



The Inner City Steiner School P-12

## Vision Statement

Sophia Mundi is an inner city Steiner school offering an affordable, enriching educational pathway from Early Childhood to Senior Secondary.

Our purpose is to awaken in young people the capacity to reach their highest goals in an alternative environment to mainstream Victorian educational establishments.

Our pedagogy involves using content and teaching methods matched to the student's stage of soul development, providing for each child a fulfilling and enjoyable experience which leads to a lifelong love of learning.

We aim to offer a stimulating, diverse and caring educational environment, which fosters a culture of respectful relationships and positive student behaviours. We wish to promote a whole school environment, actively encouraging participation in the school by the wider Steiner community

Sophia Mundi is an independent, non-denominational, co-educational school.

We are a not-for-profit organization and member of the Rudolf Steiner Schools Australia.

## Philosophy

Sophia Mundi Steiner School is part of a worldwide educational movement which numbers close to 1000 schools internationally. Steiner's educational philosophy offers a development path from early childhood to adulthood, which sits at the forefront of educational thinking and extends far beyond the normal educational domains of knowledge accumulation and academic excellence. Like other Steiner schools, Sophia Mundi has adapted a core Steiner curriculum to its own cultural and environmental situation so it can meet the needs of its students and remain true to the values and educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner.

Steiner pedagogy is based upon a three-fold focus of "thinking, feeling, willing" or "head, heart and hands" which equips students with a healthy balance of faculties as they fulfil their educational journey.

By making learning a fulfilling and enjoyable experience and by teaching only when a child is developmentally ready to learn, a level of enthusiasm is engendered through which educational outcomes are ultimately improved. Class teachers generally stay with their class as they move through the primary years, enabling them to recognise and support the individual learning path of each of their students.

In the early years the children are given an experience of the goodness of the world. They learn by imitation. During primary years the children work with imaginative (pictorial, non-abstract) thinking. They learn through story and practical activity. In secondary years the search for truth and ideals awakens reasoning and compassion. At all levels artistic activity is an integral part of the learning process.

Our curriculum content and teaching methods have been carefully aligned to children's developmental stages. By having the courage to wait for the right time to introduce concepts, educational outcomes may far exceed traditional expectations.

Our curriculum is structured around a daily Main Lesson through which all complex themes are introduced. These in turn are inter-woven throughout the various subject areas to deliver a richness of learning and depth of understanding. We may explore the same concept from a number of different standpoints including scientifically, artistically and spiritually. Practice lessons take place in the middle part of the day with crafts, sports, and music ensembles in the afternoons.

We celebrate a range of festivals based upon our spiritual response to seasonal changes. It is commonplace within our school to see colourful dancing, live music, drama, games, singing, puppetry and story-telling.

We actively encourage the use of natural materials, beautiful colours and forms in our classrooms and recognise the importance of healthy eating for our pupils. We discourage TV and computer-based entertainment in favour of more interactive and artistic pursuits such as music-making, dancing, group games which help to develop social awareness and motor skills. We have an exceptional outdoor camp programme culminating in year 9.

To ensure academic standards are maintained, Sophia Mundi has comprehensively mapped our curriculum to the eight key learning areas of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). We fully support NAPLAN benchmark tests for years 7 and 9 and are investigating options for a more sympathetically designed equivalent for years 3 and 5. These tools enable us to measure our academic performance and outcomes against peer organisations. Sophia Mundi, through its membership of Rudolph Steiner Schools of Australia, supports the development of an accredited National Steiner Curriculum.

The years 11 and 12 Senior School programme at Sophia Mundi is very different to the traditional graded VCE. It has three components, the first being a Steiner curriculum, which includes 22 main lessons, arts, craft and physical education programmes. The second component is a yearlong in-depth and challenging major project, which, in conjunction with the Steiner curriculum culminates in a Steiner Certificate of Completion. The third component involves study of VCE subjects that are awarded an ungraded VCE Certificate issued by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Together our programme is an acceptable basis for entry into many of Australia's leading tertiary institutions. The Steiner Certificate of Completion is not yet an accredited senior qualification in the state of Victoria.

Sophia Mundi is philosophically committed to the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including:

- Elected government
- Rule of law
- Equal rights for all
- Freedom of religion
- Freedom of speech and association
- The values of openness and tolerance

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