



•Milkwood•
Steiner School

Parent Handbook 2024



Image: Parent volunteer, teaching woodcarving as part of Milkwood's Outdoor Classroom Lippa Lippa project, 2023

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Acknowledgement

Milkwood Steiner School is situated on Larrakia country. We acknowledge the Larrakia people as the owners of this land and acknowledge the privilege of teaching and learning on Larrakia country. As a school that values community and connection to country, and believe that childhood is sacred, we acknowledge that these values and practices rest on the shoulders of a 60,000 year long history of Aboriginal people teaching, learning, caring for country on this land with wisdom and integrity. We seek to be guided by Indigenous people in order to contribute to healing the wrongs of the past on this land.

In 2021, Milkwood Steiner School granted permission by Larrakia elder, Duwun Lee, to operate as a school on Larrakia land. Milkwood Steiner School was given the Larrakia name, Djandjag (Milkwood Tree).

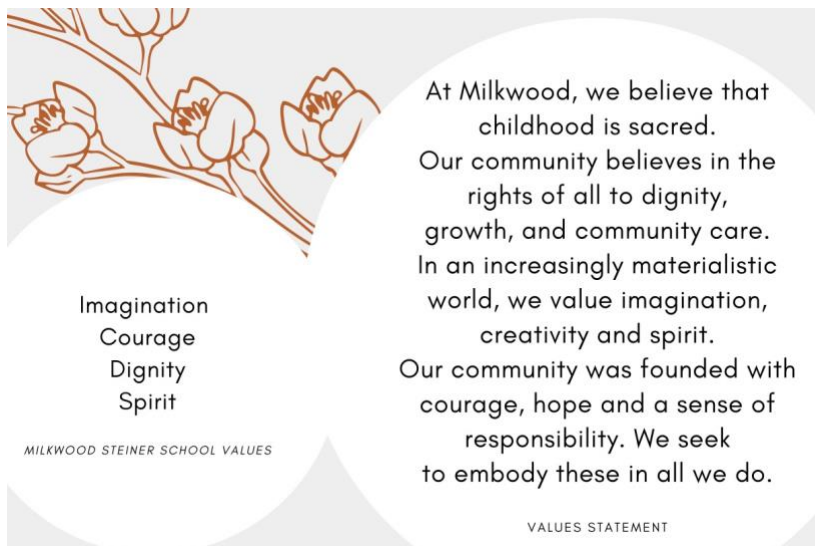


Image: Djandjag Smoking Ceremony, 2021

Milkwood Steiner School Association

As a parent of a child enrolled at Milkwood you are automatically granted membership to the Milkwood Steiner School Association (MSSA). Members of MSSA are bound by the Code of Conduct and Policies, available on the school website and have voting rights at the school's Annual General Meeting, held in Term 2.

Contact information for Milkwood's staff and Board can be found on the school website.



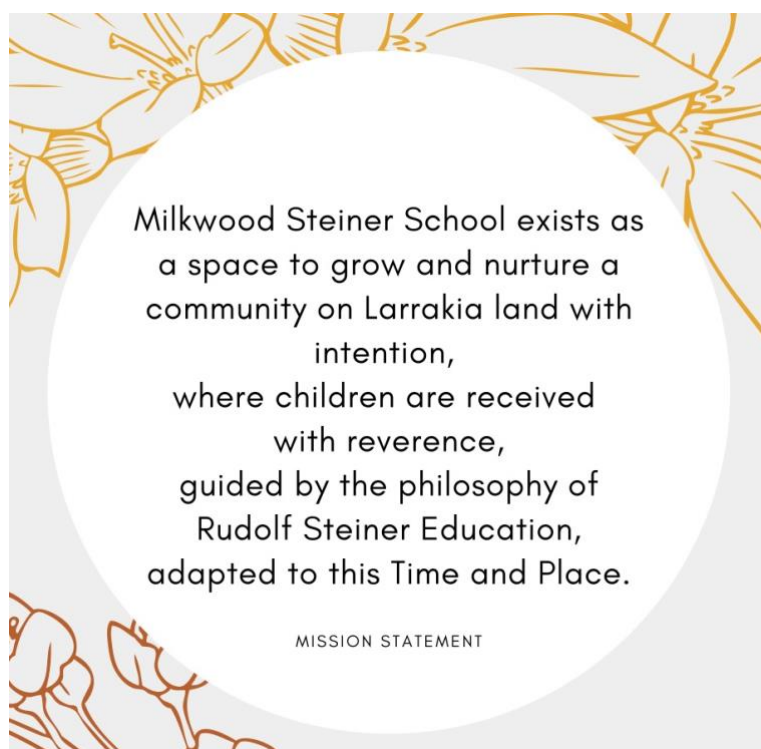
The graphic features a light grey background with a circular white area containing text. To the left, there is a line-art illustration of three flowers in shades of orange and brown. The text is centered within the white circle.

Imagination
Courage
Dignity
Spirit

MILKWOOD STEINER SCHOOL VALUES

At Milkwood, we believe that childhood is sacred. Our community believes in the rights of all to dignity, growth, and community care. In an increasingly materialistic world, we value imagination, creativity and spirit. Our community was founded with courage, hope and a sense of responsibility. We seek to embody these in all we do.

VALUES STATEMENT



The graphic features a light grey background with a circular white area containing text. The background is decorated with a line-art illustration of various plants and flowers in shades of orange and brown. The text is centered within the white circle.

Milkwood Steiner School exists as a space to grow and nurture a community on Larrakia land with intention, where children are received with reverence, guided by the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner Education, adapted to this Time and Place.

MISSION STATEMENT

Policies

Milkwood's Policies are available on the school website. You can also contact Admin/Principal for clarification on the school's policy on any matter. MSSA members are responsible for staying up to date with, and abiding by Milkwood's policies.

Approved policies include:

- Animals
- Child Protection
- Code of Conduct
- Communication
- COVID19 Isolation and Repatriation Guidelines
- Critical Incident
- Curriculum
- Delegation of Authority
- Discipline
- Emergency Management
- Enrolment
- Excursions and Camps
- Fees
- Finance
- Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination
- Pandemic Outbreak Management
- Policy Development and Review
- Privacy
- Recording and Reporting of Student Injuries
- Recruitment and Employment
- Sun Protection
- Work Health and Safety

ASC Policies

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations_ASC
- Delivery of children to and from the premises_ASC
- Duty of Care between School and ASC_ASC
- Fees and Enrolment_ASC
- Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements_ASC
- Sleep and Rest_ASC
- Staffing_ASC
- Water Safety_ASC

Uniform and Dress Code

Milkwood's dress code allows children to attend school in clothing that allows them to do their most important work: play.

On normal school days, children attend school wearing the Milkwood t-shirt or a plain, single-coloured t-shirt (like the Milkwood t-shirt but with no school logo), and plain, comfortable, functional shorts/pants/skirt. Please pack a change of clothes and wide-brimmed hat daily.

Children should arrive at school wearing shoes. Shoes and hats are compulsory outdoors. SPF30+ sunscreen is available to children in the Office.

Gumboots are recommended during the wet season.

On excursions or for school performances and events, additional information is distributed to parents regarding the required clothing.

Pick Up / Drop Off

Children arrive at school no earlier than 8am and put their bags and lunchboxes away.

Kindergarten children must be accompanied through the Kindergarten gate and handed over to the Kindergarten teacher or TA on duty, in person.

Primary School children may be dropped off at the gate, or parents are welcome to enter the school.

When the bell rings at 8:15am, children line up at the door to their classroom.

Children arriving after 8:15am must sign in via the front office.

Classes finish at 2:35pm.

Children should be picked up by their parent/guardian or emergency contact no later than 3pm. Notification to the office is required to provide permission for anyone else to collect your child.

To arrange early departure, please contact the office and sign your child out.

Children catching a bus home from school can be accompanied to the bus stop on Vanderlin Drive or Boulter Rd by the Duty Teacher. A Bus Permission Form is available from the front office.

Children who are not collected by 3pm will be entered into to After School Care at the parents' expense, and the school will continue to attempt to contact the parent. If parents and emergency contacts remain uncontactable beyond school hours (after 5:30), the school is required to work with Emergency Services to ensure care.

What to Bring to School

- Wide-brimmed Milkwood Hat
- Closed-toe shoes
- Change of clothes
- Water bottle
- Lambie: A Natural, undyed Sheepskin (or vegan alternative). This is carried through the primary years by the child from Kindergarten. In the early years, children use their lambie for rest times, and in play (for costumes and props, and at festivals). As they get older, children cover their seat with their sheepskin, and take it with them when they graduate.
- Tiffin or Lunchbox: Healthy morning tea and lunch, which is stored in the class fridge. Please pack only nutritious food. Chips, lollies, gum, chocolate, juice poppers are not allowed. If packing processed foods such as muesli bars, please minimise packaging. Kindergarten children prepare their own morning tea as part of their daily program and only need to provide their own lunch.
- Gumboots for wet days

Children are not permitted to bring toys, devices or personal items to school unless this has been arranged with their teachers (eg for a project or show and tell).

Children who carry a mobile phone to school for safety purposes (eg children who catch the bus) are required to hand in their phone to the front office before entering class, and collect at end of day.

Keeping Informed

Parents are responsible for staying informed about school matters that affect their child.

This includes:

- Reading the Weekly Newsletter (email) and Website
- Attending Parent-Teacher Interviews and Parent Information Evenings
- Reading and responding to emails and phone calls from the school, including excursions and camps permission forms
- Reading any reports received by the school, including Educational Adjustment Plans and Student Learning Profiles
- Attending Adult Education sessions offered by the school

For information about the strategic direction of the school, parents are encouraged to

- Read the school's Strategic Plan and Annual Report
- Attend the AGM and other meetings offered by Management and Board

To help spread the word, parents are encouraged to

- Like, Follow and Share Milkwood's facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/milkwoodnt/>
- Invite your friends to school tours, festivals and events

Parent Meetings and Communication

Parent Information Evenings are held in Terms 1 and 3. This is a 1-hour session hosted by the class teacher for parents of the class (children do not attend). At these sessions, teachers share some of the learning or focus of the class, some elements of child development, a practical experience of the classroom and plans/requests for the rest of the term.

Parent-Teacher Interviews are offered in In Term 2 and 4. These interviews are used to discuss the strengths and learning of individual children, and to hear from their parents. EAPs and other reports may reviewed at these meetings. Depending on the topics to be discussed, the child may be invited to attend these meetings.

Parents are responsible for informing the class teacher or Principal if a family crisis or significant change is occurring in the home. This allows the teacher and school to put support in place and respond to changes in a child's behaviour with insight into the context of life circumstances.

Parents may request a meeting with their child's teacher outside of these scheduled meeting times. When possible, please email your meeting request to the teacher directly, with a brief summary of what you would like to discuss. With the exception of urgent brief updates, please avoid big discussions with your child's teacher before school.

I want to discuss...	Who do I contact?	Not resolved?
My child Something happening in class / playground Steiner Education Educational Adjustment Plan Specialist subjects	Child's teacher	Principal
School operations Child safety / urgent matters Potential employment or volunteering at Milkwood Adult Education	Principal	Board
School Fees / Invoice	Finance Manager	Principal
Enrolment I have a question but don't know who to direct it to!	Enrolment and Admin Officer	Principal
Governance Unresolved concerns / Grievances	Board	

Principal: principal@milkwood.nt.edu.au

Finance Manager: finance@milkwood.nt.edu.au

Enrolment and Administration Officer: admin@milkwood.nt.edu.au

Board: board@milkwood.nt.edu.au

The *Communications Policy* guides communication at Milkwood Steiner School. Abusive communications will not be tolerated and may result in conduct and disciplinary action.

Visiting or Volunteering at Milkwood

Please arrange a time to speak with your child's teacher or the Principal regarding visiting or volunteering at Milkwood. Visitors, volunteers and staff are all required to sign in / out via the front office.

Parents collecting their children at normal school pick up / drop off times are not required to sign in / out.

Illnesses and School Absences

Children who are unwell must not attend school.

Parents and emergency contacts will be phoned to collect their child if the child is feeling unwell or displaying symptoms of illness.

Student absences due to illness, cultural reasons, sorry business or other reasons should be communicated to the school by 9am on the day of an absence.

Medication and Health Records

Parents are responsible for providing information about their child's health conditions and any medication being administered during or outside of school hours, to ensure informed application of First Aid at school.

If a child needs to take medication at school, the medication and instructions need to be provided to the front office. The administration of medication happens in the front office.

Immunisation

All schools are required to maintain records of student immunisation.

Immunisation is not compulsory for children attending Milkwood.

Milkwood abides by government directions regarding immunisation and communicates changes to staff and families as directed by government departments.

Headlice

Headlice is not a medical emergency, but can become problematic if left untreated.

Parents are required to notify Administration if they detect headlice in their child's hair, and treat before returning to school. Parents will be notified if a case of headlice is detected on a child in their child's class.

Emergencies, Emergency Contacts and School Closure

In the event of a Critical Incident, notification of risk including cyclones or other weather warnings, or on advice from the Government or Department of Education, parents may be contacted to collect their children and the school temporarily closed. Communication to parents happens by email and phone.

Parents are responsible for keeping their child's emergency contact information up to date. Children can only be handed over to people listed with consent to collect on our database. Contact Administration to update this, or to notify that someone else will be collecting your child on any given day.

Electronic Media and Computers

Electronic Media and Computers can be creative and necessary tools. The Steiner Curriculum introduces IT in the Middle School Years, and does not work with digital technology in the Primary Classrooms, unless required as assistive technology and incorporated into an EAP.

We expect parents to support children to not engage with screen-based technology in their Primary years, at home. By sending your child to Milkwood Steiner School, parents commit to their child being "screen-free" at home on school days.

Middle School students who own their own laptops may be invited to bring these in for targeted use, at the discretion of the teacher and in accordance with Milkwood's policies.

Homework

Families are expected to support their child with daily home reading and daily music practice (Class 3-6). From time to time, teachers may recommend some extra support at home with learning tasks, eg. practising times tables.

After a full day of school, children need time to rest and play, and participate their family culture. This, alongside healthy eating and sleeping rhythms, allows their learning to consolidate.

Standardised Testing (NAPLAN)

The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual assessment for all Australian school students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. NAPLAN testing is undertaken every year in the second week in May. It assesses where each child's skills are ranked, against other Australian students.

NAPLAN tests skills in areas of reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy, that are taught by schools who follow ACARA's *National Curriculum*. It is a testing system designed for children who attend schools who teach from the Australian *National Curriculum*.

Milkwood Steiner School teachers from ACARA's only other approved curriculum: the *Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework*, not the *National Curriculum*. All of these skills are taught at Milkwood, but following a different curriculum sequence, and at different times to when they are taught in the National Curriculum. For example, Steiner students learn to write persuasive essays, but not in Class 3.

This means that NAPLAN does not test Milkwood students on what they learn in class. Detailed information about NAPLAN and the process for parents withdrawing children from this testing is distributed to relevant classes' families, each year. Milkwood is obliged to facilitate this test to any Class 3, 5 and 7 child whose parents have not withdrawn them from the test.

Educational Adjustment Plans (EAPs)

An Educational Adjustment Plan (EAP) is a support document created for children who require any adjustments (teaching, environmental, behavioural or other) to accessing learning at Milkwood Steiner School. These documents allow the school to provide reasonable adjustments to a teaching and learning program for any child at Milkwood. EAPs are created with parent consultation. They generally feature 3-4 school-focused goals, achievable in 6-12 months, and document the roles that different parties will take in delivering these adjustments. Parents will be notified by their class teacher if an EAP is required for their child by early Term 2.

Student Learning Profiles

Student Learning Profiles (Student Reports) are written by a child's teachers to their parents to communicate the child's learning profile and learning growth each Semester. It forms one part of a bigger picture, of your child's being and growth this year.

This report aims to document an overview of

- Explicit teaching in your child's the classroom this semester
- Some areas of strength and growth in your child
- Some areas where a child required additional support

In this report, your child's educational experience is summarized according to the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework (ASCF) Achievement Standards, using an achievement scale and descriptors determined by Australian Government requirements. Comments provide a personalised account of the teacher's observations of your child's learning.

Kindergarten

Steiner Early Childhood Education recognises that children are learning all the time. Children under the age of seven are expert imitators, so the most important role of the Kindergarten physical and social environment is to model a healthy, kind and holistic model of living, being and relating, that is worthy of replication. The Kindergarten is a home-like environment, where children engage deeply in the rich domestic tasks of growing food, cooking, craft, time in nature, rest and play. The beautiful physical environment of the Kindergarten is guided by a principle that “what I touch touches me”; the materials for work and play are open ended, sustainable and purposeful. Play is the most important work of the Kindergarten.

Milkwood’s Kindergarten welcomes children from two age groups:

1. **Bush Apple Kindergarten** for children turning 5 during the school year.
2. **Waterlily Kindergarten** for children turning 6 during the school year.

Activities are based around the homelike environment of the Kindergarten, such as gardening, baking, painting or simple handcraft. Stories, songs and verses are chosen to harmonise with the season and the rhythm of the day. The Kindergarten is a beautiful and secure sanctuary, in which the children can begin their journey into the wider world. In Steiner education, the day is usually divided into three parts and activities are repeated over three or more days. Typically the same circle games, rhymes and story will be told each morning for the full week. For young children, activities requiring concentration and will, such as stories, plays, poems, songs and rhymes, are taught in the morning. Activities that evoke the feelings such as painting and music are taught mid-morning and activities that require less concentration such as games and walks are taught in the afternoon. These afternoon activities bring the group together, teaching social skills such as sharing, cooperation and patience. They also begin the teaching of observation and wonder which are built on in later years by science and nature study classes.

In the early years, days are known by the children as ‘walk day’, ‘painting day’, and so on. Teachers recognise that these rhythms help to maintain health and well-being. Imitation, imagination and rhythm are the key words in Steiner education in early childhood.

The following three statements can sum up our approach to early childhood education:

- Imitation of adult role models who are engaged in wholesome activities and work develops gross and fine motor skills and provides a sound basis for confidence in self and trust in the world.
- A sense of wonder is cultivated through activities in nature. Celebration of seasonal festivals fosters enthusiasm for learning and life-long moral strength.
- Imagination in play, dramatisation and artistic work provides the first step of a cognitive process that is furthered through the academic work of the elementary school. Much genius originally springs from the fantasy and imagination of individuals whose creative thinking enables them to visualise how things are and also how they might be.

While the Kindergarten curriculum does not emphasise academic learning, it prepares children for academic learning in many important ways:

- Foundation for language arts: Broad fundamental work in listening and speaking skills, including singing, proper pronunciation, rhymes that form the later basis of word families, poems, listening to and comprehending stories, which also provide vocabulary enrichment.
- Foundation for mathematics: Broad work in developing gross motor skills, graceful movement, balance, coordination, and dexterity in fingers and limbs; imaginative play with simple objects provides the basis for abstract manipulation of symbols in school.

- Artistic training: Beeswax modelling, watercolour painting, music, singing and Eurythmy and simple dramatizations.
- Social skills: Learning to live, work and play in a group, sharing and taking turns; practicing common courtesy and politeness.
- Work habits: Learning to complete tasks, helping to clean up after themselves and working within the gentle structure provided by the daily rhythms of similar activities.

For Kindergarten, this is the beginning of their journey as members of a social group. There is so much to learn! This is a time of figuring out that there are others who have a different perspective than they do, a time of learning how to share, a time of figuring out how to play successfully with different children, and a time of feeling comfortable and safe in someone else's care besides their families. All children have their own way of greeting the world around them and it is our intent to lovingly guide and help each child become more comfortable and skilled at being with others. This may be through a redirection of their activity or energy, helping them express through words their emotions (especially the older ones), or giving them an activity away from others such as helping the teacher do a task, so that they can collect themselves to be able to happily play again.

The children begin to know the importance of three things: respecting and being kind to others, respecting and being patient with oneself, and respecting the materials we use in the world around us.

Formal learning commences in Class 1, in the year the child turns 7.

Specialist Programs (Primary – Middle School)

Music

Music is embedded into all curriculum areas at Milkwood Steiner School. In addition, a specialist music program exists for children in Class 3-6, including private lessons in a string instrument (violin, viola, cello), string ensemble and choir lessons and performance opportunities.

Indonesian

Milkwood partners with the Darwin Language Centre to provide weekly Indonesian language and culture lessons for children in Class 2-6.

The Outdoor Classroom

The Outdoor Classroom is embedded into Milkwood's whole-school curriculum. This program brings in guest teachers, including Indigenous Elders and Leaders, Outdoor Educators and Scientists from Western and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Upper primary students participate in inter-school sporting events and camps. A deep connection to country is fostered through working with the Larrakia seasons and the unique environmental characteristics of the Top End.

Library

The library teacher works with children to access storytelling and the library in creative ways.

Milkwood's library is accessed weekly by all Primary students.

A parent library is available at the front office.

In order to become confident readers who love to read, in addition to the work done at school, children need to read and be read to at home every day, and see the adults in their lives reading for pleasure and enrichment.

When reading at home with your child:

- Sit next to your child when they read, so you can see the words and illustrations and discuss the book.
- Before you read, make predictions. What is the story going to be about? **Never cover the pictures - using them as cues is an important strategy for children to learn.* Sometimes words can't be read by sounding them out, so do not focus on them too much with your child.
- If an error is made, pause to give your child a chance to self-correct. Ask your child which strategies they can use to decode a word.
- Ask questions that invite recall and thinking, such as 'Why do you think ___ happened?', or 'What do you think might happen next?'. Encourage re-reading to build comprehension as needed.
- Model expressive reading and have your child echo-read. Demonstrate how to attend to punctuation (for example, pausing at the end of sentences, adding expression based on the punctuation marks!)
- Encourage your child to explore a diversity of texts in diverse ways; graphic novels/comics, newspapers, magazines, the pictures in an encyclopedia, engaging with oral storytelling and story-listening, recipes, packet ingredients, manuals, reading street signs and number plates, are all examples of reading.

Home readers aim to build confidence in reading through practise. The readers sent home from school for your child to read at home should seem overall a little easy, but involve a bit of a struggle.

Health and Physical Education

The Health and PE teacher works with students from Class 2-8 on the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework's Health and Movement Curriculum areas. In addition to this on-site program, students participate in an annual swimming intensive, various sports off-site. Physical Education in the Steiner curriculum also involves dance, eurythmy and other movement arts. Cooking and Gardening are part of all class routines.

Learning Enrichment Program

Milkwood Steiner School delivers a model of classroom teaching that allows each child to reach their full potential, through the richness of the Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework. When additional support is needed, the College of Teachers draws on a deep understanding of Steiner Pedagogy and child development, to collaborate with a Learning Enrichment Specialist to designing Educational Adjustment Plans and interventions, documenting recommendations and referrals, to meet a child's needs. In practice, this includes programs for 1:1 or small group work to address individualised academic, social, emotional or behavioural goals. For some children these interventions may be temporary, and for others, the support will be ongoing. The learning enrichment program draws on best practice in inclusive education, disability and trauma-informed practice, and gifted education in the Primary School setting.

Playgroup

A Playgroup for children aged 0-4 and their parents is run at Milkwood during school hours. See *Playgroup Handbook* for more information.

After School Care

After School Care is available for Milkwood students aged 6-13, until 5:30 daily. See *After School Care Handbook* for more information.

Adult Education

Throughout the year, parents are invited to Adult Education sessions. Milkwood's Adult Education program recognises the joys and importance of lifelong learning. Adult Education themes include Indigenous Knowledge (led by Larrakia Nation and Traditional Owners), topics related to the Steiner Curriculum and Child Development, Parenting, Nutrition, the Arts, Crafts, Anthroposophy, Wellbeing and more.

Festivals

Parents are encouraged to take part in preparations for Milkwood's festivals, and strongly encouraged to attend to celebrate with the community.

Term 1: Mayilema - A Larrakia seasonal festival, held at Lee Point

Term 2: Winter Solstice - Lantern Festival

Term 3: Bush Dance and Dragon Festival

Term 4: End of Year Recital and Nesting Week

Craft Shop

Milkwood's front office sells beautiful hand-made crafts and craft supplies, and publications (books, music, etc) by members of our community.

Milkwood Café

Each class, supported by their teachers and parents, hosts a Milkwood Café on a Friday afternoon, once a year. Parents are asked to contribute a healthy, home-made item for sale, and to volunteer to support their children to serve the community. Café is both a fundraiser for the school and a community engagement event, and one that children take pride in hosting. The Class Teacher or Class Guardian will communicate instructions for Café in the weeks leading up to it.

Working Bees

Working Bees are held each term, with dates communicated via the Newsletter. Milkwood depends on parent support for working bees, with tasks including simple maintenance, cleaning, gardening. Working Bees are an opportunity to meet other families from your child's class and contribute to the school.

Class Guardian

At the beginning of the school year, each class teachers seeks one or two parents in their class, for the role of Class Guardian.

The role of the Class Guardian is to facilitate a healthy, supportive and connected community of parents in the class. This may be achieved through facilitating social activities that align with the school values (eg. a weekend picnic) and personal welcomes to new families. The Class Guardian may also be called on by the teacher throughout the year to help to encourage parent participation in the learning and cultural life of the classroom. Eg. To coordinate parents helping with reading/craft/cooking programs, excursion volunteers, cultural experiences, etc.

Fees and Finance

Upon enrolment, parents/guardians enter an agreement with Milkwood Steiner School Association to pay school fees in exchange for delivering education. This agreement is represented in a statement signed by the parent/guardian on the enrolment form.

Invoices and statements will be sent to your nominated email address. Fees are invoiced for the entire year before Term 1.

Information about payments, sibling discounts, invoice due dates, the building trust fund and fee relief is communicated by the Finance Manager and guided by Milkwood's Finance and Fees policies.

Withdrawal Process: 10 school weeks' notice is required in writing to the Enrolment and Administration Officer for student withdrawals. I.e. A withdrawal effective for the end of Term 4 requires notification before the end of Term 3. Holiday periods are not taken into account for a withdrawal period. Unless withdrawal notification is provided, your child's enrolment will roll over each year.

To discuss any matter regarding Fees and Finance, please contact the Finance Manager:

finance@milkwood.nt.edu.au