



CHRYsalis SCHOOL  
for Rudolf Steiner Education



General Information

# Chrysalis School for Rudolf Steiner Education

*The healthy social life is found  
When in the mirror of each human soul  
The whole community finds its reflection  
And in the community  
The virtue of each one is living  
Rudolf Steiner*

The essence of Chrysalis School for Steiner Education is to educate the **WHOLE** person, to encourage the individual to become a citizen of the world through a balanced curriculum of academic studies, artistic activities and practical experiences — as well to develop each student’s self discipline and strength of body and will.

The foundation for educating the students at Chrysalis is based on providing skills and competencies and exploring core values. Upon this each individual may build a life-long process of learning, finding his or her path in life and developing the will, courage and strength to follow it.

The school aims to develop “free human beings who are able, of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.”

These aims are held throughout the child’s schooling and implementation of them varies according to the age and stage of each individual.

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## History

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In the late 1970’s many alternative communities were founded in the Thora Valley and among these the impulse to found a school that spoke to their needs and hopes for their children arose soon after. As part of this impulse Chrysalis School was founded in 1982 as a non-denominational and co-educational school for Rudolf Steiner Education. Over the last twenty five years, through the inspired and dedicated work of the parent body and the College of Teachers, the school that exists today has evolved. In 2008, with nearly 160 children and classes ranging from Kindergarten to Year 7, the school continues to prosper. The school is fully accredited by the NSW Board of Studies and in 2009 will be offering classes from kindergarten to Year 8.

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## Founding Values

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At Chrysalis, we nurture and foster:

- The love of learning, knowledge and wisdom
- The pursuit of truth
- The promotion of logical and critical thinking
- A moral recognition of human spiritual needs
- The pursuit of excellence in living
- An appreciation for individual and group achievement
- The promotion of wellbeing of the self and the welfare of others.
- A reverence and respect for the natural world.

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## **The School Environment**

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It would be hard to find a more beautiful environment for children. We are situated in the Thora Valley on a spectacular site of 10 hectares, 20 minutes from Bellingen and 25 minutes from the Dorrigo. Through our creative and dedicated building program in our pioneering years, we have a campus that features buildings of exceptional architectural beauty.

Each classroom has been designed and built to take into account the outstanding natural environment and to create a nurturing and beautiful learning environment.

Education at Chrysalis is based on the stages of the child's development. A child's being and destiny are seen as part of an evolutionary process in which lawful development steps ripen into freedom.

The school also aims to develop, through the curriculum and the way it is taught, a sense of appreciation and respect for life. Accordingly, students can grow and truly become 'caretakers' of the world in which we live.

Underlying all lesson preparation is a picture of lifelong human evolution which helps foster a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

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## **Rudolf Steiner 1861 -1925**

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Steiner (or Waldorf) education is based on the philosophy of Austrian philosopher, scientist, and educator Rudolf Steiner. It has stood the test of 80 years of experience and is practiced in over 1000 schools worldwide, including more than 50 in Australia. It is based on the insight into the needs and consciousness of growing children on many different levels: social, artistic, academic, physical and spiritual. Through taking account of human spiritual nature, it honours and develops both what is unique and universal in each child.

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## **Rudolf Steiner Education**

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The curriculum in a Steiner school reflects the developmental theory and philosophy on which it is based, namely an emphasis on the whole development of the human being - spiritual, physical, moral and academic. At each stage of development, the curriculum is designed to engage the abilities of the growing child. In the kindergarten, this is done through guided creative play, in the primary school through the imaginative and artistic presentation of material by the class teacher and in high school through challenging the students awakening capacity for independent thought. In this way the Steiner curriculum responds to the developmental needs at each level. It has proved to be a relevant and contemporary curriculum over 80 years, largely because it is broadly-based, integrated, interdisciplinary and comprehensive.

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## Curriculum

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Our endeavor at the Chrysalis Rudolf Steiner School is to provide an all round, in-depth education of all aspects of growing human being. All areas of cultural development are important to us; academic, physical, social, moral, artistic and spiritual.

When assessing our curriculum, the College of Teachers strives for balance between academic, artistic and practical activities.

Behind all the teaching is the recognition of the spirit in each human being and the relationship to the natural world. This elevates every subject from being simply training in skills and a gathering of information to becoming a medium for individual deepening and maturation. All aspects of the curriculum are considered important for a healthy, rounded development.

Every subject can have a direct and intimate relevance to these subtle processes of growth. As a result, because adolescence brings qualities very different from earlier years of childhood, the content and style of teaching is also different in the senior part of the school. In particular there is an emphasis on healthy development of individuality within a social context and a nurturing of the students' capacity to discern and take responsibility for their conduct and work.

Both the syllabus as prescribed by the Board of Studies and also the Rudolf Steiner curriculum are interpreted by the College of Teachers and applied within the structure of the subjects offered. An integration of the two curricula (BOS and

Rudolf Steiner Education) occurs, with each approach being quite complementary.

Overall, Chrysalis strives for a curriculum responsive to the developmental phases in childhood to young adulthood and nurturing of children's imaginations.

We encourage our students to strive for excellence, respect, find their place in the world and care for others and thereby become motivated, balanced and responsible citizens.

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## Main Lesson

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The overall purpose of the Main Lesson is to deepen, enrich and unify the learning experience through a thematic and integrated approach to a topic. It is designed to meet the needs of students at each developmental stage. This teaching unit is integrated and cross-curricular and includes activities to awaken and focus the children's attention, oral and written practise of basic skills, presentation of new material, recall and discussion of the previous day's (or earlier) work, individual working, conversation, narrative and practical work..

Main Lessons are usually organised into three to four week blocks. The aim is to provide a solid context and relevance for learning, with the avoidance of unrelated "one-off" lessons. This structure seeks to immerse students in the themes and concepts being studied.

In addition to the Main Lesson, students have 3 practise lessons which concentrate on the consolidation of skill development. These lessons could include music, language, math and English practise

lessons, eurythmy, painting, drawing, drama or singing.

The teacher endeavours to present all content in a creative manner; this brings about in the student an appreciation of the great freedom of expression that comes with learning and a valuing of the personal and unique relationship they each develop with the subject areas.

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## Kindergarten

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The world of the small child is an imaginative one. The children live in a world of fantasy and will and this expresses itself in the serious activity of play. To the small child everything is good; small children are in sympathy with the world.

The true kindergarten spirit is one which embraces the child in a home-like atmosphere of warmth and security, playing a transitional role between home and school.

The Kindergarten at Chrysalis School sets out to create a warm, loving, home-like environment in which wonder, beauty and goodness pervade everything. During the kindergarten years there is a gentle preparation for learning through domestic, practical and artistic activities such as painting, modelling, cooking, woodwork, handicraft and gardening.

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## The Primary Years

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The primary years are a time when the child's emotional life is further developed and enriched. Sheltered beneath the twin umbrella's of the family and the school, the child begins to explore the world and their place within it. The class teacher is their guide on this journey and through a sequential set of main lessons the class follows the evolution of humankind. These stories and fables ranging from the early biblical stories to the Greeks and then in class 6, the Romans and the birth of modern civilization all serve to mirror the child's own development.

In this context stories are the medium through which the world and all the things in it are communicated to primary school children and the art of story creation and storytelling is something that teachers are encouraged to develop.

It is important to note that the basic process of math's and the fundamentals of literacy are all taught thoroughly at Chrysalis. The key learning areas are covered in a deep and enduring way, but always with imagination at the heart of the pedagogy.

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### ***Class Teacher***

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A distinctive feature of Steiner Primary Education is the role of the Class Teacher. The teacher meets the children in Class 1 and together they share the journey through the primary years. The growing child experiences a greater depth of learning, when authority is established with someone they know and trust. This intimate relationship between teacher and child provides continuity and a strong sense of security through the middle phase of childhood.

The class teacher plans and sees the gradual and sensitive transition from this stage to the Class Guardian Period in the Middle School.

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### **The Middle School Years**

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In a traditional Steiner educational paradigm, the primary years extend to the end of Year 8. However in NSW primary school ends at the end of Year 6. To this end, Chrysalis has evolved the concept of a middle school which encompasses Year 6, 7 & 8. This is a time when the child enters into the first stage of adolescence, puberty, with all the turmoil and change that that presents. It is the belief of Chrysalis that the best place for this change to take place is within the stable, loving and supportive environment already established by the class teacher.

#### ***Class Guardian Period***

In adolescence, the student develops his or her rational thinking capacities. The healthy idealism and individuality of

the adolescent needs to be nurtured and protected during this period of life in which sensitive inner feelings and experiences unfold.

Teachers are respected as friends and guides, but also for the love of their subject and the integrity and commitment with which they represent their specialist field. In the Middle School, the student's individuality and potential is recognised and consciously developed. Academic rigor is fostered and a greater independence is encouraged within a holistic framework so that our young adults evolve into a sensitive awareness of themselves, one another and the world in which they live.

#### ***Birthing Main Lesson***

A particular feature of the middle school is the birthing main lesson taught by local midwife Joie Van Renen. The process of this main lesson involves the parents passing on to the child all the particulars of the story of the child's birth which the children then share with each other. Joie then guides the children in the creation of a mandala art work to represent the birth story. The artwork is framed and presented back to their parents. In this way the young adolescence is given the gift of their own story at that critical time when they are beginning to take charge of their own destiny.

#### ***Year Eight Project***

This is the culmination of all the handwork and craft programs in the school. The students must choose a major project to undertake and then find themselves a mentor within the community to guide them. These

projects span three terms and in the past have taken many diverse forms, for example, the construction of a cob oven, a guitar amp, a medieval gown, a horse bridle or a mosaic mermaid.

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## Cultural Activities

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These take many forms. As well as taking advantage of the many performance opportunities that tour to Bellingen and Coffs Harbour, the school also has an extensive excursion, camp, music and festival program.

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## Excursions

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Excursions are an important part of the curriculum, providing children with the opportunity to interact with a range of people with varying skills and experiences to share. Students also have an opportunity to visit features of the unique landscape both locally and in other regions.

Children visit National Parks and other natural environments and participate in cultural and sporting events in Bellingen, Coffs Harbour and further afield.

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## Music Program

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Music is an integral part of the Chrysalis School curriculum. Children learn recorder from Class 1 and participate in our Strings Program, learning violin from Class 3. Further to this, the children participate in music classes, ensemble and choir and perform at a range of venues throughout the year.

The range of instruments taught at Chrysalis includes recorder, strings, guitar and percussion. Further to this, the children have the opportunity to listen to performers from a variety of cultures and musical genres as a part of our cultural visitors program within the school.

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## Festivals

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The celebration of the seasonal festivals is an enriching part of the school's cultural and community life. Through art, music, story and poetry, the children are helped to identify and recognise the changing rhythms of the earth. This in turn builds and encourages a stronger connection with nature and the cosmos. Each festival has its highlights:

The **Autumn Harvest Festival** sees a bounteous gathering of mother nature's treasures and the celebration of the "Michaelic" spirit as we move into the cooler months.

The **Winter Festival** marks the solstice, the longest night of the year. The decorated lanterns that the children have prepared are carried through the darkness to a clearing in the bush. As each child walks in and places their candle in the prepared spiral a gradual and beautiful transformation of light mirrors the shepherding of their own inner light towards the outward energy of summer.

The **Spring Festival** is celebrated with songs and dancing around the Maypole Green. This cheerful event sees the children weaving wreaths of delicate

flowers to wear in their hair and gives the upper primary children an opportunity to share their recorder playing and singing for the whole school community.

At the end of the year, the children work to prepare for our **Summer Festival of Plays**. Each class prepares a performance to share with other students and the wider school community.

Other cultural festivals such as the Jewish Hanuka celebrations and the Indian Diwali festival are celebrated during the year at Chrysalis School.

These Festivals provide indispensable nourishment to the soul life of our School community.

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## **Class Camps**

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Of all the activities at Chrysalis, one of the most memorable is the Class Camp. Some classes prepare all year for this event with lessons devoted to studies that will enhance the experience.

In the early years, Classes 1-3, camps are a short time of social interaction where the children learn to live with and care for each other, with emphasis on observing the natural world from which their lessons are drawn. By Class 4 the children are studying local geography in their Main Lessons and this is a time of focusing on longer bush walks and overnight outings close by.

From Class 5 onwards these excursions extend further afield and link in with

exploration, geography, botany, farming and industry lessons. Examples of these could include trips to the western mining area, the Snowy Mountains, the Great Barrier Reef, tracing river systems from source to sea, and trips to cities to study architecture and culture.

In the Middle School, class camps involve physical challenge and an experience of our historical, artistic and political culture. In these camps students are required to show an increasing sense of responsibility, cooperation and independence.

Over their schooling not only will the students cover many geographical regions but also meet people from all walks of life. This time away as a class strengthens the relationships between students and the teacher to create a strong identity as a class group, working and growing together. Through the Class Camp Program the teacher is provided with many opportunities to observe and learn about the children, observations that are invaluable in the years and months to follow.

The children themselves learn resilience, sharing, cooperation, reverence for nature, the excitement of exploration, interest in the world around them, independence and many outdoor camping skills.

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## The School Structure

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Chrysalis School is an independent, co-educational, non denominational Steiner School (limited by guarantee).

### ***College of Teachers***

As a Steiner School, we have a College of Teachers which is responsible for educational matters and the philosophical impulse of the school. Chrysalis school does not have a principal.

### ***Board of Governors***

Administration, legal and business issues are the responsibility of our Board of Governors. The Board of Governors is elected each year from the School Community and College of Teachers.

### ***Operational and educational Administrators***

The Operational and Educational Administrators and administrative staff support the work of the Board of Governors and the College of Teachers.

### ***The Parents and Friends Committee***

An active Parents & Friends Committee provides a forum for parents to support the school through volunteer work, fundraising and social and educational activities.

Each class is supported by a Class Carer and the community of families within that class.

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## Strategic Plan

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### **Vision.**

Chrysalis School will strive to be a centre of excellence for the delivery of Steiner Education in Australia consistent with the ethos of the School and specifically to foster an active understanding and practical application of education as indicated by the published works of the late Dr. Rudolf Steiner.

The School will reflect the changing needs of education within Australia whilst maintaining the Anthroposophical philosophy that underpins the spirit of the school.

### **Mission.**

To continue to secure and grow Chrysalis School to a position where it can expand and enrich the opportunities of Steiner Education available to the school community.

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## School Funds

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Chrysalis derives its funding from 3 primary sources. From the state and federal government and from fees that parents pay. The School Board endeavours to keep educational fees to an affordable level.

The current level of fees is considered appropriate to the level of programmes that we offer and the socio economic status of the Bellingen Shire. Chrysalis School offers attractive sibling discounts and a comprehensive fee subsidy programme. Many schools require fees paid in advance, however at Chrysalis you are welcome to pay school fees by regular direct debit.

Chrysalis school was built by the combined efforts of parents, teachers and students; accordingly we honour those who wish to attend Chrysalis but may have financial challenges in doing so. This is administered through the Chrysalis fee subsidy programme.

## **House Keeping**

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### ***Administration Hours***

During term the office is open from 8.30 am to 4.10 pm Monday to Fridays. This may be varied during school holidays. Messages can be left on an answer machine or by email and fax outside these hours.

### ***Bus System***

The school is 20 minutes from Bellingen. The school is linked to the surrounding districts by a comprehensive bus system provided by the State Government, and the bus trip to and from school is a valuable social part of the school experience for the children.

### ***Food for the developing body***

Steiner education emphasises our relationship with nature. Our school prefers that children are eating a balanced diet of natural foods, consuming a minimum of processed foods. Children are to bring a fresh wholesome morning tea and lunch each day. Avoiding packaged food is the best way to ensure your child will have the energy to learn and play all day, without their attention span being affected by any synthetic chemicals present in most packaged food. Foods such as chips, sweet biscuits, chewing gum, cordial, lollies and chocolates are unacceptable.

A healthy lunch is available from the tuckshop for Class 1 to 8 on Wednesdays.

### ***Behaviour code***

Chrysalis School Behaviour Policy aims to support and promote the development of individual responsibility and respect for others, from the kindergarten child through Year 8. We strive to create a balance between the rights of the individual, and the harmony of the whole.

Using the indications of Rudolf Steiner as a guide, the College of Teachers addresses discipline and behaviour problems within the context of the overall development of the student and through the education itself. Please refer to the Parent Handbook for the specific details of the *Behaviour* and *Code of Conduct* policies.