



Kilkenny Steiner School Secondary 2026



Introduction

Beginning in September 2026, Kilkenny Steiner School is delighted to open Class 7, carrying forward the rich foundation nurtured in our primary years.

This next step will unfold naturally, with Classes 8 and 9 to follow in the years ahead. Looking further to the future, our vision is to grow into Classes 10–12 by 2029, so that young people may complete their full secondary journey within the Waldorf tradition—rooted in creativity, community, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our Vision & Philosophy

At Kilkenny Steiner Secondary, we believe that true education nurtures the whole human being—head, heart, and hands.

Our curriculum is carefully designed to meet the changing needs of adolescence, guiding young people on a journey of self-discovery, independent thinking, and social responsibility.

Within our classrooms, curiosity is encouraged, creativity is celebrated, and every student is recognised and valued.

We place emphasis on:

Holistic Development – supporting intellectual, emotional, artistic, and practical growth.

Experiential Learning – engaging with knowledge through exploration, practice, and discovery.

Ethical Awareness – nurturing compassion, respect, and a strong sense of purpose.

Community Connection – fostering meaningful relationships among students, teachers, and families.

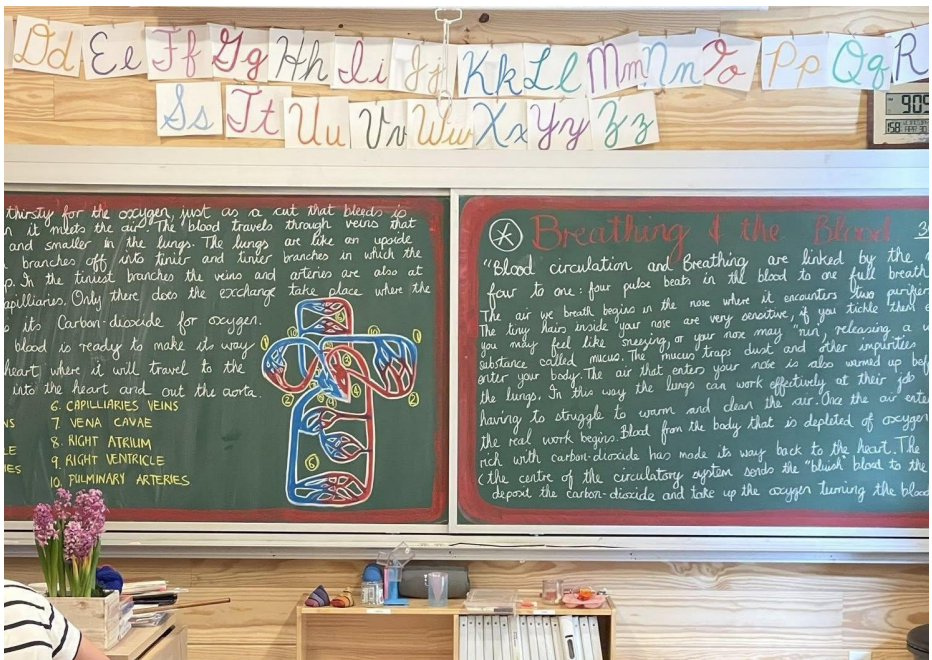
Together, these form a living education that prepares young people not only for exams, but for life.



Our Secondary Curriculum

Our curriculum is designed to meet teenagers at each stage of their development, nurturing independence of thought and a deeper understanding of the world.

Instead of fragmented subjects, students experience a **rich, integrated journey** through *Main Lesson Blocks*—immersing themselves in one subject for several weeks. This rhythm allows for focus, depth, and genuine discovery.



Key areas of study include:

Sciences – Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Astronomy, explored through observation, experimentation, and living phenomena.

Humanities – History, Literature, Geography, Philosophy, fostering critical thinking, imagination, and empathy.

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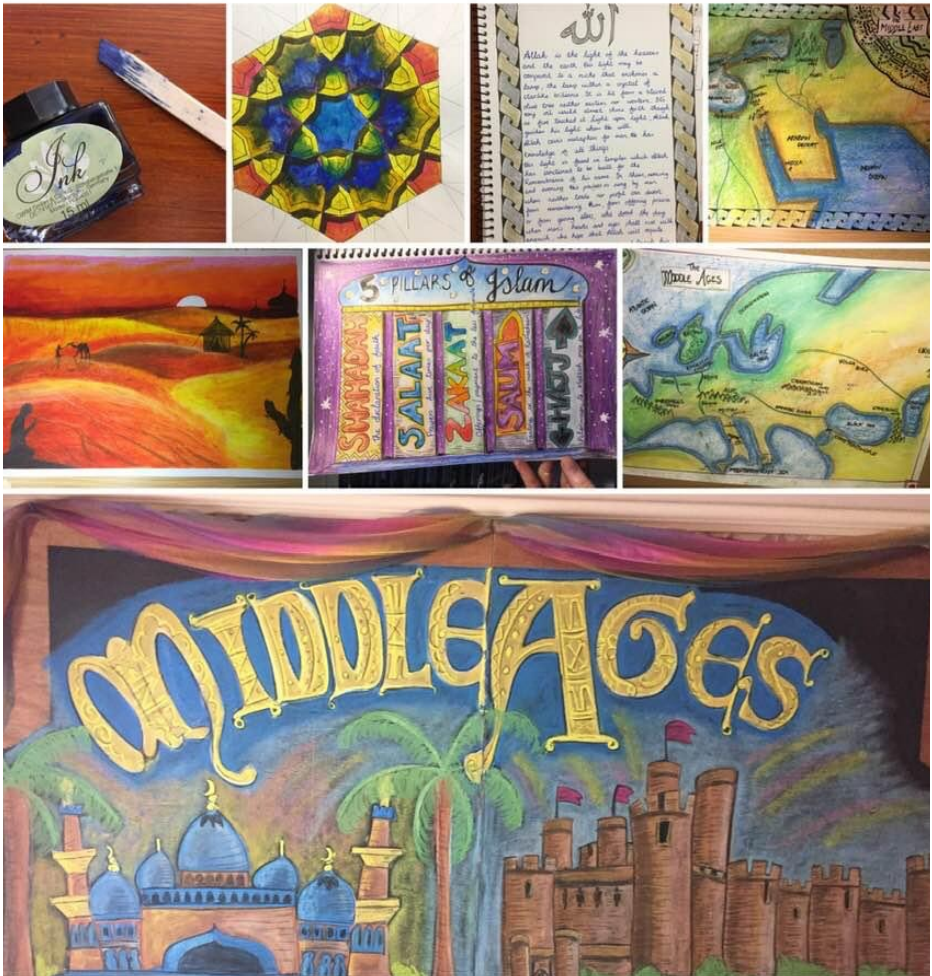
Arts – Painting, Sculpture, Music, Drama, woven into intellectual and emotional development.

Practical Arts – Woodwork, Metalwork, Textiles, Gardening, cultivating skills, craftsmanship, and a connection to the material world.

Mathematics – From geometry to calculus, approached with clarity, logic, and beauty.

Modern Languages – Opening doors to cultural understanding and global communication.

Through this balanced and holistic approach, students are guided not just to know, but to understand, create, and contribute.

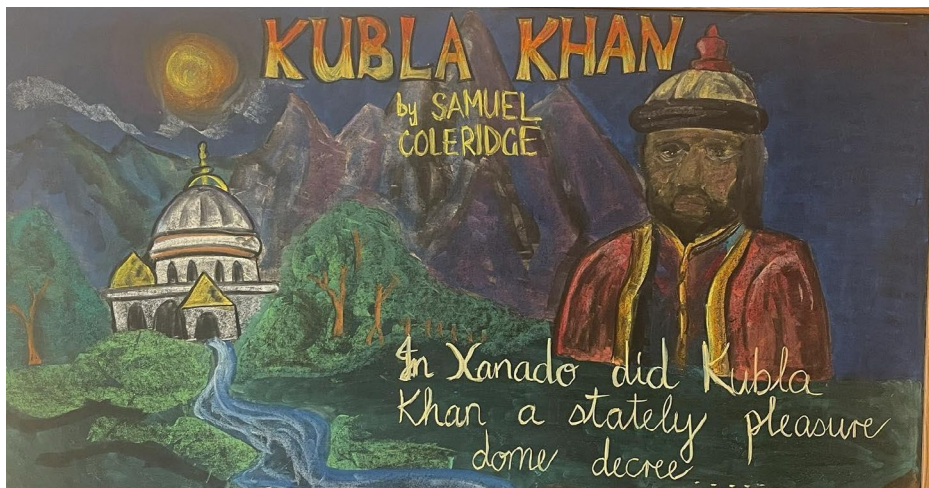


Full curriculum in annex at the end of this document.

A Journey of Self-Discovery

At Kilkenny Steiner School, we offer a learning environment where curiosity is nurtured, and each student can grow at a natural pace. As young people enter adolescence, they meet new questions of identity and individuality. Our role is to support this stage with guidance that builds confidence, strengthens independence, and honours their emerging sense of self.

With small class sizes, teachers can form meaningful relationships with each student, creating a foundation of trust, encouragement, and respect. The curriculum is designed to engage students in practical, intellectual, and social ways, fostering creativity alongside critical thinking. In this way, we aim to provide a balanced and inspiring path of development that prepares young people not only for academic progress, but also for a thoughtful, connected, and resilient life and a connection to the world around them.



Most subjects are taught in block courses enabling students to fully immerse themselves in a topic for a few weeks. Subjects which need ongoing practice, such as languages, maths and music, are taught in weekly lessons.



Beyond the Classroom & Our Community

Education at Kilkeny Steiner School extends far beyond the four walls of the classroom. With the parents involved, we offer a vibrant array of extracurricular activities, school trips, and community projects that enrich the learning experience and build character.

Outdoor Education: Environmental studies, connecting with nature via our forest school

Performing Arts: School plays, musical ensembles, choir, fostering confidence and collaboration.

Service Learning: Engaging with local communities, developing civic responsibility.

Festivals & Celebrations: Marking the rhythms of the year and fostering cultural appreciation.

Our dedicated faculty are experienced Steiner educators, committed to fostering a supportive and inspiring environment.

We believe in strong partnerships with parents, working together to support each child's unique journey.



Governance

Kilkenny Steiner School is a vibrant independent school offering the internationally recognised Waldorf curriculum.

As the school receives no state funding, it is sustained primarily through the financial contributions and voluntary support of parents. In partnership with its sister setting, Ballyhall Kindergarten, the school is overseen by a Board of Governors. The Board carries responsibility for upholding the school's ethos, ensuring legal compliance, and safeguarding financial sustainability. The holding company, Ballyhall Kindergarten Ltd, is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.

The heart of the school rests with the College of Teachers, who care for the children and teenagers and guide the day-to-day educational life of the school. They are supported by a small but dedicated group of parents who take responsibility for administration and finance, working in close collaboration with both the teachers and the Board.

Teachers

Each class has a dedicated class teacher who carries responsibility for the wellbeing and progress of the children. The class teacher supports not only academic learning but also the social development of the students, working closely with parents to foster a strong connection between home and school. The teacher also organises class trips, projects, and internships, enriching the students' experience beyond the classroom.

The class teacher remains with the same group of students as they move through the school, allowing deep insight into each child's strengths, challenges, and growth over time.

Alongside this, specialist subjects are taught by dedicated teachers who bring a rich knowledge of their craft or profession. They guide students in both the practical and theoretical aspects of their subject, ensuring a well-rounded and engaging learning journey.

Finances

Kilkenny Steiner School follows the Steiner curriculum, which is outside the standard national school model, and therefore receives no state funding. The school is sustained almost entirely through the financial contributions of parents. We work hard to keep costs as low as possible, avoiding unnecessary expenses and finding creative solutions wherever we can. The generous voluntary support of parents in areas such as classroom assistance, maintenance, and administration also helps us to minimise costs. With our small class sizes (typically between 10 and 16 children), the average cost of running the school is approximately €4,000 per child per year.

We are committed to ensuring that no child is excluded on financial grounds. To support this, the school operates a tiered system of contributions, based on family income. In addition, a bursary scheme exists where, depending on individual circumstances, up to 60 per cent of school fees are met from the scheme.

Curriculum in more detail

Class 7 (Age 12-13)

Discovery and Renaissance

This is an age of exploration and the dawn of independent judgment. The curriculum meets this with themes of pushing beyond known boundaries, mirroring the student's own growth.

- **History: The Age of Exploration & The Renaissance**

This historical period mirrors the 13-year-old's soul state: a "renaissance" of the self and a desire to explore. Biographies of explorers like Magellan and artists like Leonardo da Vinci speak to the student's developing sense of individuality. Students map the great voyages, practice perspective drawing, and write biographical essays.

- **Physics & Chemistry: Mechanics & Combustion**

The study of mechanics (levers, pulleys) relates directly to the student's own body, while the first chemistry block on fire and combustion connects to their inner passions and emotional turbulence. Students learn about simple machines and the fire triangle, building working models and conducting teacher-led experiments on combustion.

- **Physiology: Health and Nutrition**

As they inhabit their changing adolescent bodies, students have a natural interest in their own health. This block provides practical, objective knowledge about the digestive, respiratory, and circulatory systems, as well as the basics of nutrition, sleep, and hygiene. Activities include creating schematic drawings of organ systems and keeping a food journal.

Class 8 (Age 13-14)

The Age of Revolutions

This year culminates the middle school journey. Students often see the world in strong polarities of right and wrong, a tendency met by the curriculum's theme of Revolutions—the dramatic upheavals that created the modern era.

- **History: The Age of Revolutions**

The powerful ideals and clear conflicts of the Industrial, American, and French Revolutions speak directly to the turbulent inner state and strong sense of justice of the 14-year-old. Students engage in debates, write from historical perspectives, and conduct in-depth biographical studies.

- **Anatomy: The Human Skeleton**

Connecting to the study of mechanics in Class 7, the skeleton is studied as a masterpiece of organic engineering—a system of levers and structures. Students learn the major bones and different types of joints, creating large, accurate drawings and building working models of joints.

- **Physics & Chemistry: Electromagnetism & Organic Chemistry**

The invisible forces and clear polarities of electricity and magnetism are a perfect subject for this age. The chemistry of foods connects science directly to the student's life. Core content includes static electricity, simple circuits, and the chemistry of fats, carbohydrates, and proteins, explored through hands-on activities like building circuits and "kitchen chemistry" experiments.

Class 9 (Age 14-15)

From Polarity to Nuance

In the transition to high school, students are now expected to grapple with complexity, and black-and-white thinking begins to resolve into shades of grey. The curriculum moves from external revolutions to the internal "revolutions" of modern art, science, and literature.

- **History: The Modern World**

Students now have the emotional maturity to study the complexities and tragedies of the 20th century, including the World Wars and the rise of totalitarianism. They analyse primary sources, create maps, and write analytical essays to form their own judgments about the vast forces that shaped the modern world.

- **Art History**

For the first time, art is studied as its own historical stream. Students can now analyse art conceptually, understanding how artistic revolutions like Impressionism, Expressionism, and Cubism mirror changes in human consciousness. They analyse paintings and practice the techniques of the styles being studied.

- **Physics & Chemistry: Thermodynamics & Organic Chemistry**

Science education now fully embraces abstract concepts, moving from the purely phenomenal to the theoretical. Students study the laws of thermodynamics, heat engines, and the formal chemistry of carbon compounds like plastics and fuels. Activities include calculating engine efficiency and building molecular models.

Class 10 (Age 15-16)

Ancient Worlds, Modern Systems

This year focuses on comparison and analysis. The curriculum returns to the foundations of Western culture with a new, analytical capacity and pairs this with the study of complex systems in science and language.

- **History: Ancient Cultures**

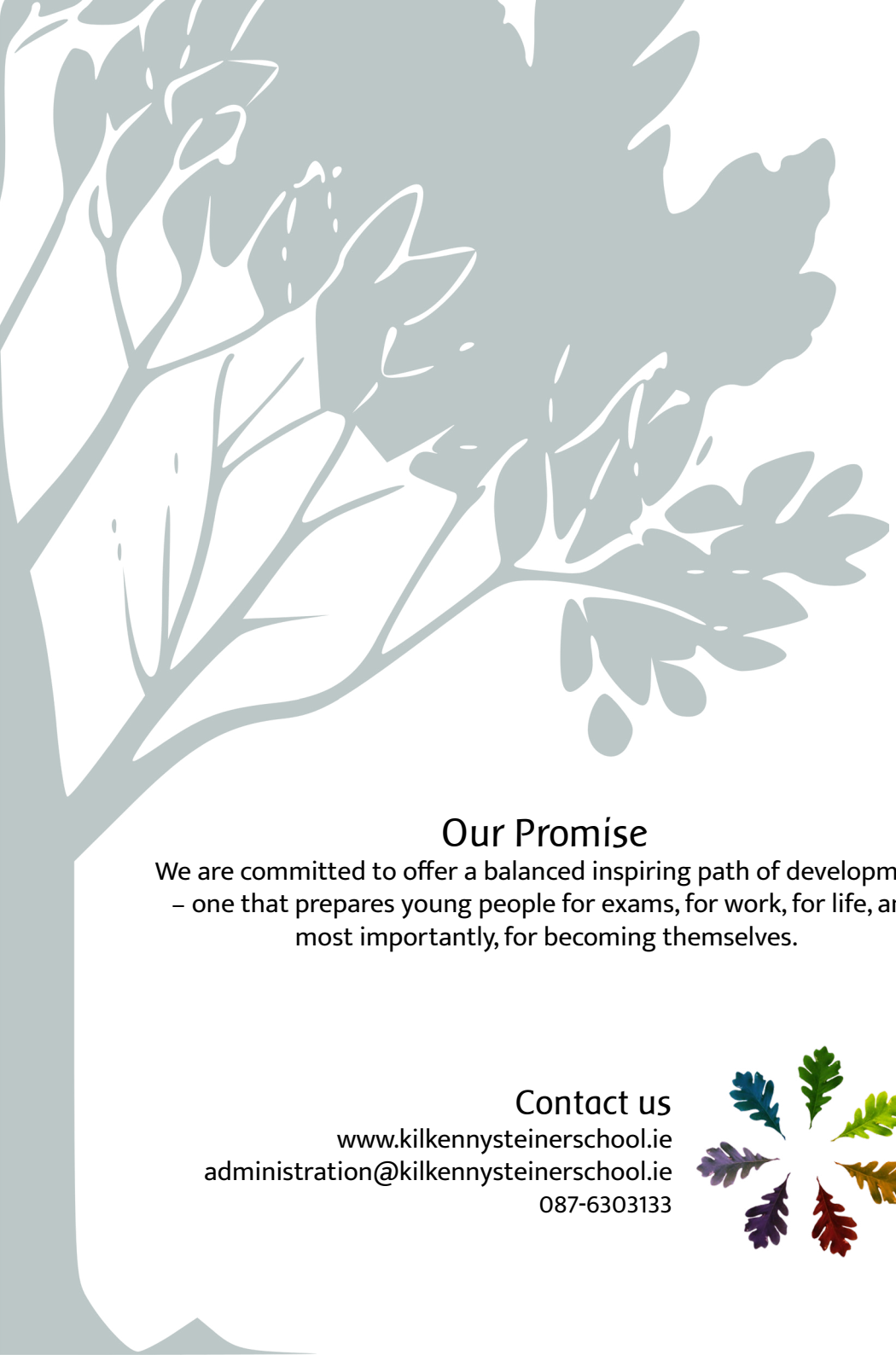
Returning to ancient Greece with a 16-year-old's mind allows for a deeper analysis of the origins of Western philosophy, democracy, and drama. Students engage in a comparative study of the Greek polis, read excerpts from Plato, and analyse the structure of a Greek tragedy.

- **English: History of Language & Poetry**

Meeting the student's ability to see overarching systems, language is studied as an evolving organism. Students explore the Indo-European language family and the evolution of English. A dedicated poetry block allows for an analytical dive into meter, rhyme, and form. Activities include tracing word etymologies and writing a sonnet.

- **Biology & Geography: Ecology & Meteorology**

The focus is on systems thinking. Students move from individual components to understanding dynamic, interconnected processes, whether in a local ecosystem or the Earth's climate. Core content includes food webs, nutrient cycles, weather fronts, and global climate zones. This is supported by intensive field trips and learning to create weather maps.



Our Promise

We are committed to offer a balanced inspiring path of development
– one that prepares young people for exams, for work, for life, and
most importantly, for becoming themselves.

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