



Kindlehill School

Welcome to Kindlehill

"We love our children: our teaching is inspired by knowledge of the human being and love of children. And another love is being built up around us, the love of parents for the true essence of the school. Only within such a community can we work towards a future of humankind able to prosper and withstand."

Rudolf Steiner

Essentially, we want children and young people to grow into individuals who will lead meaningful and productive lives. From kindy to year 10, we immerse our students in a creative and engaging education, which draws from the wisdom of Rudolf Steiner's indications for growth and development in a contemporary context.



We believe education is a social deed. We want each of our students to grow into their future living an ethical life that contributes to a fairer and more compassionate world. Teachers strive to integrate into learning programmes, a sense of global citizenship with opportunities for students to do the socially good. An awareness and respect for the inter-relatedness of all life is cultivated and in our beautiful Blue Mountains environment, connection to nature is central. Our school is on the traditional lands of Dharug and Gundungurra peoples and we seek respectful and productive relationships with Aboriginal people in our local community.

Imagination and the arts are cultivated, so that an education at Kindiehill is artistic in every aspect. For example, music and art are integral to the academic work. Performances in drama and music across the whole school are highlights showcased at regular school events. Joyful and celebratory, the arts nourish the life of the school community. The beautiful buildings and productive gardens are also part of this practical aesthetic.

Education at Kindiehill is supported by a thriving community of families and friends that values relationships, celebration, friendships and working together for common goals. Kindiehill is well known in the wider community for its beautiful buildings and environment, its creative and performing arts, its commitment to sustainability and to social justice.

Kindiehill School is situated on Dharug and Gundungurra land. We pay our respects to the traditional custodians of this land, to the Dharug and Gundungurra peoples, whose cultures and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture this land. We pay our respects to elders past and present. We recognise the strength, capacity and resilience of all past and present Aboriginal people in this region.

We acknowledge the spirit that resides in and flows through this land, the elemental and spiritual beings who cohabit this place. We support reconciliation between all Australians. We are committed to upholding the imperative of justice and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Practising the art of education

Wisdom in the curriculum

The curriculum is derived from an understanding of the growing and developing human being as described by Rudolf Steiner, in dialogue with an evolving understanding of the needs of individuals and our society in the times in which we live. These are the deep, wide, mysterious but fathomable principles, on which our learning programmes and our methods of teaching are based.

Rudolf Steiner says that “when what we introduce is presented at the right moment... it becomes a source of revitalisation for the children for their entire lives”. When subjects and skills are introduced at the optimum time for children and young people, they develop in them life forces that will last their entire lives. He goes on to say that the teacher in a Steiner school is working to “produce people who will be both fit for and able to question a life that will become ever more difficult in times to come”.

At Kindlehill, what we teach, the timing of it and how we teach is not arbitrary but based on the wisdom of the growing and developing human being, so that he or she can lead a meaningful and productive life.



Kindy garden

The kindy teacher (kindy gardener) welcomes the children with such reverence, for she works from an understanding that each one has birthed from spiritual realms into a family, a community, a country, the times we live in with its unique opportunities and challenges. Each child is a wonder to her with tasks to do and potential to unfold.

Everything she does and brings to the children, is to enable them to come into the world in a way that is respectful, confident and optimistic, as they go on in their life journey. A sense of gratitude and reverence pervades the kindy garden. Are these not two of the most universal and spiritual qualities we can aspire to? Kindy is a light filled, happy and creative place.

In the first seven years, the child is in the process of growing into and taking hold of her physical body. She finds out of her own naturally unfolding forces, an orientation in space, balance, coordination, flexibility and dexterity in a creative and play based environment. She develops as a social being in relationship to her friends, nature and to the shared story of human culture. The burgeoning capacity for imagination is nourished with story, song and play opportunities. The kindy lays the foundation for a healthy soul life, through experiences of gentleness, kindness, joy and wonder, tolerance and respect for difference. The kindy child develops resilience, and first steps in independence outside of family life and into community.

Providing the environment and the time for the children to grow and develop these foundation tasks is at the centre of the kindy education. It lays the basis for a well-rounded life and intelligence in every aspect of the child's being. The child feels herself cherished in the warmth of Mother Earth and her human community.

Kindlehill is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.





Primary school

Early years

In the younger years of primary school, the child still lives in an ensouled world and does not strongly differentiate between himself and his surroundings. The child is deeply satisfied to have the lessons of the world brought to him through stories and imaginations, as well as in rich artistic and practical experiences.

In the words of Rudolf Steiner, “love is the best way for what teachers have to give to flow into their students”.



In the early primary years, the children feel themselves deeply nourished and supported. It is natural for them to seek out what we teachers intend for them to know, feel and do. This is conveyed by the very being and presence of the teacher, not in dogma or by over reliance on direct instruction, and it is why the children are generally so happy and content to be in school.

Parents often ask about discipline. The structures and forms that are typical of compulsion and coercion are nowhere to be seen. What is visible is love, cooperation, a joy in working together, respectful and respected boundaries, imaginations in story and song that speak to the part of every child that wants to be treated fairly and well, and knows this is what is right and good for all.



Middle years

Around 9 years, the child begins to separate her sense of self from the outer world. She is ready to begin the journey of observing the world more independently and to develop thoughts and feelings of her own. And it is at this time, that it is very important for the teacher to guide the children to open their horizons, to educate their thought and feeling lives through introducing the children to the cultures of the world, the sciences and humanities. The children want meaningful learning and this is the optimum time for developing in children the heart of gold that will guide them for their lives.

The children are nourished as they discover the wisdom and morality that lies behind the stories of the natural world and of humanity.

They are pained when they discover all that is suffering and are stirred in their own moral beings to make choices that create and sustain a fairer and kinder world for all. The teacher engages the children from imaginations that depict wisdom and deeper, universal truths. Every subject is brought through the arts of storytelling, songs, poetry, sculpting, painting, movement and drama.

Every child is an artist developing a sense of beauty in its relationship to truth and goodness. Practical skills of gardening, cooking and handcraft develop in the child a sense that she has a place and things to do in her world. Games as well as bush-walking and camps support social skills of initiative, cooperation, and resilience and perseverance in meeting challenges and enduring difficulties.



Older primary

In the older primary classes, the students prepare to meet the enormous changes that accompany adolescence. The teacher appeals to the healthy instincts of the children, to make choices that are good for the self and others. Biographies which highlight the finer human qualities and the achievements that come from striving and persevering are very educative. Students seek greater independence, avenues to express their growing strength and individual natures. Intellectual stimulus, artistic accomplishment, physical challenge, opportunities to make and do, support the growing sense of “I am a powerful being with things to do in the world”.

There is a strengthening interest in the outside world, questions and exploration are encouraged. Perspectives are considered, observation and characterisation is cultivated which keeps to an open mind, rather than judgements and fixed conclusions which tend to the opposite. Interest and curiosity for life is carefully nourished as a capacity for lifelong learning. Excursions are an important way of taking classroom learning into relevant and meaningful connections to the world around them. Social life can be full of ups and downs and provides fertile growth for social and personal growth, through it all the children become good friends and a culture of friendship supports each to develop his or her potential. Camps, concerts, plays, presentations and class projects connected to the wider community provide opportunities for a sense of class cohesion and the felt triumph of working together to achieve common goals.

Major projects are a substantial element in the year 6-7 transition year - between primary and secondary school - the students are ripe for pursuing a personal passion, with the support of the school, parents and a chosen mentor. As well as learning specific technical skills, the students develop planning and organisational skills, and get to ride the roller coaster of dead-ends, deadlines, and finally, glorious success and accolades for their accomplishments.



Junior high school

Kindlehill junior high school embraces Thoreau's concept of "beautiful knowledge". Thoreau said that "the highest we can attain is not knowledge but sympathy with intelligence". We want students to shine with intelligence in every aspect of their lives.

Developing the capacity to think critically, to question, to explore perspectives, to reflect and make informed judgements, to experience that the "body of knowledge" we build our lives around is an evolving one; these are some of the capacities the young person is ready to develop as capacities for lifelong learning. Students are individually supported to achieve their potential in academic areas of study and to cultivate good habits of learning such as those of hard work, self-motivation and the setting of high standards.

Extension work, challenges and learning support are provided as required to individual students. Subjects are taught in ways that engage the students and that support a meaningful dialogue with the issues and concerns of the times in which they live. Students are challenged to think, feel and act in resourceful and creative ways, and to be constructive participants in community.

Kindlehill high school embraces the concept of the "village", where learning is not limited to school but is embedded in its community. The creative and performing arts are of central importance, accomplishment in the arts supports well roundedness in the human being. At a time when young people are vulnerable to some of the negative influences of peer culture, the arts imbue their lives with celebration, creativity, a sense of community and cherished values of what it is to be a creative and resourceful human being.

In the high school, the teachers are mentors who inspire the students out of their own love of learning, their keen interest in world affairs and in their commitment to making the world a better place through the use of their particular talents and abilities. They bring to the students what is of necessity in order for young people to take their place in the world as good and capable individuals. They model for the students that life is not only about what feels fun but that growth comes from facing difficulties and struggle, with courage and perseverance. Kindlehill junior high school supports young people toward finding their place in the world, as self directed, motivated, clear sighted and resourceful adults who want to create a fairer world for all.



Global citizenship

"May my soul bloom in love for all existence."

Rudolf Steiner

Education is a key way of creating a fairer and more peaceful world for all. Appreciation of diversity, respect and gratitude for the natural world, a sense of the interrelatedness of our lives in a globally connected world, are the values that underlie various engagements with social issues by students. From acts of kindness and compassion, to awareness raising and advocacy, students are encouraged and skilled to be part of creating a more beautiful world.



Building rainwater tank in Pango Village, Vanuatu



Creating a coral garden on Pele Island, Vanuatu



Students make boomerangs on cultural camp with Uncle Pete



Visiting kindy on Pele Island, Vanuatu

Creative and performing 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

Drama

The arts nurture creative, imaginative, rich inner lives in our students as well as the capacities to collaborate and express themselves. These qualities and capacities will be well-springs for their whole lives.

Plays are integral to the curriculum in each year of primary school. Mostly they are devised by the teachers for their classes. Often they explore a theme or topic that has been studied in class and they also showcase the wonderful singing and musical talents of the children. Plays are also an opportunity for self-expression and collaboration. In junior high school, drama is taught by a specialist. Weekly drama work incorporates physical drama, devising, improvisation as well as working toward the big production for the year such as a Shakespeare, a musical or a collaboratively devised piece. The high school play is a highlight of the school year.

Kindlehill school music programme

The school values music as a vital element in a child's education. It supports intelligence in the whole being of the child. At the youngest age, children participate in group singing and musical activities: for the joy of it, and to develop the musical ear.

In early primary school, recorder is introduced, initially in a pentatonic scale, the children follow the teacher and little songs are created together. Then as the children grow, recorder playing becomes more complex, working with rounds and harmonies. The marimbas and a range of percussion and other instruments become spontaneous ensembles for performance at fairs and in school concerts. Singing together is highly valued at Kindlehill and to hear the whole school sing together is a joy to experience. There is a threshold in childhood development around 9 ½. After this time, musical notation is introduced. By the end of class 4, the goal is for students to be on their way to being proficient in learning, playing and composing using musical notation.



Instrument tuition programme and practise

From class 3, students learn the violin. From class 5, students can continue with violin or opt to play another instrument (flute, clarinet, ukulele, guitar and from time to time others as per interest). The school provides free tuition. Parents provide the instrument(s) for their children.

The ongoing practise of music is homework. It is vital that the students practise at home 5-6 times per week during term time. These sessions can be short (15 - 30 minutes), but regular. Those who don't practise quickly get overtaken by the younger children and are less likely to sustain their interest. The children are still young and they need the active self-discipline and support of parents. Over time, this self-discipline becomes internalised by the child. In high school, students continue with the instrument programme and incorporate their instruments into ensemble work in their music classes and performances.

Assessment and performance

Each term, instrument students perform: at a school festival; a lunchtime performance; or at performance to showcase individual students' proficiency, with small ensemble or solo performances. The school looks for opportunities for ensemble performances. The tutors collaborate to foster this social musical activity. High school music is taught by a specialist in high school.

Each term a new musical genre is studied with research, composition and performance as key assessment areas. Topics include blues, romantic music, reggae, world music and music for film.

Using technology for composition is a popular and engaging part of the studies as are the mandatory but celebratory performances at school events. Bands and ensembles are a feature of the high school music programme. Social collaboration, cohesion and the joy of creative work contribute to the health and vitality of young people at Kindlehill.



Creative and performing arts



Eurythmy

Eurythmy is an artistic form of movement, particular to Steiner schools, that strengthens and harmonises the life forces in the child and young person. It is also a social art and the children learn to work together on quite complicated forms, to find a common expression of a verse or piece of music. Great concentration is required as are alertness, attention to posture, listening, respectfulness of others, quickness, the capacity to come to inner quiet, and as a whole class to collectively arrive at an open and listening state of being.

For the younger classes, eurythmy is brought largely through verses and imaginations that lead them through forms and gestures, that complement the morning lesson the children are working with. For example, in first class, they will move the forms of the consonants and experience the soul gesture of vowels. In second class they may work vigorously with the times tables as a basis for dynamic movement and rhythmic patterns. In the older classes more complicated forms are brought that require concentration and cooperation. During the Ancient Greece lesson in class 5, the students feel themselves as the Greek gymnast or hero, with the power to speak and act to meet great challenges. In high school, reverence for life, a respect for each unique individual within the context of working socially as a group underlie the work.

Dance

Creative dance is a wonderful opportunity for the class to move together in expressive ways, often co-creating the dances to further explore a theme they are working with in class. Dance is a popular performance item at school events. Dance in high school is optional and the high school troupe will sometimes perform with other dance groups in the wider community.





Outdoor education

There is no substitute for experience! Outdoor education is a vital part of the Kindiehill school education. Kindiehill is situated in the beautiful Blue Mountains, five minutes walk to Wentworth Falls Lake and within walking distance to other scenic beauty spots. From here the vistas and opportunities to explore are grand. Beyond this, camps and experiences in outdoor education are an important way for students to connect with nature and develop a lifelong interest and respect for the natural world. Students also add to their back packs life skills and capacities such as a sense of adventure, resilience, teamwork and resourcefulness in solving problems and overcoming difficulties.

Early primary school

Class sleepover, bushwalks and local camping experiences.

Middle primary school

Going further afield for longer e.g. snorkelling camp or bike riding.

Older primary school

Challenges and skill development such as extended bushwalk, abseiling, canoeing and the ski trip.





High school

Orienteering, sustained and challenging hikes, climbing and abseils, extended canoeing trip, geography on the road trip in class 7/8, Great Barrier Reef island trip in class 8/9 and Vanuatu island experience in class 9/10. The geography teacher works with expert outdoor educators to integrate classroom learning into the outdoor experience. Throughout all of the camps and outdoor education experiences, an appreciation of the significance of land and cultural practices to Aboriginal people is fostered, as is an awareness of the importance of living sustainably with nature.



Japanese culture and language studies

From kindy to year 10, the students love their language studies with our specialist teacher. Beautiful stories, songs and artworks accompany the lessons in the younger classes while historical, cultural elements become more the focus in older primary and high school. Japanese extends beyond just language at Kindlehill with beautiful stories, songs, artwork, and ceremony to accompany lessons.

The primary school children are immersed in the serenity, simplicity and the connection to the Earth through a gate of Japanese stories, songs and art. They feel and relate to the life in the northern hemisphere through stories set in deep snow, and traditional houses decorated with bamboo. In high school, the students engage with pen pals in a Tokyo Steiner school. They connect not only by the language but by the exchange of their personal world and culture. We have welcomed high school students and their teachers from Japan. They stayed with lovely families from Kindlehill where they experienced family and school life in the Blue Mountains.

One memorable visit was the lesson in which we held a World Café with students from year 6 to year 10, together with visiting Nagasaki students. At the World Café, we discussed how countries should ban nuclear weapons by focusing on the effect that the atomic bomb had on Nagasaki and Japan. What a wonderful collaboration with youth from Nagasaki, hearing their opinions and stories about nuclear war. The whole school is involved in Hiroshima Peace Day, celebrating friendship and peace in the world. Everyone from kindy to year 10 extends their hearts and builds a friendship bridge with their verses, songs, Japanese traditional tanka poetry, shakuhachi music and tea ceremony.





Gardens and sustainability

The roof top vegetable garden is complemented by a food forest of edible fruits, berries and herbs that are integrated into the play areas and around classrooms. A specialist gardener works with students weekly to encourage food growing and harvesting as a natural and satisfying part of life. Each autumn, the kindy and primary school visit local parks to collect fallen leaves, which become the basis for a giant biodynamic compost heap. Composting of food scraps, recycling and a focus on refuse, reduce and reuse are woven into the everyday classroom activity.

The school harvests honey from its bee hives and eggs from the chickens. Food from the garden is used in classes for cooking and preserving. Parents are welcome to help in the gardens and harvest as well. The school has been awarded a gold standard after an audit by Low Carbon Living Blue Mountains.

"Kindlehill is an exemplar of sustainable practice that is embedded both in the fabric of the buildings but also in the philosophy and practices in the school. This includes the use of low embodied and recycled materials in the construction of the school, extensive reuse and recycling and extensive onsite edible production."

Student action on sustainability

Students have been active in lobbying local shops and council to reduce the use of plastic bags and to install water fountains to reduce the consumption of bottled water. The school also works with Council to care for local waterways.



Playgroup

Playgroup is a gathering of young children together with parents. Kindlehill playgroup is offered as a morning session from 9am to 12 noon. Playgroup is held in a beautiful room overlooking the water feature and adjacent to the kindy room.

The playgroup leader oversees the rhythm of the day and ensures the environment is warm and nurturing. Activities include baking bread, free play, and a morning circle time of stories, rhymes and songs that reflect the season.

Playgroup brings a rhythm to the children, with the daily tasks and rituals of washing hands, baking bread, sharing our morning tea and tidying-up with a smile and a song. It is a place to grow friendships between families with young children, with friendly chats, inspiring conversation and shared thoughts on parenting over cups of tea. It is also a taste of the Steiner approach to educating the child, in particular how this is implemented at Kindlehill.



After school care

Kindlehill after school care provides a nourishing and nurturing space for students at Kindlehill whose parents are unable to collect them at the completion of the school day.

The service is offered from 2:45pm to 5:45pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in Kindlehill term time.

After school care is held in the school library, which is a quiet warm space, connected to a full kitchen. There is plenty of outdoor space for free play. The service offers a non-structured afternoon programme, with a selection of indoor or outdoor activities, including craft, reading, resting, cooking, indoor and outdoor games, socialising, and free play. The children are offered a nourishing afternoon tea and plenty of opportunity to assist in the kitchen.

The facility operates according to the ethos of Kindlehill School, and eligible parents receive government rebates to assist with the cost of the service.



Steiner graduates

Research recognises that Steiner graduates generally share key characteristics. They practise life-long learning, value the opportunity to think critically and creatively, have a well-developed sense for aesthetics and they live according to ethics that are respectful of others and the natural world.

Here is a glimpse of some of the Kindlehill alumni:

Kian Llorente

Kian Llorente attended Kindlehill from Kindergarten in 2004 to year 10 in 2014. He wanted to be a chef from 3 years of age. As part of his year 7 project, Kian worked with Shaun Presland, executive chef at Saké restaurant in Sydney, as his mentor. This project gave Kian the opportunity to work hand in hand with Shaun, which gave him a first-hand taste of how a professional kitchen works. Furthermore, Kian was always supported by Kindlehill who supported and encouraged him to cater for school functions as well as to run the coffee bar at school fairs. Upon leaving Kindlehill, Kian completed his apprenticeship at 1 hat restaurant Darleys, Lilianfels Resort Katoomba. He is currently working as a commis chef at 2 hat restaurant Bentley in Sydney. He is planning work in France and Spain in the coming years.



Lylapearl Appel

Lylapearl Appel spent her last years of schooling at Nepean Selective High School and is studying Law and International Studies at Sydney University. She has spent study time in Italy and will travel to Spain to complete a semester focus on European Studies and to refine her Spanish language skills. She is a regular competitor in Ultimate Frizzbee and looks forward to playing in the Madrid frizzbee competition.



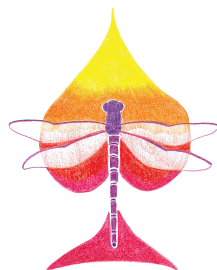
Willabel Grindley Bennett

Willabel is studying International and Global Studies with a major in Arabic Language and Cultures at the University of Sydney. She graduated from Blue Mountains Grammar School with high distinctions for both her academic work, and for visual arts. Willabel is very active in social justice pursuits as a recent youth mentor to refugees for Western Sydney MRC. “My time at Kindlehill has gone on to shape my desire to pursue a career in human rights. Kindlehill and the wonderful teachers that I am lucky to have had, have cultivated my care for the environment, for people and the emphasised the importance of kindness and creativity.”

Dylan Todd

Dylan is an Adventure Senior Guide in the Blue Mountains and a Qualified Yoga Teacher. In 2018, Dylan cycled 7000km from the southern tip to the northern tip of Australia. Dylan says Kindlehill gave him the “inspiration to follow my dreams”. Dylan says the camps in high school sparked his interest in outdoor education and nourished his deep love and curiosity for the natural world.





Kindlehill School

For more information please visit
kindlehill.nsw.edu.au

If you wish to arrange a tour of
the school and meet the principal,
please call (02) 4757 4402

Kindlehill School
8-12 Lake Street
Wentworth Falls NSW 2782
community@kindlehill.nsw.edu.au