the earth'.

The aboriginal word Yoogali, meaning 'Rejoice', evokes this mood.

We are delighted to have community events in Yoogali.

We seek to preserve the resonance of this room and its environment and to use it in such a way that its original character grows stronger and more vibrant.

We want the Mothers, Fathers and Grandparents, babies and little children to be able to bask in its energy at Playgroup.

To this end we have prepared a few rules for its use. We seek your understanding and support to maintain them.

- If you wish to run an activity in Yoogali you need to pick up a proposal form from Reception. Please return it to Reception and it will be passed on to our Property Manager. The College of Teachers and Directors will decide on appropriate room usage. They will consider OH&S issues and the preservation of Yoogali's ethos.



6. Safety Matters

i. School Closures - Fire Danger

Ghilgai School closes on

- All Code Red days
- All days of Extreme Fire Danger
- Some Severe Fire Danger days
- Playgroup closes on all Severe days as well.

Once the closure decision is made it will not be changed.

Code Red Days — CLOSED

- On Code Red days (Code Red days have a Fire Danger Index (FDI) of 100+) Ghilgai will be closed, as will be many schools across the state. Two staff will be present 8.40-9.15am to ensure that no children are dropped at school.

Extreme Fire Danger — CLOSED

- The description of an Extreme Fire Danger day has FDI 75-99. It may therefore be very close to a Code Red day, so after consultation with the CFA, Ghilgai has decided to put in place the same procedures as used for Code Red days.

Severe Fire Danger Days (FDI 50 –74)

- The CFA have proposed that some schools should consider closure on Severe ‘peak’ days where the following criteria are reached:
 - Temperature 30°+ with low humidity
 - N/NW winds, 30 km+ (clothes on the line dry quickly)
 - No rain for 2/3 weeks
 - Severe day preceded by 2/3 days of 30°+

Ghilgai will close on Severe days which fit the preceding criteria. You may only receive notice the day before. A half day closure is also a possibility.

- Ghilgai has a detailed Bush Fire Emergency plan. Please ask Reception if you would like to read this.

Relocation. In situations deemed necessary, for example pre-empting an ember attack, we have strict policy and guidelines about relocation. You will be informed annually regarding arranged relocation venue. A private bus company is on call for this purpose.

If you are unable to safely pick up your children from this venue, then do not be unduly concerned, staff will remain with them and make individual contact with you as soon as practicable. Our first duty is to care for the children.

Please listen to ABC 774 (AM) for fire information and check www.emergency.vic.gov.au

Each class has a Phone Tree to be used in emergencies (e.g. School closure days due to fire risk). Make sure you have it and understand it.

ii. Days of Extreme heat – pick up

You may wish to collect your child at midday. Please ensure you complete the Early Departure Book which is kept near the door of each classroom, so the Teacher can account for absent students.

School will continue as usual although some classes may be combined if we have low student numbers.

iii. Safe Traffic Procedures Map page 55

• Safety Prohibitions

School parking is limited at Ghilgai therefore we have procedures for parking and traffic flow. The procedures below have been designed to ensure the safety of all and we request that each person entering the school grounds familiarises himself/herself with them. If you are unsure of anything in relation to our traffic procedures, please ask someone for clarification.

NEVER (EVER!)

- Park on the incline leading to the Flow Thru. A car that reverses here is extremely dangerous. This is also our access for Emergency vehicles.
- Park in front of our old farm gate – Emergency access/exit

• Arriving at School/Drop off

Option 1 – Drop off

Enter Ghilgai from Liverpool Road, follow the road up the hill, veering right at the bend towards the 'Drop off' point. You will see a crossing. Please be very alert for children here! To ensure a good flow of traffic please do not allow your child/ren to disembark here.

A little further along is our 'Drop off' point, this section is single lane only - DO NOT OVERTAKE. Children may unexpectedly alight from the driver's side of another vehicle and step into your path.

The painted lines on the road provide a 'safety zone' for the children to organize themselves with schoolbags, goodbye waves, etc.

DO NOT PARK ON THE SAFETY ZONE LINES.

- Please be mindful of the cars behind you.
- Encourage your child/ren to be ready to go promptly and safely. Children should leave the car from the left-hand side.
- You must leave this area immediately after dropping children.
- Do not drop off at Founder's walkway/crossing.
- If you are feeling rushed, just drive a little further, turn left into the Overflow Area and park your car there.

Option 2 – Park and Walk Up.

- Park in the Bottom Carpark (open area facing Liverpool Rd).
- Reverse park at all times to ensure safety of all children.
- You may also park in the Overflow Area (Service Rd, parallel with Liverpool Rd nose in parking.)
- Please park mindfully. Make sure you are not blocking others. Do not take up more than one car space.
- You can walk up to the School via the Founder's path or via the path that leads up to the Flow Thru.
- In warmer weather please be alert, you could find a snake on the walkway or in the bushland - particularly the Founder's Path.

- **Founders Walkway Closure times**

For the safety of all children the Founder's path will be locked (from the crossing up to the gate) at 9.10am each morning and reopened at 2.50pm. If you are collecting your child during the day then please use the Main Entrance through the breezeway.

- **Special Needs**

If you require assistance with parking due to pregnancy, ill health, injury, loss of mobility or any other reason, then please let us know, we are happy to help.

- **Exiting the School**

1. Via the Main Exit – as on map – turning either way is safe.
2. Via Exit on the brow of the hill – only a left turn is permitted

- **Picking up from School**

Option 1 – Park and walk up

Parking is available in either the Bottom Carpark (reverse park) or in the Overflow Area. Please use the walking paths to get to your child's pick up area.

- If you are collecting younger children, and are parked in the Bottom Carpark, please return to your car as soon as you have collected them as Class 5 & 6 parents will need these car spaces by 3.15pm.

- **Option 2 – Flow Thru**

Upon entering Ghilgai from Liverpool Road, follow the road around the bend and then left up into the Flow Thru area. If you are the first car to arrive, the key to unlock the chain is located in the bag hanging from the red Fire Hydrant (near the breezeway). Please ensure the key is returned here once the chain is unlocked.

The parking area is wide enough to allow three vehicles to park across and three vehicles deep. In theory, the younger classes will have departed by the time the older classes arrive. For traffic to flow safely and efficiently through this area the following must occur;

- Founder and Class 1 parents - park in the right or middle lanes.
- Class 2, 3 & 4 Parents - park in the middle and left lanes.
- *If you have children in multiple classes it is best you keep to the middle or left lanes.

Be ready to accept your child/ren as soon as they arrive with their Teacher. This includes having any other children with you buckled in and ready to go.

Please co-operate with any directions given by Teachers and Staff.

NEVER REVERSE your car in this area unless specifically directed to do so by a Staff member.

On occasion, you may be asked to move on and park in the Overflow Area, if those behind you are ready to leave and you are still waiting for your child to come down. Whilst our Teachers will make every effort to be down on time, there are sometimes unforeseeable delays.

Please support and respect the work of the 'Traffic Warden' to keep traffic flowing safely and efficiently. This person is working for the good of everyone... and you may not see the rationale of a directive from your car's position.

Please leave promptly once everyone is safely in the car.

We thank you for your cooperation and patience.

- **Designated Waiting Areas.**

Each class has a designated area and time for pick up. Please wait in or beside your car, your children will be brought to you. Please do not take your child before the teacher has released him into your care.

CLASS	TIME	PICK UP AREA
Sessional & Founders	2.50PM	Flow thru – Lower seating
1	2.55PM	Flow thru – Lower seating
2	3.00PM	Flow thru – Upper seating
3	3.05PM	Flow thru – Upper seating
4	3.05PM	Flow thru – Upper seating
5	3.15PM	Bottom Carpark- Liverpool Rd
6	3.15PM	Bottom Carpark - Liverpool Rd

x. Wet Weather Pick up

On rainy afternoons all children from Founders to Class 6 gather together in the Breezeway and the Teachers “ferry” the children down to their cars.

- If you are waiting in the Flow Thru please stay there – don’t come up.
- If you are parked in the Bottom Car Park, walk up to collect your child/children and move off quickly.
- Class 5/6 students finish a little earlier on wet days in order to be grouped with siblings.

xi. Half day / Early pick up

Please park your car and walk up to your child’s classroom. If it is not a scheduled half day (ie. Founders & Class 1) please ensure you sign the Early Departure book inside your child’s classroom, and where possible, acknowledge your departure with the Class Teacher.

Please DO NOT park at the Drop off area.

xii. Class Meetings in the evening

The Flow Thru will be open for parking on these nights. Please aim to park in the usual three lane formation to maximise car spaces. This area will be lit for safe access to the classrooms.

xiii. Open Day, Festivals, Sharings, etc.

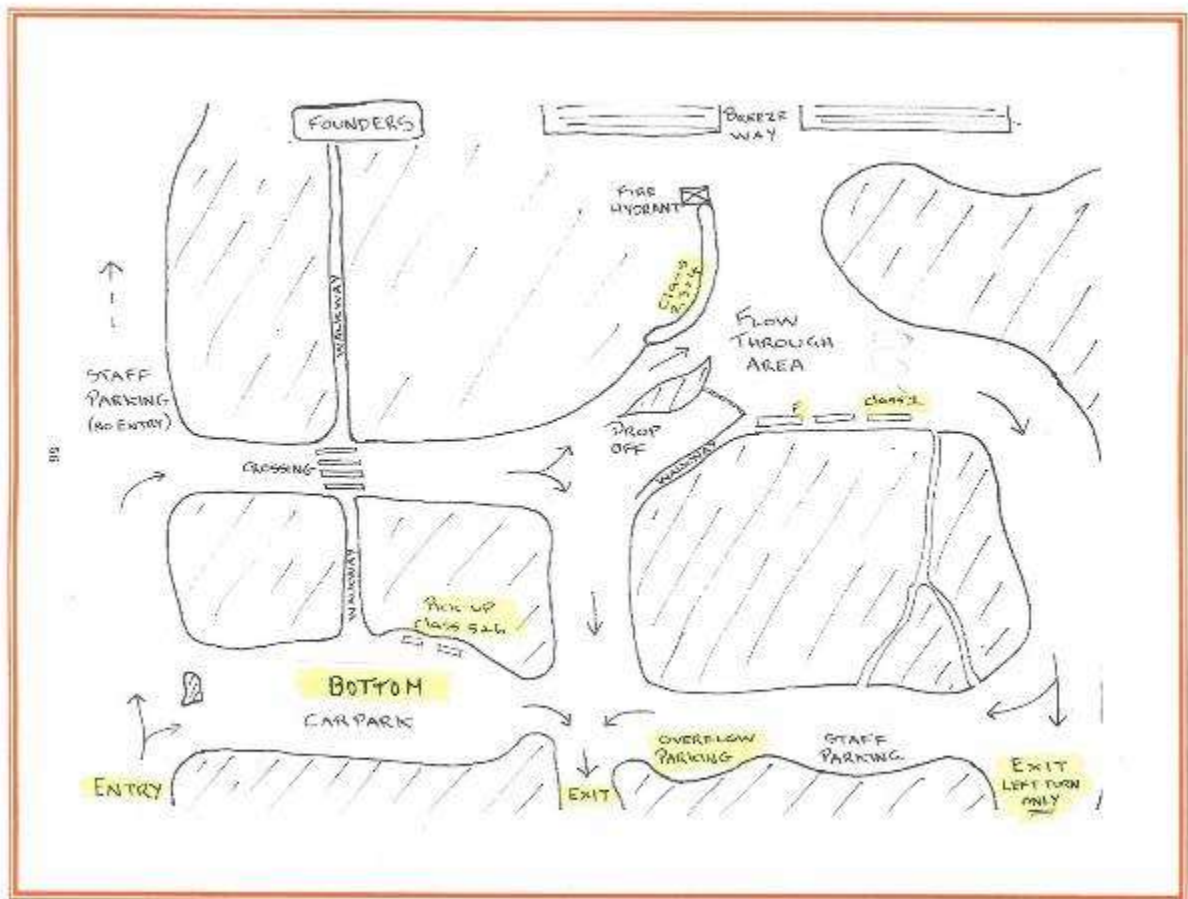
Special instructions will be provided for certain events as necessary.

If it’s too far for you or your guests to walk up the hill to our buildings to attend an event, please do not stay away or struggle - let us know and we can make provisions for you.

- Do not parallel park on Liverpool Rd, if need be you can go to the brow of the hill and enter Terreden Drive and angle park. Do not block the drive ways of our neighbours.

Your co-operation in these matters is critical for the safety of our Community. If at any time you witness a near miss or have concerns about procedures or practice then please make it known to our Education Co-ordinator via a note or email. If urgent phone Reception immediately.

Thank you for your Support



7. Ghilgai School Structure

Ghilgai's management structure is free and fluid. It is not dependent on any single person. It is enriched and strengthened by the many people who flow through it. It is a strong, firm structure made up of four interweaving bodies.

i. **The College of Teachers** is comprised of all the Teachers at Ghilgai. This is the sensing heart of the School.

“Every day we live with the children and share their scene. Daily we see the needs of the school around us and feel its energy moving through us. We do not migrate to a staffroom away from the ebb-and-flow of the School Community life.

Individually we spend long hours in preparation in order to enable our vision for each class to be realised. We have a common vision for our School and work hard to uphold it. Our shared values unite us. We nourish and support one another as we journey through the class levels.

We meet regularly as a staff to deal with practicalities, to consider issues, to grow in education. To collaborate and consider individual students and to work for their potential.

“Upon our table nourishing bread and living water are always available.”



- ii. The College of Teachers Executive** has a maximum of 3 members drawn from the College of Teachers. The Education Coordinator also attends.

The College of Teachers Executive is a strong entity with the responsibility of principal-ship. The capacity of each person is expanded in the climate offered by the potential of all the others. The life of the school weaves through the College of Teachers Executive.

This body meets fortnightly, and otherwise as frequently as necessary when urgent matters arise. Decisions arise from consensus. When working on a difficult or delicate issue the College of Teachers Executive may have to meet on several consecutive days in order to gain resolution. At times it may have to work on a major issue over several weeks - treading deliberately with love and care and respect, secure in confidentiality.

The College of Teachers Executive is responsible for curriculum, student learning outcomes, student wellbeing, Teacher performance and development, the safety of the School Community, compliance with Government regulations.

The College Charter governs the work of the College of Teachers Executive. It is constituted as a committee of the Board of Directors; it is accountable to the Board.

iii. The Board of Directors – Governance

- Is responsible for financial and legal matters
- It enables the wellbeing of the school
- The Board meets monthly
- The Ghilgai School Constitution is a legal document that details all operations of the Board.

iv. The Parent Seed Group

The Parent Seed Group is a School Committee formally recognised by the Board of Directors.

It is accountable to the College of Teachers Executive. It is bound by the Seed Group Handbook. It fosters the ethos of Ghilgai School, it seeds community-building activities social and cultural activities, and raises funds for targeted projects.

Seed Group is made up of

- Parents (representatives from each class) with a maximum of 12 people.
- 1 or 2 representatives from the College of Teachers Executive or delegated teachers.

All Parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in ‘Open Seed Group Meetings’ to discuss events and activities for the current year.

Seed Group is often the driving force behind activities, but each and every family is what makes the magic happen. We encourage you to become involved where you think you can help (you may even surprise yourself).



- **These four bodies** form a living whole – one body bound together by the cords of love. Love for the children. The children-of-the-present and the children-of-the-future. All the children who will, in the years to come, be the guardians of earth.

A verse by Rudolf Steiner used in the first Waldorf School

*May there reign here spirit-strength in love;
may there work here spirit-light in goodness;
born from certainty of heart,
and from steadfastness of soul,
so that we may bring to young human beings
bodily strength for work, inwardness of soul and clarity of spirit.
may this place be consecrated to such a task;
may young minds and hearts here find
servers of the light, endowed with strength,
who will guard and cherish them.*

8. Ghilgai Financial Policy

The Ghilgai **Financial Policy** is to be read in conjunction with Ghilgai's current **Fee Schedule**.

Our current **Fee Schedule** is always available from Reception or the Bursar.

i. Introduction

Ghilgai presents its fee policy in a spirit of social and financial responsibility.

- Parents are required to conscientiously undertake their financial obligations
- Parents **must** communicate with the Bursar if they are unable to meet their fee commitment.

It is a condition of enrolment that parents and guardians agree to be bound by all Rules and Regulations contained in the **Ghilgai Financial Policy** and its associated **Fee Schedule**, and **Parent Commitment to Ghilgai School** form.

This agreement between Ghilgai and enrolling parents/guardians is formalised by signing the **Parent Commitment to Ghilgai School** form.

Any failure to meet these requirements may result in the student being unable to continue in the school.

New parents must meet the Bursar to hand in their completed *Notification of Fee Payment Method* form prior to the student's commencement in the School.

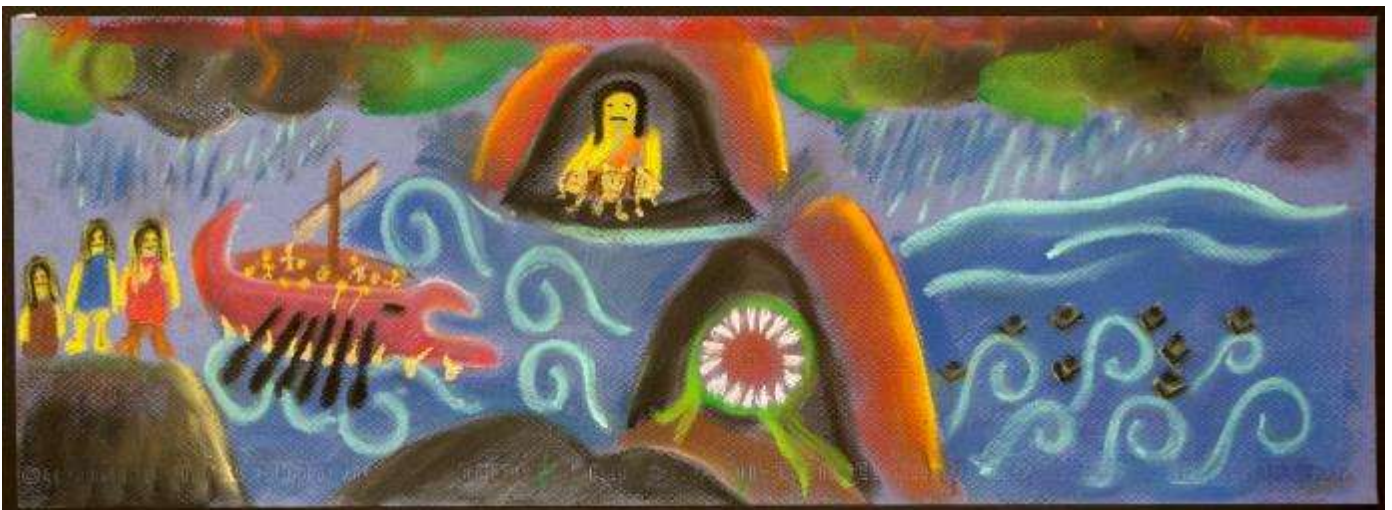
ii. Parent/Bursar Communication requirements

Communication is a key element in any environment. Our Bursar is there to assist and support you to meet your financial obligations to Ghilgai School.

1. **Student Withdrawal:** If you plan to withdraw a current student(s) you **must give one term's advance notice in writing to the Bursar**. A child withdrawn at any time without one term's notice will incur one term's fees in lieu.

Parents must give a full term's notice to the Bursar in writing, if they wish to withdraw a student for a term or more of extended absence (e.g. in order to travel) and still want to keep a place in the class. Full fees will be payable for the duration of the absence.

2. **Fee Payments:** If families are unable to make fee payment by the due date, they must contact the Bursar to discuss their situation. We recognise that financial stress may occur suddenly (due to job loss, ill health, etc) and will assist you to set up a payment plan. The Directors have compassion in times of need.
3. **Unpaid Fees:** Only in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Directors, will a student be allowed to enter a new school term if the fees for the previous term remain unpaid without a Payment Plan in progress.
4. **Payment Plan breach:** Where a Payment Plan commitment ceases and where no communication has been made with the Bursar, the school has the right to withdraw student enrolment.



Class 4 – A Norse Myth

ii. General Information

1. **Enrolment Fee:** A non-refundable Booking Fee is to be paid when an application for enrolment is made.
2. **Annual Foundation Class intake:** A Confirmation Fee is required 8 months prior to starting. This is deducted from the first term's fee account.
3. **Fee Responsibility:** The applicants, whose signatures appear on the enrolment form, shall be jointly and separately responsible for the payment of all fees and charges. Both parents and/or guardians where applicable must sign the application form in order for enrolment to proceed. Where separated parents split the fee account, Ghilgai will keep both parents informed of payments made to that account.
4. **Fee Payment:** Parents must pay fees by the due date. Payment plans are available – talk to the Bursar.
5. **Siblings:** Ghilgai School do not have discounts for siblings. We have kept our fees as low as possible to embrace a wide community.
6. **Fees and Charges:** Fees and charges are subject to periodic amendment by the Directors. Details of fee changes are provided on the annual Ghilgai **Fee Schedule**.
7. **Term fees Class 1:** Includes a *start-up* kit – library bag, 2 boxes of crayons - sticks/blocks, Ghilgai backpack. Each child receives a recorder – parents pay half of the cost.
8. **Term fees Class 2 to 6:** Students entering mid-stream - Parents pay the cost of the *start-up* items required.
9. **Term fees in all Classes:** Includes paper, books, pencils, art/craft materials. Occasionally parents may be asked to pay for a special item in senior classes.
10. **Playgroup, Sessional Children & Foundation Class:** Fees are charged by the term. Playgroup positions must be booked for the year – fees payable termly in advance. There are no refunds for non-attendance and/or public holidays that fall within a term.
11. **Fee Increases:** You will be notified with Term 4 fees of any fee increase for the coming year. We strive always to make our school financially accessible to many.

12. **Fees in Advance:** Foundation Year children and children commencing Ghilgai mid-stream are required to pay one term of fees in advance. This is invoiced across 4 terms of the school year.
13. **Building Fund Contribution:** Each family is asked to make a Building Fund Contribution towards Ghilgai School's Building Fund. **This is a one-off payment per family upon School entry.**
This payment can take the form of:
 - A Tax-Deductible Donation to the School
 - A Loan to the School, refunded when the last family member leaves the School
14. **Camps:** Camps begin around Class 3. You will be given an estimate of camp costs early in Term 1 with invoices being sent separately to Annual Fees. Camps will be invoiced by the Bursar and payment of Class Camps are due in advance of the camp departure date as per the invoice.
15. **Excursions:** Excursions are organised by the Class Teacher. Excursions will be invoiced by the Bursar and payment of Class excursions are due in advance of the excursion departure date as per the invoice.
16. **PE enrichment activities:** Swimming/Karate/Gym – Fees include these extra-curricular activities.
17. **Private property/Insurance:** Parents are advised to provide comprehensive cover for any private property which may be brought to the school, especially valuable items such as musical instruments or bicycles. The school, whilst trying to avoid any damage to such items, does not accept any responsibility for damage to, or loss through accident or theft, of such items, whether within the school or in transit to or from school.
18. **Accident Cover/Insurance:** The School has 24hour comprehensive insurance cover for all students in its care. The cost of this policy is included in the fees.
19. **CSEF (Camps, Sport and Excursion Fund)** Funding Support is provided by the Victorian Government to assist families to cover the cost of school trips, camps, and sporting activities. If you hold an eligible Health Care Card, Pensioner Card, Concession Card or are a temporary foster parent then you are eligible to apply. Application forms are available from the Bursar or Reception and need to be submitted in Term 1. We encourage families to apply and will support you through the application process.

20. Conveyance Allowance

Conveyance Allowance is a government subsidy that contributes to student travel costs if certain criteria are met. Forms are given in Ghilgai's Orientation Pack. If you move to a new house, please consider whether you may be eligible.



21. Tax Deductible Donations received with Gratitude

Ghilgai School Ltd Public Building Trust Fund is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) for Deductible Gift Recipient status (DGR). If your family would like to invest in additional financial contributions to Ghilgai School Ltd please communicate with the Bursar who will issue you with a Tax-Deductible receipt.

iv. Fee payment methods

Option A

- ❖ Payment in full each term, by the due date, cash or through internet banking transfer.

NB: Email notification to the Bursar is required immediately upon internet payment.

Option B

- ❖ If circumstances necessitate, a Payment Plan can be negotiated with the Bursar, it will commence prior to the student beginning the term. This Payment Plan must cover each term's fees prior to the end of that term.



v. Debt Policy

Unpaid Fees

Fees are deemed not to have been paid if remittance is not received by the instalment date.

Procedures to recover outstanding fees will be carried out in a confidential and sensitive manner by the Bursar, in liaison with the Directors.

Failure to Communicate

Any outstanding accounts may be handed to an external Debt Collector if a parent fails to meet their contracted commitment and fails to communicate with the Bursar in relation to a negotiated Payment Plan. Any costs associated with debt collection will be the responsibility of the debtor(s).

Exiting Students/Outstanding Fees

If fees are outstanding on the departure of a student from Ghilgai School, the unpaid amount remains payable. Parents must make a written arrangement with the Bursar in relation to the method of settlement. If this is not undertaken, the account may be handed over to a debt collector and/or solicitor after thirty (30) days following the end of the term of departure, all associated costs will be payable by the debtor.

Siblings of existing students for whom there are fees outstanding will usually not be accepted into the school.

Instrumental Lessons

When fees are outstanding instrumental lessons are closed to the student.

9. Appendix

- i. Ghilgai School Privacy Statement
- ii. Foundation Year
- iii. Entry to Class 1
- iv. Affirmations

Epilogue

Photos



1. Ghilgai School Privacy Statement

1. Ghilgai collects personal information, including sensitive information about pupils and parents or guardians before and during the course of a pupil's enrolment at the School. This may be in writing or in the course of conversations. The primary purpose of collecting this information is to enable the School to provide schooling to pupils enrolled at the school, exercise its duty of care, and perform necessary associated administrative activities, which will enable pupils to take part in all the activities of the School.
2. Some of the information we collect is to satisfy the School's legal obligations, particularly to enable the School to discharge its duty of care.
3. Laws governing or relating to the operation of a school require certain information to be collected and disclosed. These include relevant Education Acts, and Public Health [and Child Protection] laws.
4. Health information about pupils is sensitive information within the terms of the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) under the Privacy Act 1988. We may ask you to provide medical reports about pupils from time to time.
5. The School may disclose personal and sensitive information for educational, administrative and support purposes. This may include to:
 - other schools and teachers at those schools;
 - government departments (including for policy and funding purposes);
 - medical practitioners;
 - people providing educational, support and health services to the School, including specialist visiting teachers;
 - providers of learning and assessment tools;
 - assessment and educational authorities, including the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and NAPLAN Test Administration Authorities (who will disclose it to the entity that manages the online platform for NAPLAN);
 - people providing administrative and financial services to the School;
 - anyone you authorise the School to disclose information to; and anyone to whom the School is required or authorised to disclose the information to by law, including child protection laws.
6. Personal information collected from pupils is regularly disclosed to their parents or guardians.
7. The School may use online or 'cloud' service providers to store personal information and to provide services to the School that involve the use of personal information, such as services relating to email, instant messaging and education and assessment applications. Some limited personal information may also be provided to these service providers to enable them to authenticate users that access their services. This personal information may reside on a cloud service provider's servers which may be situated outside Australia.
8. Parents may seek access to personal information collected about them and their son/daughter by contacting the School. Pupils may also seek access to information about them. However, there will be occasions when access is denied. Such occasions would include where access may result in a breach of the School's duty of care to the pupil, or where pupils have provided information in confidence.
9. The School's Privacy Policy also sets out how parents and pupils can make a complaint about a breach of the APPs and how the complaint will be handled.
10. The School may engage in fundraising activities. Information received from you may be used to make an appeal to you. We will not disclose your personal information to third parties for their own marketing purposes without your consent.
11. On occasions information such as academic and sporting achievements, pupil activities and similar news is published in School newsletters and magazines, and on our website, this may include photographs and videos of pupil activities such as sporting events, school camps and school excursions. The School will obtain permissions from the pupil's parent or guardian to use this material as stated above.
12. We may include pupils' and pupils' parents' contact details in a class list and School directory.
13. If you provide the School with the personal information of others, such as doctors or emergency contacts, we encourage you to inform them that you are disclosing that information to the School and why.
14. All people viewing personal information are governed by the Privacy Act 1988. All School personal and regular volunteers sign a Ghilgai Confidentiality Affirmation. All Seed Group members also sign a Ghilgai Confidentiality Affirmation.

ii. Foundation Year

- Foundation Year precedes Class 1.
- In manifold ways it prepares the child for Class 1 and the learning-journey that begins in Class 1.

- **Entry into the Foundation Year** – in general, the child beginning Foundation Year will probably have turned 5 in the preceding October / November / December.

Some children who turn 5 in Jan/Feb/March may go on to Class 1 the following year – in our experience they are more likely to be girls rather than boys. We deem them Floaters because we cannot readily discern their maturity at the beginning of the year. These Floaters begin with just a few sessions, just 3 or 4 per week – and we watch for growth and expansion, and increase the number of sessions if need be. Some children flower richly quickly in the latter part of the year.

- **Sessions in Foundation Year**

- Children who turn 5 in the preceding year – 4 days a week generally speaking.
- Children who turn 5 in Jan/Feb of the Foundation year – perhaps 3 days a week.

The Foundation Teacher will consult with you about your child's sessions, some children are not ready for 4 full days. Ghilgai seeks to offer rich and challenging sessions and children need to be able to participate with energy and goodwill.

- **Starting the Year procedures**

The children begin the year gradually with rostered starting dates and half day sessions.

In the first weeks the groups are small in order to foster confidence and familiarity, and whole days do not begin until around Week 4.



iii. Entry to Class 1

Basic principles

The Pre-School years are formative and foundational to both active joyful learning and to health and well-being, in the school years, and beyond.

To enter Class 1 children must be ready in all ways – physically, socially, and in their learning capacities. We do not wish to push any child forward nor to hold any child back – finding the right time for entry to Class 1 requires careful observation and an holistic view of child development. It is a delicate issue.

Advancing a child with precocious intellectual ability can be problematical if the child is struggling on the social plane.

On the other hand, a child who needs to go on should not be held back – withholding could shadow a child’s learning experience and lead to loss of joy, even to behavioural problems. As a child matures, his whole being begins to open out expectantly and unconsciously he seeks the ‘next stage’; the beginning of formal learning. If we hold the child back to play again for a whole year, he may feel a dearth of nourishment and a lack of fulfilment.

On occasions we give a child another year in Founders in order that he may grow in confidence, expand socially and develop his concentration.

Even after the school has made the decision that the child is ready to cross the threshold into Class 1, we still watch his progress very carefully. On occasions we have gently re-aligned a child who has ‘leaked’ out of the right container, and he has been guided back to the Foundation Year environment without stress.

Satisfaction or relief may be evident in the child’s behaviour upon his return.

One needs to be ever watchful, even with the apparently ‘ready’ children – in late Class 2 or Class 3 challenges caused by age, health issues or family stress may appear. We evaluate these and are prepared to realign the child even then, in consultation with parents.

We also assess ‘readiness’ in Class 6 students – are they ready for the next stage, holistically speaking, or might the child profit from another year of enrichment before Secondary School?

We ask parents to recognise the complexity of school readiness, and to support our efforts to place the child appropriately.

The Question of “Readiness”

Children will be ‘walking into their seventh year’. This means in practice that most children will turn 6 before entering Class 1.

We have chosen not to have a cut-off date for Class 1 entry – rather, to assess the children individually in consultation with parents. The Foundation Year Teacher converses with the College of Teachers Executive regarding student readiness for Class 1.



Class 5 - Pegasus

iv. Affirmations

During the final term of the Class 6 year the students glow with anticipation. They attend Orientation Days at their Secondary Schools joyfully. In the last week the whole school gathers for their Graduation. And on the last day each student receives a reflective report from the Class Teacher about his/her personal development and learning outcomes.

This 'report' is supportive and uplifting and is simply called "Affirmations".

One day, in a moment of deep gratitude for the potential of Steiner Education, I wrote affirmations about the achievements of my Class-Six-Community.

I wrote them in the voice of the students using the inclusive 'we' in order to get closer to the inner experiences of the students.

They highlight the potential of Steiner Education.

1. We have travelled far and we are eager to journey on.
2. We are capable in the 'tool subjects' - Maths/English.
3. We are able to think clearly and creatively so that this knowledge is applied in manifold ways.
4. We are Questioners and seekers of Truth ... so ... we can enter new fields of learning with open expectancy.
5. We are confident – we quietly acknowledge our strengths and know that with effort we can overcome weakness.
6. Our individuality is strong, yet we strive to live in harmony with others; to be tolerant, understanding and compassionate. To live responsibly within the natural environment.
7. Our bodies are well co-ordinated. We know how to care for them and avoid harmful substances that impair capacity. We have diverse skills. We are practical.
8. We are independent. We value our friends, yet we do not easily succumb to peer group pressure.
9. We have a sense of purpose. We know how to exercise initiative.
10. We do not expect life to be 'a bed of roses'. We are adaptable and buoyant. We are learning to ride the waves.
11. We have great treasure - gems/gold/pearls, from many cultural epochs. Our inner being has been well nourished by great Literature. We have much to draw on as we search for meaning on Life's way.
12. We've often got a twinkle in our eye (!) and a chuckle in our heart (!) - These ripple forth from a kind of inner joy.

- Ruth

v. ... a little history of our School



In early 1982, after weeks of searching for School land we stumbled on Lot 3 Liverpool Rd. At that time Liverpool Road was a quiet road – not even the garage on the corner of Canterbury and Liverpool Road had been built. There were several pieces of land for sale along it – secluded, beautiful blocks with a view of Mt Dandenong, they were very expensive. Hopelessness had begun to settle upon us. This piece of land had two signs – “For Sale” and “Danger - do not enter!” We wondered what we’d find.

We entered with trepidation and found a beautiful block, nearly six acres, surrounded by natural bush. The sky was a brilliant blue and Mt Dandenong towered majestically above us. There was a large cleared area, and further up the slope an ideal play area. We knew it was the right place there and then! “But,” said the voice of reason, “six acres in a developing area would be far beyond you – forget it!”

Nevertheless, that vision drew us on and we walked a little further, we soon came upon the first ugly ravines/gullies, some filled with rubbish and struggling plants in a somewhat hopeless attempt to halt the devastating erosion.

There were few plants on the hill area – just firm, yellow sand scattered with pampas grass. An unusual barrenness. Many folks commented on the quality of it – a strange desert landscape, beauty and starkness combined. There were no fences and horses had trampled tiny plants and provoked further erosion. We saw foxes, hares, wallabies and rabbits. Beginning growth was eaten immediately.

We learned the land had been the site of a quarry, hence the danger sign (the present location is Fussell Rd). Mr Collier, who once lived in the house opposite and is now deceased, had worked a bulldozer daily to fill and consolidate the area. Filling was probably completed twenty-eight years ago.

The site was beautiful but the degradation from erosion was so terrible that the price was greatly reduced.

We scraped together enough money to purchase the land and erect two classrooms, as well as install essential services – all in eleven months. How did we do this? – Sacrifice and the hard-voluntary work by a faithful few saved us thousands of dollars.

In a basic way we owe our existence to Alex Podolinsky – his original loan made our inception possible and his work on the land made the buildings possible. He spent days constructing spoon drains across the site, filling ravines that were seven feet deep in some cases, spiking tractor tyres on concealed rubbish used as gully fill. The local Council forced us to drive stabilising pylons into the rocky ground, one metre deep in a close grid like manner under each building slab. Alex did this for us with his tractor and ram because we did not know where to find the extra money. It was a nightmare job! Eventually, after two or three rooms, he managed to convince the Council that it was unnecessary. We had built on the hard-rocky soil at the edge rather than worked on the fill. Alex did the painting and bagging of most classrooms, laid hot mix, worked on the services and negotiated, sometimes battled, with the authorities on our behalf.

Ruth and a wide-ranging composite class of fifteen moved into the first classroom on September 15th, 1982. There was no veranda, just a little ‘pioneer cottage’ set in a glorious desert. (This is the yellow room next to the girl’s toilets.) Nila began the Kinder/Founders group in February 1983. The finishing touches to necessities were completed by 8.15 am on the morning the children arrived. (This is the green room next to the boy’s toilets.)

We had arrived! But we lived with two constant fears – snakes in the warm months and erosion problems whenever it rained.

The spoon drains were operative, but they did not stabilise for about five years. The rain washed down sand/clay from the naked landscape and filled them quickly. They often overflowed and the excess, uncontrollable water created more erosion. So we dug, often up to our knees in mud, to keep them flowing. I remember once digging by torchlight at 10pm with a few parents who lived close by, struggling to keep the drains operative so they we might save a prepared classroom site.

We will still continue to live with the erosion problems for a few years yet, as there are still some very vulnerable places on our site. Only when the area is covered with a variety of living plants with generous roots will we be able to relax. It must also be said that the cursed pampas grass, which the visiting animal life could not destroy,

served us well – it held ravines and breakaway areas and stabilised degraded areas whilst the land remained untended. We had to concentrate on buildings in the early years, and it was very hard, both practically and financially, to erect a new classroom each year; we were thus grateful for any plants which could help retain the soil.

Even though the pampas grass may soon be classified as a noxious weed, and recent working bees have controlled its rampant spread, we still need to leave a few plants in place for a while longer in order to contain the erosion problem. As we slowly interplant, we will be able to remove them and other pests such as Cotoneaster, Leguminosae, Broome, etc. We are endeavouring to return the site to its original quality of native bush with indigenous plants. Much has been achieved and I think we have indeed ‘made a silk purse from a sow’s ear’.

Today it is perhaps easy to see Ghilgai as a beautiful place and overlook the needs of the environment that still confront us. Forget that our buildings need to be maintained and that our School ethos needs to be sustained.

Allow me to quote a few lines from a childhood poem by Dorothea Mackellar. I learned them in Grade 6 and they jingle in my mind often.

*... “We are the old-world people/ours were the hearts to dare/
Take now the fruits of our labour/nourish and guard it with care/...”*

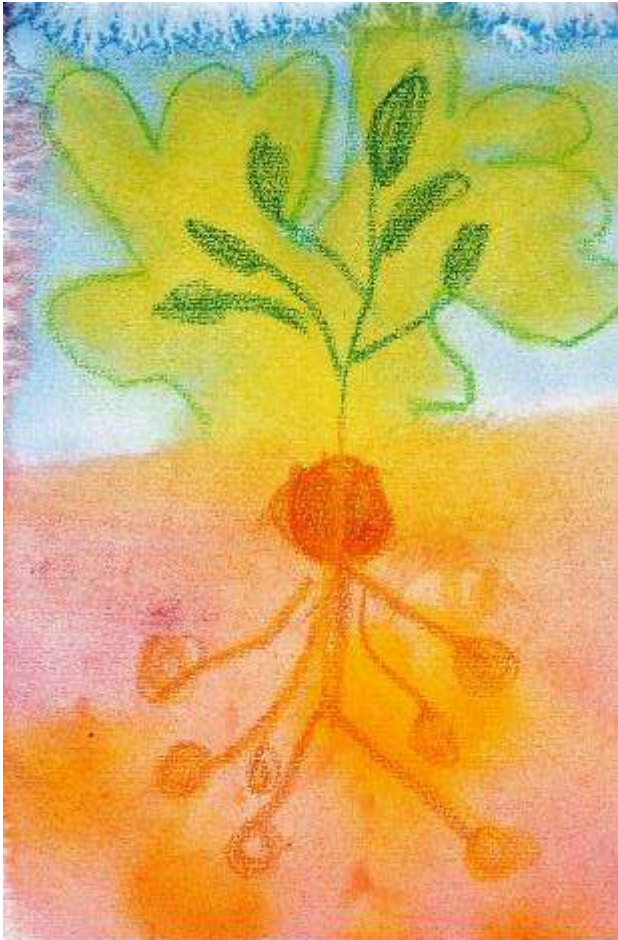
Our pioneer stage is over – Ghilgai is a vibrant entity. Many of the ‘pioneer folk’ have left our school environs, bequeathing us their work: yet their voices waft to me from time to time in the lines of that poem.

As we enter our second decade we face new challenges. We must not take for granted the work already accomplished. We must not slip into apathy, stagnate or congeal in tradition. We need, I believe, to apprehend what we have and resolve upon renewal and growth. Renewal in the environmental realm confronts us readily. At all levels we must maintain the vibrancy of the school.

In the early days, enthusiasm burned within us as we strove to give substance to our vision. That vision is only partially realised – let’s work on with the same enthusiasm and commitment!

Ruth 1992

Epilogue



“A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are important.

You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him.

He will assume control of your Cities, States, and Nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities, and corporations.

All your books are going to be judged, praised or condemned by him.

The fate of humanity is in the hands of the child.”

Abraham Lincoln

Photos

Cover – Tree – Class 3 painting

Frontispiece– Working on our Mosaic 2017 with Sioux Dollman

Page 5 – Weaving in Class 3.

Page 9 – School Community Picnic – Ghilgai Oval

Page 10 – Clay work - Class 6

Page 11 – The Music–Maker - Class 1 student.

Page 13 – Playgroup – Morning Tea – Eager listeners at story time

Page 16 – Reading on the stair rails

Page 17 – Curve Stitching Class 6

Page 18 – Animal Project Class 4 - Working on the Castle Class 6

Page 19 – Dragon Embroidery - Class 5

Page 20 – Class 6 Music outdoors

Page 21 – Hurdles – PE lesson Class 4

Page 22 – Autumn Fun

Page 24 – Music uplifts the soul.

Page 28 – The Engineers - Sandpit activities

Page 31 – Easter Festival – breadbasket

Page 34 – Class 6 Play – Chanticleer

Page 35 – Lunching

Page 42 – Winter Solstice

Page 43 – Travelling in a carriage - Founders

Page 45 – Autumn Market – the children sell their wares.

Page 47 –House projects - Class 3

Page 56 – Tree Planting together - staff hands.

Page 58 – Open Day stall

Page 61 – Norse Myth - Class 4

Page 64 –Conversations at recess

Page 65 – Jumping skills – Founders PE

Page 67 –House building project Class 3

Page 69 – Camel - Class 5 Craft

Page 71 – Pegasus – Greek Myth - Class 5

Page 73 – ‘Our pioneer cottage’ - present Class 3 room
(Looking towards the city from where-the-oval-is now)

Page 76 – We’ve got potatoes in our garden! Class 3 painting

Page 79 – Community Mosaic – flower details.

Page 81 – Recess – a cosy cubby





