



Prospectus

Casuarina School
for Steiner Education
COFFS HARBOUR





Casuarina Vision Statement

*The vision of Casuarina School is to nurture
the children in the spiritual, artistic and intellectual
environment of Rudolf Steiner Education.*

*We endeavour to educate head, heart and hands
in every child so that a harmony in
all three may be achieved as the foundation
for balanced and free human beings.*

*The children are encouraged to be innovative
and are guided towards self-responsibility while being
mindful of the rights of others.*

The School

Casuarina School is located 3 kilometres from the centre of Coffs Harbour, within walking distance from the beach. The school has beautiful, architecturally designed buildings set amongst landscaped gardens and is close to natural bushland.

The school caters for young children with Playgroup running several times a week, Peach Blossom Kindergarten for children turning 5 and Casuarina Kindergarten for children turning 6.

From kindergarten, children “cross the bridge” to enter life in the “big” school where the children travel from class 1 through to class 7. From here our children successfully enter local mainstream public and private schools.

The child

While recognising the diversity of individuals and their cultures, Steiner Education is based on a belief that there is a process of child development common to all children. It places particular emphasis on bringing subjects at the right time and in a way that is compatible with the children’s natural style of learning at that age.

Steiner Education gives equal emphasis to fostering the emotional, intellectual and physical aspects of the child. It recognises that humans are spiritual as well as physical beings. It places a high value on artistic work, not just as an addition to education but

as an integral part of education. The curriculum is multi-disciplinary and integrated in its application, involving “the head, the heart and the hands” in all aspects.

Thinking, feeling and willing

Rudolf Steiner emphasised three aspects of the human soul - thinking, feeling and willing (or doing). When these three aspects are fully developed and working harmoniously with each other, we are healthy and “well -balanced”. We are able to perform “thoughtful actions” - to form worthy ideals, and carry them out in the world, for the benefit of others.

Steiner Education seeks to develop the proper relationship between these three. Each activity, each day, each week, each term will reflect “the head, the heart and the hand.” In this way, it provides a truly holistic education, addressing not only the child’s intellectual training, but their physical and emotional development as well.

The 7 year stages

In the first seven years, (from birth to 6 years) the child is developing his or her physical body, and is primarily living in his /her will, that is, learning through physical actions. The child unconsciously imitates the actions of others close to them. In the pre-school and kindergarten years then, Steiner Education emphasises the importance of worthy role models; the kindergarten teacher will teach by example rather than by instruction.





The 7 year stages (continued)

The second seven-year period is from age 7 to age 13. In this period, children become aware of a wider world outside their family - they are starting to have a sense of self, with private dreams, hopes and fantasies. Finding new relationships is important. These new horizons bring both enthusiasm and insecurity. This period is one of strong feelings - they have a sense for things rather than a rational understanding. Effective teaching therefore involves engaging their imagination pictorially rather than through analysis. Dance, music and other rhythmic activities are also particularly appropriate.

The period from age 14 to 21 marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. The individual is experiencing physical, emotional and intellectual change. The period is characterised by the development of thinking - students are now able to form more sophisticated concepts and utilise logical analysis. There is a strong will to express their own ideas, and a passionate striving for a sense of self.

The role of the teacher and of the curriculum is to guide their use of critical thinking into constructive ends and to help them to develop self-direction and independent judgement.

The individual child

Against the backdrop of this common path of development, each child brings individuality. Each has his or her own temperament and family

environment. Each has his or her own destiny to pursue.

Individuality within the group

One of the challenges for a teacher is to treat each child as an individual, and to cater for each child's learning ability and style while still holding the class as a whole. In a Steiner classroom, much emphasis is placed on the social cohesion of the whole class.

The Teacher

One of the fundamental principles of Steiner Education is the profound importance of the class teacher and the long-term relationship between the teacher and the class. Ideally, the Class Teacher accompanies the same group of children from Class 1 through to Class 7. In practice today, this is not always possible but Casuarina strives to achieve this stability for the children.

Teaching as a vocation

Taking on a class for seven years requires considerable personal commitment by the Class Teacher. During that time they build very strong relationships with the children and their families.

Their responsibility is great as they are one of the primary role models and source of knowledge for that group of children in the most impressionable period of their lives. This requires ongoing commitment to their professional and self-development. The curriculum provides a framework, but the essence of the education comes from the



teacher's study, preparation, and inspiration based on their insight into the children.

Moving through the School

Playgroup

Our playgroups are run to support families in their early years. Playgroup operates on the same principles of the school. Activities include music, storytelling, baking and play to engage the children. The groups are facilitated by a trained co-coordinator. Families have opportunities to meet and develop supportive friendships.

Playgroups are held each morning, Monday to Friday. Families are invited to contact the school to book in.

Kindergarten

Children are able to enter our kindergarten part time in the year they turn 5. Kindergarten aims to provide a gentle transition between home and school life.

Once children join the kindergarten they are part of a "family" grouping which includes part time 5 year olds and full time 6 year olds. The aim is to provide a nurturing environment where teachers are worthy role models for the children. The curriculum focuses on movement, problem solving, social interaction, language development and the development of fine and gross motor skills. Activities include artistic activities, stories, cooking, play, stories and rhymes.

The school provides a very beautiful, physical environment filled with natural play materials allowing maximum use of the imagination.

Classes 1-7

After leaving the kindergarten children move into the upper school and begin the journey through the school.

They will experience the security of a long term teacher, a beautiful environment and a value-based curriculum that seeks to develop all the capacities of the child. The child will be engaged in a formal state approved curriculum of English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Australian Society, Music, Visual Arts, Technology and Practical Arts, Personal Development, Health Education., Language, Eurythmy and Outdoors education.

Each aspect of the school is designed to support the development of well rounded children ready and eager for high school. Each day children can expect to have a dynamic, interactive experience with the learning material, their teacher and their class mates.

After School Care

Casuarina School also offers an after school service. The programme is offered along similar principles and philosophies offered in the school. Children are cared for by qualified carers and have a range of activities. Children receive a small meal while in care. The service is available 5 days per week from 3pm until 6pm.





The Main lesson

Integrating “Head Heart and Hands”

A feature common to all Rudolf Steiner Schools is the “Main Lesson”. It is an integrated approach to a topic, which spans a period of three weeks, for approximately two hours each day.

Main Lesson topics are taken from the main subject areas – English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities, Creative Arts, etc. Each Main Lesson is linked to the others across the year as well as to those from the same subject area in the years behind or ahead.

Willing (hands)

Each Main Lesson starts with physical activities called morning circle. It begins with a verse and song of greeting. This is followed by a period of varied activities including movement, speech, recitation, music, singing and games. Repetitive learning is a feature of this time and a recognisable routine is formed with which the children become very familiar. This time ‘wakes’ the children so they are ready for learning.

Feeling (heart)

The second area is the imaginative, feeling element. This comes in the quieter periods – the storytelling, the playing of instruments, and the artistic decoration of their Main Lesson book. The content of the Main Lesson is also chosen to address and engage the child’s feeling life.

Thinking (head)

Thirdly the intellectual, thinking element is always

present but becomes more prominent in the older age groups where more abstract knowledge is being developed. Throughout the education process skills are being mastered and understanding is being acquired.

After Morning Circle there will be recall of the previous day’s story or information, further development or discussion, and then the introduction of today’s work followed by individual work in the student’s books and then a story.



Working with Rhythms in Steiner Education

Rhythm is a strong component within the curriculum. Both the day and the lesson allow for periods of “breathing in”, with deep concentration, and of “breathing out” with physical activity and artistic expression. Teachers seek a balance between active and passive learning in each lesson.

Daily rhythm

The school day is structured in three parts. In the morning Main Lesson, intellectual work is





concentrated upon from 9-11 am. The middle session of the day is devoted to work that involves the feeling life of the children. This includes revision and practice sessions for English language and maths form drawing, other languages, music and play practice. In the afternoon “doing” activities include art, sport or physical education, cooking, gardening and class walks. Artistic activities such as painting, craft and modelling can fit into the middle or afternoon session.

The three-day rhythm of learning

What is taught on day one is recalled on the second day. On the third day it is written down. This allows children time to really integrate their learning.

The weekly rhythm

A weekly rhythm creates security for the child at school. Young children enjoy knowing that today is “painting day” or “games day” and take comfort in a rhythm that is repeated each week.

The seasons and festivals

The seasons and cultural festivals are celebrated to bring awareness to the children of the greater rhythms in nature and the world around them. The Harvest festival in Autumn, the Mid-Winter festival on the solstice, Spring and the approach of Christmas are all celebrated with community events, songs, poems, dance, plays and food.

Working with story, myth and legend

At the primary school age children think in imagery rather than the abstract thinking of adolescence. Scientific or factual explanations are inappropriate for

children under nine or ten because they understand subjects through their feeling life. A deeper understanding is developed when the material is brought through artistic imagery and personal experience.

Stories are not brought simply as entertainment. Tales that embody the collective wisdom of cultures over many years speak to the children on a deep soul level.

Stories are also used to enliven literacy and numeracy. Concepts such as the alphabet, and the four mathematical processes (+, -, x, ÷) can be more readily understood by class 1 and 2 children if they are personalised - eg, Kingly Divide is a great and fair-minded ruler who shares his kingdom between his sons. The children draw a picture of each son’s castle, one on either side of the river, out of which they discover the division symbol “ ÷ ”.

Moral qualities and ideals can be fostered by telling students of individuals who have contributed to the world, often overcoming great personal difficulties. Great leaders, spiritual figures, freedom fighters, scientists, artists and philosophers of all cultures are brought to the children at appropriate stages in the curriculum, gradually moving from story to biography.

The importance of beauty and artistic work

At Casuarina the child is immersed in a world of beauty. Children of all ages learn better if their emotions are engaged through beauty, both





experienced from without, and expressed from within.

All aspects of their work are accompanied by artistic work - painting and drawing in pure colours, modelling, and Eurythmy. Intellectual work is brought through the medium of picture developing imaginative thinking. Music is also integral to all activities in the classroom - music which is carefully chosen for its beauty and soul mood.

The beauty of the natural world is very evident at Casuarina. Children use high quality, natural materials in class. Bushwalking and gardening are common activities and working and playing with natural materials bring an understanding and respect for the natural world. A reverence for nature is fostered, which, when combined with knowledge, will flow through eventually to goodness in the actions of students.

Catering to different levels of ability

Each class will hold children of different abilities. This reflects the wider community and encourages children to recognise that each of their classmates has strengths and weaknesses in different areas, and to tolerate and support each other.

Teachers cater for different levels within the framework of the whole class. Support is given to those who need it and extension work to those who need further challenge. Children with special needs in literacy or numeracy may receive individual sessions with a learning support teacher. Children

may also be taken into small groups based on ability for certain activities such as maths practice, reading or creative writing.

State requirements

Reporting

Because parents are normally very involved with the school, there are many opportunities for discussion between teacher and parent. This is supplemented with more formal methods, but always characterised by a personal approach, reflecting the close relationship between child, parent and class teacher.

Formal methods include continual assessment at the end of each main lesson and bi-annual reporting. More informal are parent teacher interviews, class meetings, home visits and presentations at main lesson sharing. There is a shift towards more formal reporting as the child gets older.

Registration

The government's role includes ensuring national education standards are being met and there is financial accountability for public funds. School registration is compulsory, and includes government approval of the curriculum and of all aspects of the school's governance.

Teacher Qualifications

Teachers are required to maintain relevant teaching qualifications and professional registration with the NSW Teachers Institute.



Testing and Assessment

As with all schools Casuarina School offers national skill testing for classes 3, 5, and 7.

Curriculum

Casuarina curriculum incorporates the Board of Studies Learning Outcomes.

Our challenge is to meet government requirements in ways which do not compromise the fundamental values, ideals and pedagogical principles of Steiner Education. The school works to apply the best aspects of each, to enable us to work in a way that is best for the child.

Casuarina students work towards the same outcomes as their peers in mainstream schools in all subject areas. What is different is the timing of the curriculum and the teaching strategies employed.

Overview of Casuarina Curriculum

English

A love of language

Beyond examining and practicing all the practical aspects of language, it is a special task of the class teacher to foster a love of language - to awaken and nourish a feeling for what is beautiful and true, to stir the imagination, to open the children's ears to mood and nuance as well as to idea.

Integration of English language in the curriculum

Main lessons are the main focus for developing

literacy skills. Regardless of whether the subject is English, Social Studies or even the Mathematics or Science, children are led to appreciate and use the English language in a creative, effective and richly colourful manner.

A developmental path from oral expression to literacy

The Casuarina Steiner School curriculum emphasises the importance of oral language as a foundation for written language, and the children move from experience of the spoken word to writing and reading, from group to individual, from imaginative to analytical.

Mathematics

“The primary task of mathematics is to develop the children's thinking”

Ernst Schuberth

Imaginative maths - from acting to feeling to thinking

The Casuarina Mathematics curriculum seeks to embody the sense of wonder and beauty that can be found in the order of our universe. It encourages the child to delight in discovery, exploration and to find relationships and patterns in both number and nature. We engage the child's thinking, feelings and actions through imaginative stories and activities. Through rhythmical activities (walking, clapping, stamping, dance, games, songs and rhymes), mathematics becomes an activity of the whole body and not just the mind.





The capacity for thinking is nurtured progressively throughout the primary years, by introducing mathematical concepts concretely and through the imagination. Teachers work to develop skills and knowledge through written work and problem solving.

Science



Science is about seeing: what we think about the world often shapes how we see it. Science is also about seeing objectively: what is really there, not what we presume to be there. Theorising in science is a process of explaining what we see: the initial step is a clear perception, unclouded by preconceived ideas. In Steiner Education we educate the growing mind to be scientific, passionate and rigorous about understanding the world around us.

Science in a historical context

Science is always taught in the context of the people

involved in it. The history of science is revealed in the history of civilisations from ancient times to the present day. Study of scientists includes their biographies and the influence of their particular societies and their general approach to the world.

Experiential science

The experiential approach starts with nature studies in early primary. Children work in practical tasks in middle primary, experiencing the laws of nature first hand, for example, in the Farming, Building, Botany, Geology and Environment Main Lessons.

Students become increasingly involved in individual research projects from Class 6, and these become more ambitious in Class 7. The focus in classes 6 and 7 is to present phenomena to children and encourage them to make careful, objective observations from which they are free to form conclusions, and for students to recognise the way in which everything is related to an all-embracing unity.

HSIE

History, Geography and Australian Society

As individuals of the 21st century find themselves in an increasingly global society, it is essential that they learn how to live harmoniously even when they have different beliefs, value systems and world views.

In history our curriculum starts in the far distant past with the archetypal world of fairytale, myth and legend and moves in time to the 16th century. The



geography curriculum begins in the immediate local environment and moves in space to encompass the world. Through bushwalking, gardening and camps Geography is given a hands on dimension.

In the thinking realm, the students gain understanding of people, culture, societies and natural ecologies. In the feeling realm, we work to develop healthy attitudes and values - of tolerance and good judgement and positive initiative towards others and the environment. In working with the will, we develop the children's social skills, their ability to communicate with others of different cultural backgrounds. As they mature, they will have the capacity to inquire and investigate and to put their knowledge to positive use in the world.

Environmental awareness is fostered throughout their schooling with a continuation of gardening, outdoor camps, and environmental activities of regeneration, recycling and reduction of waste and other projects.

Music



*"The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treason, stratagems and spoils"*

William Shakespeare, 'The Merchant of Venice'



In the curriculum, music is seen as central. Music is powerful in developing the imagination and creativity of the children. Each day starts with rhythmical work. Songs and verses provide good musical training and bring the class together as a community. The child's natural love of rhythmical activity is employed in subjects like language (rhymes, verses, poetry) and maths (singing, clapping of times tables).

Through rhythmical movement, singing and playing percussion instruments, the young child (5-9) has the experience of beautiful, live music. This provides a foundation for more theoretical instruction after the age of nine.

From Class 1 to Class 7 each child learns to play the recorder and from Class 3 children may be encouraged to take up private tuition on an instrument. Also in Class 3 Casuarina's String Program begins and each child learns the violin. In the upper classes children may learn the cello.





By becoming a member of an orchestra or choir the child finds that he or she is important to the whole, while at the same time realising that all the others are equally important.

Children are given opportunities to experience a variety of music from different countries and different times. The mood of the seasons and the quality of the festivals are experienced through music.

Visual Arts

“Art exists for its own sake. Teachers should love art so much that they do not want this experience to be lost in children. They will then see how the children grow through their experiences in art. It is art that awakens their intelligence to full life.”

Rudolf Steiner

The joy and love of doing and making are just as important, in fact more important in the lower classes, than the end result. Thus the process and the experience of the process for the child, is the main ingredient of art in the primary curriculum.

“Artistic activity is not to produce artists but rather to develop human beings who can be creative in all walks of life.”

Teaching as a lively art: **Marjorie Spock**

By engaging the imagination the child can be fully involved in the learning process. The educational and therapeutic effects of artistic activities in children are far reaching and lasting, with the potential to

grow and mature into life skills in adulthood. By creating and interpreting images and objects, children come to understand themselves and the world. Every child is an artist.

As the students get older, specialist teachers or visiting artists may be brought in to lead them in sculpture or specialist art techniques. These supplement rather than replace the art done with the class teacher.

Technology and Practical Arts

At Casuarina School a great emphasis is placed on the experience of doing and making. The handwork of the primary school provides the basis for design and technology in Class 7.

The children start with cooking, and making practical objects for their own use - woven knitting bags, knitted recorder bags, hand-sewn pencil cases.

On a larger scale, they build cubby houses from natural materials. As they get older, they work with wood and textiles, moving from handwork to the use of specialist tools. The experiential approach to science has the children designing and making equipment.

Development of skills and values

Fine motor skills are developed early through activities such as weaving, knitting, threading needles, sewing, crochet and modelling in beeswax. Gross motor skills are involved in cubby building, kneading in clay, felting, sawing and hammering. The children learn specific technical skills with different



materials and tools.

In handwork there is an acknowledgment of a culture of excellence in all aspects of work. Craft is valued as much for cultivating a sense of beauty as it is about acquiring different skills. Individual abilities are appreciated and accommodated, even celebrated. Enthusiasm and joy of the creative practical process is encouraged. Every project has a purpose; this encourages the attitude that human endeavour is significant and can make a difference in this world.

Form Drawing



Form drawing underpins the curriculum, from the introduction of writing, through art-work and geometry and movement.

Form drawing lessons provide an opportunity for all the senses to work together in learning. Initially form drawing, along with painting, serves to prepare the children for handwriting.



Language Study

“Learning to understand and to speak another language

Fosters the healthy development of the child’s mind, body and heart.

It helps the mind to develop lateral thinking patterns,

The body to develop into a more differentiated tool

And the heart into a more understanding warm and tolerant psyche.”

Rudolf Steiner

Language study gives students a sense of how other people live and deal with everyday situations and how they express themselves artistically - the physical characteristics of their landscape, their history, their character, traditions, customs, music, art and literature.

Language study can contribute to student’s understanding of and respect for other people, their values and their points of view. Ultimately, learning foreign languages can actually help to make the world a better place - if one envisages the children of today growing into adults with a natural generosity, tolerance and morality, through having developed greater understanding of other people and the world around them.



Children benefit from the discipline of learning to communicate in a differently structured language. Casuarina has an Indonesian language curriculum, which has been in place since 1994. Children have weekly Indonesian tuition. In addition, the school regularly has a “visiting” language, usually for two years running where short term intensive language and cultural study is undertaken for a language other than Indonesian. In the past the school has focused on German, Japanese and Italian and plans to focus on Spanish in the future.

Personal Development and Health and Physical Education

It is our aim to develop in the child a positive attitude and enjoyment of a range of physical, social, personal and health activities. This encourages a healthy, active, balanced and caring attitude towards one self, to others and the environment.

Group games

The focus is to promote the development of skills which work on co-ordination and the senses of the child in a rhythmical way and wherever possible within an atmosphere of imagination. Children are encouraged to participate and co-operate respectfully with their teammates in a positive and socially acceptable manner. The school does not promote competitive sport, rather participation and enjoyment.

Swimming

Swimming is an essential skill when living so

intimately with rivers, creeks and beaches, as we do living here in Coffs Harbour. To meet these needs we have developed a compulsory annual, swimming program for students. During this program, students will develop their swimming and stroke skills and participate in swim safety procedures and levels. Older children participate in the Surf Safety and Survival courses.

Drama

The imitating faculty of the young child makes working with drama a natural, everyday experience. The children participate in drama activities during morning circle time as they take on the characters being sung or talked about. During drama play sessions the children can experience a range of feelings, situation and emotions. Formal drama activities that prepare the child for a performance are also pursued, utilising elements of song, dance, movement, music and choral speaking.

Personal Development

Casuarina School has a range of social programs including, Social skills, Life Education Van, Anti-Bullying and Rock and Water.



Outdoor Education



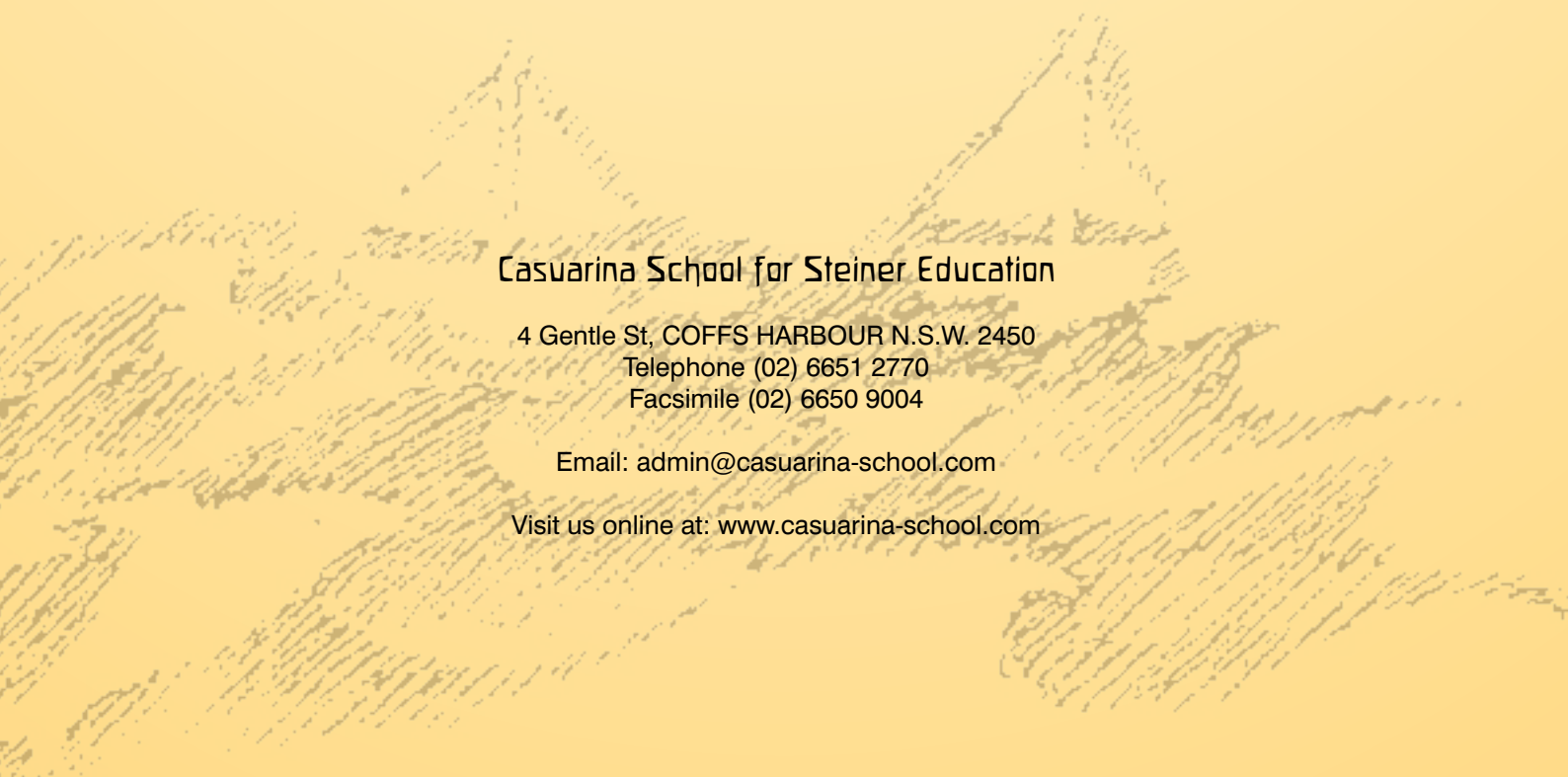
School camps are a valuable contribution to the education of the children. By affording children the opportunity to live and learn together, in an outdoor atmosphere, they can develop a sense of responsibility, cooperation and the ability to relate to their peers. Camps develop important life skills such as teamwork, organising, problem solving, cooperating, coordinating, leadership and confidence. Activities vary and may include orienteering, archery, canoeing, skiing, bushwalking, water safety, surfing, swimming, fishing, camp cooking, natural science, storytelling, games, singing and visits to places such as museums, art galleries, aquariums, observatories and mines.

Eurythmy

Eurythmy, is a modern performing art. It develops in each child poise, good carriage, and a capacity for expressive gesture through using the human form in movement for artistic expression. It develops an awareness of others and a responsibility for the work of a group.

At Casuarina School, the Eurythmy program varies according to the availability of an Eurythmist. Currently the School has a specialist attend the school for a week intensive Eurythmy program each term.





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