



STEINER WALDORF SCHOOLS FELLOWSHIP

August 20th 2021

EYFS EXEMPTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS REQUESTED FROM THE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS, ELG'S & ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS.

In the exemptions application form *(below), we have been asked by the DfE to explain why the exemption is needed and how the exemption will affect children's experience. The following provides a rationale explaining what happens in a Steiner Early Childhood setting* and some of the ethos reflecting this in relation to each of the exemptions applied for under the ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES ROUTE where, in 12.1, it says 'that the provider's established principles cannot be reconciled with one or more of the learning and development requirements of the EYFS'. This will apply for all Steiner Waldorf (SW) Early Years settings in England.

Parents carefully and deliberately choose Steiner Waldorf (SW) education in order to give their children a broad, rich and imaginative early childhood experience in mixed age groups for children from 2 to 6+ years giving them an unpressured childhood experience. The education and care is holistic, play based, embeds the foundations of literacy, numeracy, science etc., and enables the children to fulfil their potential and a love of learning. The practitioners lead a range of age appropriate activities without formal instruction so that the children can learn at their own pace in an enabling environment which offers effective and broad foundations for later formal learning. The children transition to SW (or Primary) schools socially competent, emotionally secure and resilient. They are good communicators, and have excellent physical abilities and skills. The SW early childhood experience encourages enthusiastic, creative, questioning, imaginative children who are able to give purpose and direction to their lifelong learning.

* 'Setting' includes Independent and School kindergartens, an Academy, Daycare centres, playgroups and Childminders.

Janni Nicol & Sam Greshoff

SWSF Early Childhood Co-ordinators

Jannisteinerey@aol.com, Sam@steinerwaldorf.org

| The Learning and Development requirement (Educational Programme, Early Learning Goal, Assessment) affected | Exemption/Modification requested | Steiner Waldorf Rationale |
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| <p>Communication and Language ELG.</p> <p>Listening, Attention & Understanding: Children listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions <i>when being read to</i> and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.</p> | <p><u>Modification required to ELG:</u> We would like to delete...when being read to: Children listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions during whole class discussions and small group interactions.</p> | <p>In a Steiner Waldorf (SW) setting, stories are told daily and repeated before often being performed as puppet plays. Carefully chosen books are available for children to explore, both with and without adults, but the oral narrative experience takes priority.</p> |
| <p>Physical development ELG. Fine Motor Skills:</p> <p>Children hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases.</p> | <p><u>Modification required to ELG:</u> Children will hold crayons and other writing materials using the tripod grip in almost all cases.</p> | <p>Children have regular opportunities for drawing and mark making with a range of materials, and crayons and paper are always available. A range of arts and crafts also contribute to the development of fine motor skills necessary for formal writing instruction in the future. However, as children are not formally taught to write before rising 7, they are not provided with pens and pencils in the setting.</p> |
| <p>Literacy Educational Programme</p> <p>It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).</p> | <p><u>Complete exemption from the whole Literacy Educational Programme and Early Learning Goals.</u></p> | <p>It is an established principle in the SW EY curriculum that young children are not formally taught to read and write before rising 7 when they enter the SW Lower School. Where they choose to write they are supported by the practitioners and materials are available.</p> <p>The SW EY literacy curriculum aims to support the development of children who are in the process of becoming fluent and enthusiastic readers with a wide vocabulary; creative and imaginative writers and eloquent and articulate speakers.</p> <p>Within the kindergarten, the development of language and literacy skills is embedded into daily life. This 'living' or experiential approach to Language and Literacy builds a strong physical, emotional and technical foundation for a more formal academic approach when entering Class 1 of the Lower School after their 6th birthday. Most importantly, children should leave the kindergarten with a broad vocabulary, and a deep love of language in many forms, and a strong motivation to read for pleasure, supporting lifelong learning. This comes from an</p> |

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| <p>The Early Learning Goals (ELG). Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <p>Comprehension Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; Anticipate where appropriate key events in stories; Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.</p> <p>Word Reading Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs; Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending; Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.</p> <p>Writing Children will write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed; Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters; Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.</p> | | <p>environment rich in effective interactions with adults and peers; aural storytelling, puppetry, songs, rhymes, language games and poetry; print awareness through imitation; development of fine and gross motor skills through many suitable activities provided such as woodwork, food preparation and other life arts; drawing, painting and craftwork.</p> <p>The SW literacy curriculum, with its meticulous approach to building all the skills that are essential for later formal literacy, generates a very ready assimilation of these skills, with particular focus in their transition year (5+). Before the start of Class 1 (6+ years), the children have already developed good listening habits and working memory, phonological awareness, narrative understanding, a wide vocabulary, the ability to use their imagination to generate mental images, and can work independently and with individuality. There is a continuing emphasis on fine motor skills, working sequentially, visual and auditory discrimination through games and varied artistic activities – all designed for maximum effectiveness.</p> |
| <p>Mathematics Educational Programme:</p> <p>Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently <i>orally</i> and develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10.(the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers) By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding (such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting) <i>through everyday activities and play</i>, children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich</p> | <p><u>Modification required from the Educational Programme:</u> We would like to delete: ‘the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers’, and ‘such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting’.</p> <p>We would like to add ‘orally’ and ‘through everyday activities and play’.</p> | <p>It is an established principle in the Steiner Waldorf (SW) EY curriculum that a sound foundation for grasping mathematical concepts comes from allowing the young child to first experience opportunities to count, calculate and problem solve in naturally occurring everyday situations.</p> <p>SW settings do not provide commercially available mathematics focussed equipment or formally teach number recognition (from written numerals) or written number formation before rising 7.</p> <p>The SW EY curriculum integrates mathematical concepts and uses mathematical language and concepts through regular everyday activities and routines of the kindergarten that involve the child in, for example; pairing up the shoes when tidying up; weighing and measuring ingredients when preparing food, counting plates when setting the table for snack time.</p> |

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| <p>opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.</p> <p>The Early Learning Goals (ELG). Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <p>Number Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number; Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5; Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.</p> <p>Numerical Patterns Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system; Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity; Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.</p> | <p><u>Complete exemptions from the Maths ELG's.</u></p> | <p>Counting songs rhymes and games are part of the daily activities in the Kindergarten. The open-ended toys and resources provide many opportunities for the children to build on their mathematical skills and understanding during free play for example building with blocks and creating patterns or number games with small manipulatives such as pine cones and shells.</p> |
| <p>Understanding the World Early Learning Goals (ELG). Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <p>Past and Present Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society; Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.</p> <p>People, Culture and Communities</p> | <p><u>Complete exemption from the Understanding the World ELG's.</u></p> | <p>The Steiner Waldorf (SW) EY curriculum seeks to nurture and protect the child's imaginative world and direct teaching, questioning and reminding is seen as running counter to this.</p> <p>Through what the practitioners provide in the enabling environment, stories, festivals and activities, the children gain experience of the world around them through exploration and discovery and as a result further develop curiosity and wonder.</p> <p>Families from different cultures and communities, with different languages and religions, and with various disabilities are welcomed. Multicultural and seasonal festivals, celebrations, close work with community and family, and rich storytelling build on and respect these relationships. Stories from other cultures provide opportunities for the children to develop their</p> |

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| <p>Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps; Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.</p> <p>The Natural World Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants; Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.</p> | | <p>understanding of diverse lived experiences in the past and the present. A range of multicultural toys, books and equipment enable children to be inclusive of other cultures and events.</p> <p>A close connection with the natural world is encouraged through the ecologically broad curriculum. Organic growing, caring for plants and vegetables, harvesting, cooking and composting are all part of the life of the kindergarten. Plants and animals are cared for and observed carefully with awe and wonder which encourages a deep love of the natural world.</p> <p>The outdoor environment plays an important part in the daily life of all kindergartens, and children go for walks, perhaps visit a farm or other outdoor settings, where possible keep animals, and have opportunity to play with sand, water, mud etc.</p> <p>The seasons are recognised through story, song, poem, nature tables and festivals. Crafts with natural materials run throughout the year and reflect the changes in the world around them.</p> |
| <p>ASSESSMENT – SECTION 2</p> <p>Assessment at the end of the EYFS – The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)</p> | <p><u>Complete Exemption from the section on assessment at the end of the EYFS – Including:</u></p> <p>Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP): 2.9 – 2.14</p> <p>Submitting the EYFSP to the Local Authority: 2.15</p> | <p>Steiner Waldorf (SW) EY practitioners conduct their own continuous observational assessment of the social, physical, spiritual and emotional and cognitive development of the whole child in accordance with their understanding of developmental stages of the child.</p> <p>Assessment is an integral part of SW practice and is an essential tool for practitioners in order to gain an overview of the child's development and learning. This happens from the start of the child's entry into the setting, with a detailed profile completed together with the parents. Concerns or needs are identified or highlighted and shared with parents and other professionals if necessary at this stage and continuously throughout their time in the setting. This is an extension of the Progress Check at age 2, which is why we have not included it in the list.</p> <p>Observational ongoing formative assessments are generally recorded on a specifically designed tracking system, and also as a summative evaluative assessment before transitioning to school. The summative assessment is particularly relevant when the child is about to move up to Class 1 (age 6+) in the SW school, where a report of the child's holistic development is</p> |

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| | | <p>passed on to the Class 1 teacher and shared with parents. The child's developmental progress is discussed regularly with parents in the form of individual meetings and written reports.</p> <p>To complete and submit the EYFS profile against goals, some of which conflict with the SW curriculum, (and from which they are exempt), is incompatible with our method of assessment. The children are in mixed age groups until 6+, and generally remain in the SW school, transitioning to Class 1 at rising 7. If the child transfers to other schools, a thorough report is given to the next teacher by the school or via the parents where appropriate.</p> <p>Parents also object to their child being assessed and the data collected on a set of goals (the ELG profile scores) which are not fundamental to SW ethos and practice.</p> |
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