

Philosophy

The educational philosophy of Sunrise Preschool recognises the importance of learning respect and love for all. It is called Neo-Humanism. Neo-Humanism expands the underlying spirit of humanism, which is love for fellow beings to encompass love of all the creation as well as a realisation of the interconnectedness of all aspects within it.

One of the goals of Sunrise Preschool is to develop this feeling of interconnectedness and to nurture a sentiment of love and respect for the environment and everything in it. This is accomplished through the application of the principles of Neo-Humanism in the classroom.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF NEO-HUMANISTIC EDUCATION

1. *To awaken a thirst for knowledge in the child which becomes the child's own motivation to self-actualise*

We trust, believe in and respect children. This belief and trust is based on the premise that each child has an innate desire to learn and develop themselves. We strive to awaken the thirst for knowledge that is already inside them. This recognises that a wealth of potential lies in every child and that it is a basic desire in everyone to strive for something great.

Neo-Humanistic Education facilitates the development of the human personality: physical, cognitive, creative, communication skills, spiritual well-being, emotional expression and social skills (an appropriate way of interacting with the environment based on respect). Each child develops at their own pace and our education system aims to meet their individual needs.

2. *An Ethically-based Education*

Ethics or pro-social development is the essence of the child's moral development. Values form the basis of a balanced individual and a harmonious and well-integrated society. Neo-Humanism has ten ethical concepts that are encouraged and modelled. They are:

- non-harming
- truthfulness
- non-stealing
- universal love
- simple living
- clean and clear
- happy hearted
- helpful hands
- inspirational study
- meditation and self-improvement.

Children should see teachers set an example by modelling these concepts in their own interactions. Making an effort towards following these guidelines themselves, teachers will reaffirm that most learning occurs through trial and error. They adopt the attitude that mistakes (even their own) are learning experiences for the children.

3. Awakening of Spiritual Awareness

The entire learning process of Neo-Humanistic Education is rooted in the conviction that the universe is an integrated whole. This idea fosters a deep sense of connection to self and others. It causes a shift in viewpoint from a mechanistic and materialistic one to one of wholeness and interdependence. Spiritual appreciation means a commitment to care for all creation and to encourage the innate desire to learn “Who am I?” and “What is my destiny?”

4. Integrated Approach to Learning

Instead of compartmentalising knowledge into isolated academic disciplines, Neo-Humanistic Education encourages a multi-disciplinary exploration. It is focused on the process and not on an end-product. Education is the living experience of the world as a dynamic and interrelated whole. Early childhood education includes a child-directed approach and child-directed play, and in later years, self-chosen projects to stimulate a joy for learning. Collaborative learning takes place when the children learn to work and solve problems together during the learning process. They work together in small groups and free conversation occurs throughout the co-operative learning time.

5. Cultivation of Aesthetics in All Disciplines

In Neo-Humanistic Education, aesthetic appreciation and experience suffuse all aspects of learning. The curriculum includes organised exploration to develop the creative imagination. The subtle expression of beauty in music, art, literature, environment and other areas uplifts human life and nurtures a greater awareness.

Aesthetic appreciation also refers to the way things are done. There should be some order and system in the activities, in the way the children do them and in the classroom itself.

6. Local and Multi-cultural Recognition and Inclusion

Neo-Humanism recognises the importance of culture in forming a person’s self-image and esteem. It emphasises the teaching of local languages and traditions and acknowledges the beauty and importance of all cultures. Every student in the class should feel that their culture is appreciated and valued. Children learn to appreciate and embrace cultural similarities and diversities. Collectively, they move towards a global future of harmony and peace.

7. A New Environmental Consciousness

Environmental education imparts the skills and values necessary for responsible stewardship of our planetary resources. It also helps children develop an intimate, living relationship with the web of life around them. Children are born with both the potential for analytical thought and for synthesised, cyclical thinking. Neo-Humanistic Education cultivates especially the development of the latter. Children learn how to build a sustainable society for the future.

8. Exemplary Role of the Educator

The role of the educator is of paramount importance. Example is one of the most effective methods of teaching. Therefore, teachers should strive to embody the noblest qualities of humanity in their day to day conduct. They also require a sound knowledge of child development and psychology. Teachers must also be good observers. Through observation, they will gain an understanding of each child's progress and development. Observation also enables the teacher to know what activities and programs are successful with the children and which are not. With this understanding, they plan, carry out and assess their work. Teachers provide a proper learning environment by arranging materials and experiences to provide maximum opportunities for the children to interact and learn. They create a safe environment that is, at the same time, conducive to originality and risk-taking. Teaching should be an empowerment process for the children and the road to greater and greater independence, self-motivation, problem solving and team working.

Additionally, the teacher helps bridge the gaps between families, the school and the community.

9. Spirit of Service

Neo-Humanistic Education does not view education as a passport to prestige and privilege but a responsibility to serve others. Art, science and knowledge are dedicated to service and welfare for all. The spirit of helping others is encouraged in children from their earliest years.

10. Expanded Social Consciousness and Sense of Justice

Neo-Humanistic Education encourages active participation in positive social change. Children need to develop a social consciousness and sense of justice. By developing rationality and heightened awareness they can discern exploitative strategies and counteract divisive sentiments which cause suffering to all beings. They are motivated towards a more just and progressive society.

Morning Circle

Morning circle is a specialty in Neo-Humanist Education. It is a time when the children gather together to enjoy each other's company and explore their own inner thoughts and emotions.

Key elements present in these lessons are songs, dances, meditation, visualizations and yoga. Story telling and stories are an integral part of Morning Circle. They are used to inspire, encourage contemplation and express virtues such as honesty, courage, respect, and love for animals, plants and all people. The role of teachers in these lessons is to provide a structural Foundation to equip children with the skills and opportunities

Yoga

This is our daily 'quiet time.' Children benefit from early use of their imagination and intuition in creative visualization and meditation exercises. Yoga exercises help children stretch and relax, and discussions at this time centre on the virtues and other introspective topics.

Nutrition

All lunches and food for Sunrise are required to follow a Yoga Vegetarian diet. This diet excludes: · Meat, Chicken, Fish, Eggs · Onions, Shallots, Chives, Leeks, Garlic, Mushrooms · Gelatine, 621- MSG (Mono Sodium Glucomate) · Lollies, Chocolates, Carbonated drinks, Cordial, Chewing gum, Roll-ups

Walkabout

As part of daily Kinder Program we go for walkabouts to our local parks & streets:

While there we can play, i.e. do yoga, have morning tea, have running races, balls and other spontaneous activities suggested by children or staff. Children become familiar with the community, safety, road rules, friendship and of course the our local park gardens.

We generally leave Sunrise between 10.30am-11am and come back between 12-1pm, however on hotter days we leave straight after Morning Circle to beat the heat.