

The Apple Tree

Steiner inspired home education cooperative

Admissions Policy

When joining the Apple Tree you are joining a co-operative of parents holding their children's education, as a network of home educators. You are expected to stay in communication with your child's tutor, contribute to the running of your child's group, participate in meetings and conversations in your group, take part in the wider Apple Tree community and pay your share of fees on time. These are some of the ways we show up for each other in our community and ensure the sustainability of the project. To join the Apple Tree, new families must follow these steps.

Step 1 : Initial Contact and Enquiry Form

Email either theappletreebristol@gmail.com to express an interest in joining the co-operative or email the group you are interested in (if you know which group is the appropriate age group for your child.)

oakensappletree@gmail.com

voyagersappletreebristol@gmail.com

discoveriesappletree@gmail.com

pippinsappletree@gmail.com

These emails will be checked weekly by volunteer parent 'reps' from each group.

The parent managing admissions for the appropriate group for your child will send you an [online enquiry form](#) to complete if you have not already done so, and will share information about the Apple Tree. They will let you know if there are spaces available and arrange a chat with you on the phone or in person (where possible) after they have received your completed form.

As per the policies of the Apple Tree Home Education Cooperative, we are sorry to be unable to accept children who remain registered at a local authority school, as all parents within the cooperative formally agree to take full responsibility for their child's education, while still registered at a local authority school it is the school who takes that responsibility.

Step 2 : Conversations with Admissions Parent / Providing Information

A discussion about joining The Apple Tree will include details about:

- the commitment of our members
- the Steiner inspired approach of our groups and curriculum
- the finances
- the way we organise as a community to run the groups and practical considerations of being a member
- the legal situation surrounding The Apple Tree and home education

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It is also an opportunity for us to gather more information about you and your child. This must include any particular considerations for your child so that we can be clear about whether we can accommodate/support them in the way that they need. During this conversation the Admissions volunteer will refer to the family statement provided in the enquiry form.

If there are many families interested in joining a group, parents may organise a social gathering, to meet with parents and children in the group, meet the tutor, so that you can find out more, and visit the venue. We cannot offer visits to the group during Apple Tree hours as this is too disruptive to the group.

If there are no places available, the family's details will be held on file and their application reconsidered when a place is available. If more families are interested than there are places available, a decision to offer a place will involve all the information we have been supplied by the family, the needs of the group at the time, and will not necessarily be on a first come first served basis.

Step 3 : Meeting the Tutor

If a space is available, the admissions rep will put you in touch with the group's tutor to arrange an initial conversation to discuss the educational approach and curriculum in more detail, to understand the suitability of the group for the child, and explain expectations and commitments on both sides from an educational point of view.

Step 4 : Group / Tutor Agreement

The teacher and Admissions rep will discuss the application, consult the Hand Group (composed of other parent volunteers from the group) and jointly agree the next steps.

Step 5 : Payments and Paperwork

Once an agreement has been reached, your child will be invited to join the group. Certain formalities must be completed before attending. You will be required to pay:

- **A £100 deposit** : held until your child leaves the setting, and will either be returned as a payment or deducted from your final month's fees. The deposit will be retained by the Apple Tree if insufficient notice is given when a child leaves a group.
- **Part or all of a month's fees**, depending upon when your child starts. The number of remaining weeks in the academic year is divided by the total (33) and multiplied by 12 to give a number of months (this is rounded to the nearest 0.1 months). The first payment will usually be a part month to reflect this. An admissions or finance rep within your group will let you know the first payment amount.
- **A monthly standing order payment** is to be set up for regular monthly payments after the first payment. Please refer to finance information provided upon joining for details.

Upon joining you will complete 3 online forms:

- Cooperative Membership Form (1 per parent/carer)
- Child Registration Form (1 per child joining)
- Parent Agreement (1 per child joining.)

Step 6 : Communication

Based upon the preferences selected on your parent agreement form, you will be added to various communication channels to begin communicating and working with the parents in your group:

(Whatsapp) Registration group : Includes the tutor(s) for your group, and is for informing of absences/lateness day to day. It may be a place to share information relevant to parents & tutors of a group regarding curriculum or logistics. (For high content, an email would be used.)

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(Whatsapp) Family chat group : A place for general communication for your group which doesn't need to involve the tutor: logistics, social, planning, lift shares etc

(Email) Google Group : For email communication between parents and tutors in your group: a channel for sharing meeting minutes, AT documents, curriculum updates, plans for trips/festivals etc.

(Whatsapp) All Apple Tree group : Low traffic, and is a place where information can be shared (by admins only) with the whole Apple Tree community, of things relating directly to the Apple Tree or other relevant news (Steiner based/inspired articles, workshops, events etc.) To share anything here, contact a group admin.

Communication between members of the Apple Tree is essential for the running of the project. It is a requirement of membership to engage with communications, and as a community we will always look to find the best possible ways to do this to meet the needs of all in the community and to reduce unnecessary traffic on channels.

Step 7 : Review

After 3 weeks from your start date, there will be a review for both the new parents/family and the tutor/group. The aim of the review is to ensure that the Apple Tree is the best match for you and your child and the group as a whole.

You will be offered the chance to have a chat either online or in person with some parents from the group to ask questions and hear more about parental involvement/responsibilities.

A separate conversation with the tutor at this stage will provide an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns around the educational element of the group, and for the tutor to provide feedback on how your child is managing in the group.

Tutors will be asking themselves questions like, does the child settle well into the group? Do they demonstrate a willful engagement with the environment, tutor and children? Are they able to manage themselves in relation to others and learning? Can I give them what they need?

It is then agreed that either:

- The child will continue.
- A second review date may be offered to aid a decision - to be arranged with the tutor/parent group.
- It is not the right setting for the child.

The decision making process will primarily involve the parents and tutor, and will also involve consultation with the Hand Group (other parents).

Parent Agreement and Apple Tree Policies

The Apple Tree has policies to ensure that we can make the groups sustainable and a positive and safe place for our children and tutors. These include policies for: Behaviour, Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Finance. When you join the Apple Tree, you are expected to read, understand and agree to these policies before your child attends the group. Any questions should be raised before your child starts.

If there are any issues or concerns about your child's participation within the group, or the family's commitment to support the project, the teacher will start a conversation with you about how these can be addressed. In the event that issues cannot be resolved the Apple Tree Oversight group (including directors and parents/tutors from other Apple Tree groups) will be consulted for support in negotiating a solution. They may decide that your child should leave the group. In this case we will give you at least two weeks notice and finances will be calculated accordingly.

Any disagreement with the decision about your child continuing at The Apple Tree will be referred to the Oversight Group for review. This process will be confidential and involve listening to any adults and children

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involved, taking advice (where necessary) and working through a conflict resolution process (where necessary) to reach a decision. At the end of this process the decision of the Oversight Group will be final.

Reviewed: November 2024