



Goora Gan Steiner School Mission Statement

Goora Gan Steiner School acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the region - the Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Taribelang Bunda and Bailai peoples. We acknowledge and honour Gooreng Gooreng Elder Uncle Merv Johnson, who gave his blessing for the school to be established, and named the school 'Goora Gan', which means 'sandy loam country' - the name used by the Gooreng Gooreng people to refer to Agnes Water and 1770. The teaching of traditional culture and language is an integral part of the Goora Gan education program, and since opening in 2017, the school community have welcomed and been welcomed by elders from Gurang, Taribelang Bunda and Gooreng Gooreng nations. Their teaching and engagement with the school continues to enrich not only the education program, but also fosters and facilitates relationships and community connections that allow for acknowledgment of the truth of Australia's rich history, and which create opportunities for reconciliation and renewal.

The aim of Goora Gan Steiner School is to be true to the spirit and intentions of the educational impulses and insights offered by Rudolf Steiner:

- by supporting each individual child as they strive to reach their own full potential, we work to encourage each child's unique gifts and potentials to unfold in a creative, nurturing, and respectful environment.
- to develop equally the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing – head, heart and hands – within each child, so that strong foundations are laid for initiative and moral strength in adult life.
- to create a place where goodness, beauty and truth permeate the pedagogical, physical and social fabrics.
- to be aware of and responsive to the unique learning opportunities provided by the natural environment.

The mission of Goora Gan Steiner School is to create a choice of education within the community, through establishing a primary years Steiner school based on the Australian Curriculum, which meets the educational goals of the Australian Curriculum, and allows for a Steiner Philosophy to be enacted as each subject is ACARA recognised and implemented. With Steiner Philosophy underpinning Steiner Education Australia Curriculum Framework, a lifelong love of learning and continued engagement is instilled through the primary school years, through enriching processes that develop faculties of thinking, feeling and willing. The holistic education provides integrated development of each child's intellectual, moral and spiritual life through the delivery of education methods balanced in academic, artistic and practical learning - head, heart and hands.



Key Values,

Philosophy and Aims

- Offer a broad and general education as defined by the Australian Curriculum within a Steiner Education Australia Curriculum Framework
- For all students to meet the Australian Curriculum achievement standards
- Impart caring, creative and imaginative teaching practices in a harmonious school environment
- Encourage and develop imagination and the capacity for creativity and free thinking
- Maintain and develop a child's individuality and support unique qualities
- Foster resilience, confidence and capacity for innovative thinking
- Inspire a passionate love of learning among students, teachers and parents alike
- Nurturing a sense of reverence for life and connection with nature and community
- Build and maintain strong relationships with the community including parents, friends, elders, local and state government representatives through community awareness events, including information sessions, festivals, open days, parent/ teacher opportunities and school/community projects.

Continue to develop the education of staff, governing body and committee members and parents, through ongoing training, mentoring and support networks with sister schools, training colleges and affiliates.

School Vision

Steiner Schools, operational since 1919, are now the fastest growing school movement worldwide because they offer a balanced and enriching method of education, proven by the success of students and the current growth of Steiner schools in Australia and worldwide – now in over 65 countries and with over 50 schools in Australia.

This holistic curriculum and methodology balances academic subjects with artistic and practical skills and includes physical movement. Steiner teachers are dedicated to creating a genuine love of learning within each child, and to learning each individual child's needs and strengths, enabling appropriate facilitation of education through applying appropriate methods of teaching, which differ from child to child. This is also possible as Steiner teachers themselves are dedicated to continued emotional, spiritual and intellectual development, modelling to the children an internal motivation to continually learn and reach their full potential.

Balancing academic, practical and artistic skills is achieved through holistic and integrated teaching application, including built in use of The Arts and Health & Physical Education to ensure students remain engaged through the primary years of education.

Goora Gan Steiner School is one that values Australia's Indigenous cultures as a key part of our past present and future. The school endeavors to continue to incorporate the cultural wisdom of our local people and have them actively partake in the curriculum through workshops and excursions, continuing to strengthen and to build on relationships, and to instill cultural awareness and respect within students and school community.



Key Values

Communication

Goora Gan Steiner School values effective communication in an open, honest and genuine way in all aspects of our school and within the community. Communication with students, parents, between governing body members and extended outwardly as appropriate transparency in all that we do.

Connection - Strong Relationships

Goora Gan Steiner School values connections among the entire school community, between students, teachers and students, teachers and parents, governing body, with local, state and federal government, with wider communities, with other Steiner Schools for the purpose of shared PD days and staff sharing of curriculum units, Steiner Education Australia, Independent Schools Queensland, benefactors and local schools for ongoing community development.

Parents are provided with opportunity for direct involvement in the school, and the wider community are encouraged to be involved through open days, festivals and community events.

Continual Growth, Development and Improvement

Goora Gan Steiner School supports, encourages and commits to ongoing development and learning of students, staff and governing body members, for the purpose of regularly assessing and improving school processes, and methods of curriculum delivery and content. This is achieved through a commitment to engaging applicable consultants across strategic and operational areas; professional development specific to Steiner Education philosophy and pedagogy, and for independent schools; and feedback opportunities for all key stakeholders; all guided by an overarching commitment to the Self-Improving Schools Programs. The School maintains a strong association with Steiner Education Australia ensuring integrity to Steiner Education and access to support and guidance, and to Independent Schools Queensland for regular ongoing training and development for all aspects of school operations and governance. Goora Gan Steiner school endeavours to operate a not just a viable, but a profitable school for the purpose of being able to grow in size and resources, building on opportunities to meet the needs of students within our community.

Goora Gan meets the educational goals for all Australian students as defined in the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education *Declaration*.

The Educational Program offered at Goora Gan directly meets the outcomes stated in *Mparntwe Education Declaration*, promoting equity and excellence through the very nature of its non-denominational approach and specifically through the connection to First Nations peoples. Goora Gan Steiner School works in partnership with local communities on all aspects of the schooling process, including cross-school sporting, seasonal and community events, ensuring that schooling contributes to a socially cohesive society that respects and appreciates cultural, social and religious diversity.

Through the involvement carried through from the very foundations of this school with First Nations peoples of the region, Goora Gan students are blessed with the opportunity to learn directly about Indigenous culture including songs and traditional stories from visiting elders who are very active within educating our community. The very foundations of Steiner's philosophy are rooted in creating morally good citizens, aware and informed with innovative, creative capacities for creating positive change in our world. All of these goals are directly in line with those of the *Mparntwe Education Declaration*.

Goora Gan Steiner School embodies the vision of the Australian Curriculum as defined in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum* paper

The Mparntwe Declaration emphasises the importance of knowledge, understanding and skills of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as the basis for a curriculum designed to support 21st century learning.

Goora Gan Steiner School offers quality and equity in Curriculum through meeting the Australian Curriculum guidelines of each subject scope and outcome through enacting a Steiner Philosophy. Through the direct involvement of Gooreng Gooreng elders, Goora Gan students learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of their contribution to Australia, and of the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous communities, past and present. Positive working relationships with Steiner schools across Australia and Queensland, and with local public and independent schools, develops a willingness to work together, across geographical and school-sector boundaries, to provide meaningful and engaging education for all students.

Through direct learning and improvement with sustainable materials, permaculture organic gardening projects and sustainable building projects, children are connected with, and contribute to, their world ethically. Because they are nourished, nurtured and honoured for their individuality and met by the artistic and practical based program designed to engage them through thinking, feeling and action, children have a strong sense of well-being and are confident and involved learners and effective communicators.

A key goal as outlined in the *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum Paper* is to help prepare all young Australians to become competent and contributing members of the community, which Goora Gan Steiner School meets through regular involvement with community activities and excursions. These include participating in the local Art Show annually, inter school sports tournaments, engagement with local sports service providers such as for tennis, swimming, beach safety and gymnastics, the annual 1770 Festival, fundraising events at the local Rotary markets, annual seasonal festivals such as the Spring Fair (which engages community members who provide stalls, workshops, entertainment), local beach clean ups, dune regeneration activities, building projects, waste management awareness and turtle research engagement. The ongoing development of permaculture, organic vegetable gardens are key projects for the school and provide opportunity to work with and serve the school community. These projects build firm and meaningful foundation skills as well as providing the basis for developing expertise.

Steiner Philosophy

In his many lectures on education, Rudolf Steiner delivered a method that helps the child develop faculties which unfold at specific times of life. At each stage of development, the curriculum is designed to engage the capacities of the growing child. For example, during the kindergarten years it is play which engages the limbs and body actively. At the primary school level, children learn through the imagination as a means to manifest feelings. Music, poetry, the rhythm of the day all provides a basis for this to happen. The secondary school years bring the opportunity for clarity of thinking and a capacity for judgement as the intellect develops. In this way the Steiner curriculum responds to the developmental needs of the students at each level. It has proved to be a relevant and contemporary curriculum for over 80 years, largely because it is broadly based, integrated, interdisciplinary and comprehensive.

The building blocks of the curriculum are the Main Lessons, which commence in Class 1 and continue right through to Class 12. The day begins in any Steiner school around the world with the Main Lesson period — an extended lesson which lasts approximately 2 hours. The content of the lesson will be drawn from one of the main academic subjects (English, Mathematics, Science, History, etc.) These subjects are taught in thematic block periods of three or four weeks in a horizontal sequence across the year. There is also a vertical sequence from year to year within a subject area (ie. the same theme may be taught on a deeper level) so there is an ascending spiral of knowledge.

The long Main Lesson period allows the Class Teacher to develop a wide range of integrated activities around the central theme which allow for a variety of learning strategies — movement, speech, music and practical activities — as well as formal academic work. Main Lessons also incorporate a three-fold approach — physical, artistic and intellectual — to consciously work with the whole child. In addition, there is also a three-day rhythm which enhances the learning process — by building continuity, incorporating an element of review and recall, and allowing for a depth of understanding which incorporates feelings and will as well as intellectual comprehension.

After Main Lesson, the day continues with shorter practice lessons from a wide range of subjects in the Class Teacher Period (Primary), including LOTE, Math or Literacy Practice lesson, Gardening, Instrumental Music, Health and Physical Education, Hand Crafts, Cooking, Hard Crafts, Art. Throughout the daily rhythm, a balance is sought between the academic, artistic and practical.

Through the study of civics and citizenship, the curriculum supports students to relate well to others and foster an understanding of Australian society, citizenship and national values. Students develop knowledge in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, languages, humanities and the Arts; to understand the spiritual, moral and aesthetic dimensions of life; and to open up new ways of thinking. The Steiner philosophy enacted in Goora Gan Steiner School is founded on these aspects of education, and teachers recognise and aim to develop the individual spirit and capacities of each child, including their capacity for innovative thinking and goodness of the heart.

The curriculum also supports the development of deep knowledge within a discipline, which provides the foundation for interdisciplinary approaches to innovation and complex problem solving. General capabilities that underpin flexible and analytical thinking, a capacity to work with others and an ability to move across subject disciplines to develop new expertise. Further, young people are supported through the curriculum to develop a range of generic and employability skills that have particular application to the world of work and further education and training, such as planning and organising, the ability to think flexibly, to communicate well and to work in teams. Through activities such as gardening, building, crafting, and working with ethically sourced and sustainable natural products - as well as large scale projects such as establishing organic permaculture food gardens - the cross-curriculum priority of sustainability is also met.

Pedagogy

Goora Gan Steiner School continually strives to provide and develop a curriculum and learning programme, aligned to the Australian Curriculum, that is inspired by a deep understanding of human development. A curriculum that embraces and reflects the universal values of freedom, equality, peace and democracy and that values diversity and individual worth; and one that enables children to develop into productive and moral adults, who are, in and of themselves, able to impart meaning to their lives.

As part of that meaning, a positive connection to the environment, including to local flora and fauna, the true history of the land, and to the ecology of our world - is a priority for Goora Gan Steiner School. Some examples include ongoing annual engagement with local elders who teach about their culture, and about local plants and their traditional uses, as well as traditional fire management practices. Further engagement with environmental scientists and the Gladstone Regional Council who work with the Pandanus Dieback Education project for dune regeneration, and organisations such as Gidarjil Land and Sea Rangers, and the Discovery Coast Environment Group who provide education and engagement with waste management practices and turtle research (Agnes Water is the home and breeding grounds for six of the seven species of turtle). In addition, Goora Gan is committed to developing sustainable systems throughout the school, whether it be use of materials, methods of construction or embedded in the curriculum. Examples are the incorporation of a permaculture organic food forest in the landscaping, an active recycling program and informed choices in classroom and office items.

The founding principles of Steiner Education hold reverence to the individual nature of each child and are supported through the teacher staying with the students where possible through the primary years, enabling the teacher to realise and deeply know a child's individual nature and thereby more effectively provide challenging, and stimulating learning experiences and opportunities that enable each student to explore and build on their unique gifts and talents. This philosophy supports and nurtures the development of confident, creative, successful individuals instilling the values of honesty, resilience, empathy and respect for themselves and the wider community.

Goora Gan Steiner School creates successful learners through the meeting of the child's developmental needs at each stage and integrating the learning through left and right brain activities, encompassing education for the head, heart and hands. The students are richly engaged in each subject through the built-in teaching methods including movement and the arts, further developing their capacity to learn and play an active role in their own learning, to think deeply and logically, to be creative, innovative and resourceful, and able to solve problems in ways that draw upon a range of learning areas and disciplines. Encouraging, allowing and supporting each child's own unique strengths and providing opportunities for them to express them through various mediums of interactive methodology including the Arts, science, building and gardening projects strengthens their capacity to work independently and also to collaborate, work in teams and communicate ideas. Because Steiner students are fully engaged in their learning through the integrative and interactive teaching methods, they are more likely to realise their full individual potential and to retain and develop a love and passion for learning through the primary years and beyond.

When a student feels safe, honoured, and supported in their learning environment, confidence and creativity is a natural by product. With daily group activities and projects including growing gardens, building projects, arts and crafts and drama plays, there is ample room for students to practice healthy communication and to form and maintain relationships. This extends to strong relationships in the wider community as Goora Gan Steiner School students interact through excursions and scheduled activities with local community groups, surrounding schools and through sporting, music and community festivals and events.