



MOUNT BARKER  
WALDORF SCHOOL

STRENGTH

SKILL

GRACE

MOUNT BARKER WALDORF SCHOOL  
AN INTEGRATED EDUCATION FROM KINDERGARTEN TO YEAR 12

STRENGTH GRACE AND SKILL - FOR LIFE

*Waldorf/Steiner Schools offer an education that is alive,  
full of wonder and strives to awaken the inner life of the young person.  
It develops the student's capacity to learn, to be open to life  
and to develop a sense of meaning and purpose.*

**Mt Barker Waldorf School's highest endeavour is to provide a transforming education which engenders a capacity for free ethical action, through clarity of thinking, refinement of feeling and strength of will.**

Our school firmly bases its education on the body of work given by Rudolf Steiner. We seek dialogue beyond our school with educators and schools with both similar and different vision that encourages in us a healthy perspective on our work.

**For our students, we work within the School's vision to:**

- o enable them to become balanced adult individuals, inspired with a love of learning, a morality which strives for goodness and truth and an appreciation of beauty.
- o inspire a sense of wonder and a healthy, positive connection to the world, arising from a knowledge of and responsibility toward themselves, each other and the environment.
- o impart the knowledge, skills and means to work competently in the world and the values which will enable them to find meaning and purpose in their lives.

**As teachers,** we work within the school's vision to:

- o continually deepen our understanding of the developmental changes of the child, as described by Rudolf Steiner and strive to provide learning experiences consistent with those changes.
- o strive to develop an imaginative sense for how we work with the children.
- o meet the challenge of the individual child and the challenge of the times with an ever-unfolding curriculum and methodology of education.
- o allow the individual destiny of each child to develop and flourish in an inclusive culture that exemplifies the connectedness of all things in the world.
- o imbue all aspects of the curriculum with artistic content to engender aesthetic sensibilities which form the basis of ethical action.
- o acknowledge the necessity for, and cultivate, a healthy collaboration between parents and teachers in the education of the child.



*“The need for imagination, a sense of truth and a feeling of responsibility - these are the three forces which are the very nerve of education.”* **Rudolf Steiner**

### **International....**

Mount Barker Waldorf School is part of an international non-sectarian educational movement founded by the Austrian philosopher and scientist, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), which has 1,000 Waldorf/Steiner schools worldwide in more than 80 different countries.

### **Australia wide....**

The national body, Steiner Education Australia, is currently developing the National Steiner Curriculum Framework (as a recognised alternative to the mainstream Australian Curriculum). There are approximately 40 independent Waldorf schools throughout Australia and a growing number of Steiner streams integrated into public schools.

### **South Australia...**

Mt Barker Waldorf School is the first of two independent Waldorf/Steiner Schools to have been founded in South Australia - the other is Willunga Waldorf School, also a K-12 school.

More recently a Waldorf/Steiner stream has developed within Trinity Gardens Primary School.

### **Mount Barker Waldorf**

**School** is set on 20 acres of red gum country amidst beautiful biodynamic gardens, including educational gardens and bushland play spaces. School buildings have been architecturally designed to complement the tranquility of these natural surroundings. Completed in 2011, the latest building at Mt Barker Waldorf School is a keenly awaited performing arts centre (funded through the Federal Government's Building Education Revolution). Other facilities include separate enclosed playgroup garden and kindergarten grounds, science, art, music and technical studies facilities, a well-stocked library, gymnasium, sports oval, courts and a large Eurythmy room, which is also used as a performing space.

We are also proud of our school-run canteen which provides freshly prepared, healthy and delicious food choices!

Mount Barker Waldorf School will appeal to families who value the familiarity and excellent teacher/student ratio of a small school as well as an integrated curriculum that seeks to address the holistic needs of each child. The school has a three-person Executive leadership team and is governed by a Board comprising of appointed individuals, many of whom are current or former parents.



### **Rebecca Fisher, PhD (former student), Quantitative Ecologist, in WA**

*“I think the breadth of education (I had) is very important because it provides more perspective with which to tackle problems that are faced during life and the ability to think critically and independently.”*

### Finding One's Place in a Changing World

Education today, more than ever, faces the challenge of preparing young people for life in a world that is complex and constantly changing.

Waldorf/Steiner Schools take up this challenge by offering an education that is alive and full of wonder and strives to awaken the inner life of the young person. It develops the student's capacity to learn, to be open to life and to develop a sense of meaning and purpose.

A non-competitive environment allows children the time to learn and develop at the pace they need and protects them from the pressure to enter the adult world too quickly.

Being part of a class community that journeys together through the school, awakens individual capacities and social awareness.

So not only is the individual's development fostered, but students are also encouraged to develop a genuine regard and respect for humanity, and service to others.

Important goals of our education are to develop in the students, creative, flexible thinking, emotional strength, moral integrity and a will to engage in life. To achieve this we have more than just a different teaching approach - it is an art of teaching that weaves together a number of vital interconnecting aspects that includes teaching methods, curriculum and a clear philosophy, all of which gives Waldorf Education its unique identity.

Waldorf/Steiner education is based upon a committed interest, observation and understanding of the developing human being. This changing consciousness of the child is reflected in the curriculum from year to year.

The concept of 'hand to heart to head' is one which can give a picture of our method: in the kindergarten years the child learns through what they do; in the primary years it is the feelings and emotional engagement that gives the child inner experience; in the high school, the appeal is to the thinking and forming of judgments.

The curriculum in a Waldorf school offers a balance of academic, artistic and practical activities so that the child is thoroughly prepared for life.

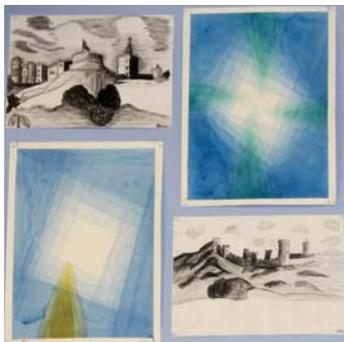
Through this comprehensive approach, one that does not specialise early, students come to know the world in its diversity and complexity - always in relation to the human being. This allows them to find their place in the world and feel connection rather than alienation.



*"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand."* **Albert Einstein**

The Arts - painting, drawing, music, modelling, eurythmy and drama are an important and integral part of our curriculum, being taught alongside the more academic subjects and practical activities such as physical education, outdoor education, horticulture, design and technical studies, including handcrafts in the Primary School.

Through the subject matter, the children learn to develop and harmonise their powers of thinking, feeling and willing. It is not only what is learnt but also, how and when, that is



important. Emerging capacities and abilities are fostered and supported by a curriculum that recognises and works with the specific strengths and challenges that develop at different stages of life. Changes in the inner world of the students can resonate with the ideas and activities they encounter at the right time in their learning.

### Diversity of abilities and needs

Students learn at various paces, and have different learning styles. Some students require additional support. A Learning Support Teacher may work with the child, assisting him or her individually, in small groups or by providing support to the Class Teacher in the form of advice, materials, or in-class support teaching.



Gifted students are given extension work, drawing out their capacities in literature, science, mathematics and the diverse range of subjects. We find that through the broad curriculum, the Waldorf education approach assists the majority of students, whatever their ability level, to find where they really are, and to progress and develop from that point.

### Max McHenry (former student) Diploma of Film and Television.

*“To learn in an environment where curiosity is nurtured and cherished is something for which I am eternally grateful. The sheer scope of different experiences that I was fortunate enough to have during my time at school have served as an inexhaustible toolbox with which to engage with the world. I value a curriculum that was diverse and all encompassing. I value the time that I spent at school not because it informed who I am today, but because it accepted me wholeheartedly as I was and am. As somebody who relies on their creativity and resourcefulness, my time at Mount Barker Waldorf School has equipped me to deal with not just the world today, but the world in another 20 years time. It has gifted me with good judgement and the confidence to exercise it as well as a holistic understanding of the world I inhabit and a healthy fascination for finding out more about it.”*

### **The Rhythm of the Waldorf School Day**

Waldorf Schools have a unique approach to the daily timetable, which is integral to Steiner/Waldorf philosophy. Much of the new academic work is introduced in the first two hours of school, when students are at their freshest. This period, called the Main Lesson, is conducted by the class teacher in the primary school, or by a specialist teacher in the high school. A particular subject will be taught during Main Lesson time over a period of three to four weeks, enabling students to explore it fully, through intellectual, artistic and practical activities and ensuring a deep consolidation of learning. The subject may also be echoed in other subjects throughout the day.

The middle lessons of the day ideally focus on the artistic subjects - music and painting as well as the practice lessons for Maths, English and foreign languages.

Afternoon lessons ideally involve students in practical and active pursuits including gardening, technology and sport. While focused on physical

activity, these lessons continue to engage the intellect through the planning, measuring, calculating and problem-solving elements inherent in these tasks.



### **Parents as Partners in the School Community**

Parent involvement in the life of the school community is fundamental to Mount Barker Waldorf School's philosophy. Children gain a sense of security from the harmonious transition fostered through strong connections between home life and school life. Mount Barker Waldorf School offers many opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school community. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the aims and intentions of Waldorf education through regular seminars,

workshops and parent/teacher meetings. Teachers also value the input parents are able to offer regarding their children's unique characteristics, needs and challenges. Information is shared in a variety of formal and informal forums, including regular parent-teacher interviews.

Many opportunities are also offered for families to get to know each other, through social events, assisting with excursions and classroom activities, fundraising events and the regular seasonal festivals. The annual Spring Fair is Mount Barker Waldorf School's major fundraising event, and is a wonderful opportunity for parents and children to work together, to offer their unique skills and talents, and to showcase the life of the school to the wider community. In addition, there are opportunities for parents to involve themselves in collaborative decision making through various committees, including the Parent School Partnership Group and the governing body – the Board.

*“Our task is to educate their (our students) whole being so they can face the future. We may not see the future, but they will and our job is to help them make something of it.” Sir Ken Robinson*

**PLAYGROUP AND  
KINDERGARTEN  
(up to 7 years)**

**Learning through imitation  
and play**

Playgroup enables a gentle introduction to life outside of the home providing a place for children and parents to learn, grow and develop together. It supports their relationship to the environment and each other in a rhythmical and interactive way. It is an opportunity for social interaction, both for parents and children and facilitates the relationship with the natural world around us through life activities.

Playgroup sessions, which are attended by both child and parent, are available for children up to 5 years, run by a qualified teacher.



**The Waldorf/Steiner Kindergarten** provides an environment where natural beauty and reverence for life abounds. At this age, children learn to know the world through doing. They use imitation and creative play to master skills in movement, communication (verbal and non-verbal) and social interaction. The Kindergarten teacher offers a stable and harmonious routine within a warm, secure, homely environment, providing a programme which supports social and physical development and resilience through constructive activity, and exploration of the world through the senses.

A kindergarten session may include music, singing, storytelling, puppetry, cooking, dancing, painting, modelling and drawing. Self-initiated creative play occurs both inside and within enclosed kindergarten grounds which incorporate a beautiful bush garden, a hen coop, a cubby house and areas for play and exploration, such as climbing, balancing, sand and water play.



The range of activities offered through the kindergarten foster practical experience of concepts and skills foundational to later development of literacy and numeracy as well as life skills for learning. Some children will naturally begin to develop reading and maths skills earlier than others, but the kindergarten environment enables all children to develop these skills at their own pace, without formal intervention, and with the emphasis remaining on allowing the imagination to flourish through physical interaction with the environment.

Throughout the two years of the kindergarten programme, children are supported to make the step from home into the wider community, in a warm, healthy and supportive way. It is a place where children are allowed to live out their childhood.

**Clara Mazzone (former student) BA and B.Engineering (Renewable Energy)**

*“The balance of practical, creative and intellectual has made me a more rounded person, and it is this quality that has continually proved valuable in everything I have done. On a practical level, I loved the school camps and the adventures that went with them. On the creative side, aside from the joy that I get from music, drama and drawing, the skills I learnt in these subjects go far beyond ‘hobbies’. I loved the intellectual content at school and enjoyed the challenge it brought.*

*Waldorf students universally seem to have more compassion, dedication and a real understanding of the world.”*

## PRIMARY SCHOOL (7-14 years)

### Learning through engagement, imagination and creativity

In the primary school, imagination is viewed as a powerful cognitive tool. Children's learning is inspired and engaged through the imaginative and artistic presentation of lessons. An environment of visual and aural beauty is provided to support learning. Formal teaching of literacy and numeracy skills begins in the year that children turn seven. Because of the strong foundation of informal conceptual learning laid in the Kindergarten years, children generally master literacy and numeracy skills with greater speed and ease.



Thinking, feeling and doing are all incorporated into the learning process, nurturing a capacity for creative and innovative thinking, problem solving, and a gradually unfolding ability to make independent judgements.

The subject matter and teaching methodology employed in the primary school curriculum is designed to meet the developmental needs of children as these capacities develop.

The primary school curriculum includes:

- English based on world literature, myths, and legends
- History that is chronological and inclusive of the world's great civilizations
- Science such as geography, astronomy, meteorology, physical and life sciences
- Mathematics that develops competence in arithmetic, algebra and geometry
- Foreign languages, physical education, gardening and outdoor education



- The Arts including music, drawing, painting, modelling, drama, Eurythmy (a form of movement) and drawing.
- Technical Studies and handwork such as knitting, sewing, crochet, weaving, felting, woodworking, mosaic and Japanese origami.

The Class Teacher journeys with their class through the seven years of primary school, while specialist teachers teach some subjects, such as languages, music, Eurythmy and handwork, the Class Teacher is the primary source of learning. The strength and stability of the relationship that can potentially be formed over these seven years enhances the learning experience, through the teacher's sound grasp of each individual child's specific needs. A strong sense of social cohesion is also fostered within the class.

*“The primary task through these years is to educate and nourish the imaginative powers of the child. It is this vital picture-making capacity that gives life and insight to logical and conceptual thinking.”* **Rudolf Steiner**

## HIGH SCHOOL (14+ years)

### Learning through inspiration and the search for truth

High school classes are supported by a Class Guardian, who provides a pastoral care role - as advocate, guide and mentor - supporting the needs of the student. At this level, students are taught by a range of specialist teachers as they are challenged to awaken their capacity for discernment and independent judgement.

The curriculum, building on and extending the subjects covered in the primary school, unfolds a rich panorama of world and life through the sciences, arts and humanities.

While the high school curriculum is highly academic, the curriculum continues to include the balance of the creative and practical subjects. The high school curriculum includes:

- English - writing skills and literature (including ‘the classics’)
- History and Geography (the knowledge of world cultures)
- Science - physics, biology, chemistry, geology, astronomy
- Mathematics
- The Arts - illustration, painting, modelling and sculpture, drama, music - orchestra, choir and eurythmy
- Design and Technology - woodwork, metalwork, bookbinding, machine sewing and computing
- Languages other than English - Japanese and German
- Physical Education - games, sports, gymnastics
- Outdoor Education - camps programme



### **Julian Bucheler (former student)**

*“I went straight into 3rd year of Certificate 3 in carpentry and general building (following graduation). I was able to do this largely due to my Year 12 project and also some other prior knowledge in the field of carpentry.*

*The range of life skills which you learn (through Waldorf education) is so diverse that it will set you up for anything you want to do in life. I believe that everyone should be able to have the amazing educational experiences which I had. For life it has equipped me incredibly well.”*

### **HIGH SCHOOL (cont)**

All students study all subjects until Class 12, including a foreign language. Because of this, students are not pressured to choose their areas of specialty before they have fully grasped their abilities, interests and values. In applying themselves to tasks which are not necessarily their strengths, students also gain confidence in their ability to respond with enthusiasm to a diverse range of subjects, and to appreciate the value of a broad knowledge base as they move into specialisation on completion of their schooling.

Understanding arises through students wrestling with the questions they confront as they study different subjects. The curriculum is optimistic and positive, exemplifying a humanistic approach which challenges students to use their capacity for original thinking and independent judgement to consider what their own role will be in shaping the world.

### **Outdoor Education**

A strong outdoor education programme also supports the curriculum in an innovative and practical way. School camps for

each year level, might include camping, bush-walking, sailing, cycling, canoeing and surveying.



### **Vocational Education/Work Experience**

All students take part in work experience for two weeks in Classes 9, 10 and 11 in the areas of primary industry (such as farming), secondary industries (such as manufacturing) and human services (such as the community or health sector).

### **Year 12**

Year 12 focusses on assisting the 18 year old to know themselves in relation to the world. Mount Barker Waldorf School has a Year 12 Programme approved by the South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre based on continuous assessment of the substantial coursework. This comprehensive curriculum fulfils a process of development within each subject. The subject content

allows for extensive discussion, exploration of ideas and their implications for modern society and personal expression. The Main Lesson books produced are volumes containing comprehensive documentation on each of the main subject themes.

### **The Year 12 Project**

An important component of Year 12 is the major project each student undertakes. The project allows each student to work into an area of their choice in a very deep way, developing the skills appropriate to the project they have chosen. It integrates a student's abilities in expression, creativity, endurance and the practical skills involved in bringing their project to completion. This involves writing about their methods and results, discussing what they have learned in perspective, and defending their thesis at an oral presentation to a public audience.

The result of our programme, we believe, is a graduate student with a unique relationship to learning; one which will enable them to participate conscientiously in any further study or vocation.

*“Adolescents have the longing to discover that the world is founded on truth. Thus education in these years is concerned primarily with training in thought. Knowledge is not intended to load the mind but to nourish and to stimulate the activity of thought.”* **Rudolf Steiner**

### Academic Standards

A Waldorf/Steiner school provides a non-competitive environment, allowing students the time to learn at their own pace, and protecting them from the pressure of entering the adult world too quickly. Rather than competing with their peers, students are encouraged to develop a strong sense of self, and to evaluate their performance against a growing sense of their own capabilities, integrity, responsibility and moral fibre.

That said, it is important to qualify that formalised assessment across the school years is ongoing and frequent, prioritised on the basis of its qualitative value to the learner.

Formative assessments and reporting to students, parents and colleagues are valued above simple summative (graded)

results. Teachers employ a wide range of information collecting strategies to assess each student's progress. Assessment practices are focussed on making clear observations, monitoring and recording student progress and giving meaningful and constructive feedback to students, parents and other teachers.

The approach to learning offered through Waldorf/Steiner education recognises that development across the range of human attributes provides a broad base for which to enter into balanced adult life, while not in any way limiting academic development. Mt Barker Waldorf School graduates are accepted into all state universities (and many others in Australia) on the basis of grades given by the school which are translated into a SATAC score.

### Graduates

During the school's past three decades, our students have demonstrated success in their post school studies across a range of disciplines including arts, the trades, commerce, education, ICT, medicine, nursing, allied health, the sciences and engineering. Research indicates that our students are extremely well equipped for tertiary study. Of the 179 students who graduated from Mt Barker Waldorf School between 1991 and 2001, 78 (43.6%) attended university. Of these, 84% achieved grades of credit or above, compared with 47% of their non-Waldorf peers studying Science, and 60% studying Humanities. (Wood, University of Adelaide, 2003).



### Joanna Wood (former student), Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery

*“Here are a few things I think have been of value:*

- *a sense of hope, of possibility, the ability to imagine how things might be different*
- *a rich inheritance of stories of courage and triumph of good over evil.*
- *the experience of tackling a broad range of subjects, not just those I took to naturally*
- *being sheltered from the world of constant testing and grading so that I could enjoy learning for its own sake for a good many years (and still do, even now) without the fear of ‘failing’*
- *the music! I have a song for every occasion...”*



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MOUNT BARKER WALDORF SCHOOL – A SCHOOL FOR RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION INC.

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