

**Professional Profile**

for

**Eurythmy Therapists**

in

**Waldorf/  
Rudolf Steiner  
Schools**



**International  
Eurythmy Therapy Forum**

Medical Section  
of the School of Spiritual Science  
at the Goetheanum, Switzerland

# IMPRINT

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## General

The existing Rudolf Steiner Schools (about 200 Waldorf Schools in Germany, about 1000 such schools world-wide) are the prerequisite for exercising the profession of School Eurythmy Therapist.

The Waldorf approach to education was developed in 1919 by Rudolf Steiner. The concept is based on the anthroposophical idea of humanity, in which illness is not understood as a deviation from "normal" health, but rather as a disharmony between the human body, soul and spirit. This is not something to be primarily repaired, but the child or adolescent's consciously grasped harmonisation of these three aspects of life allows for self-healing, helping these young people take a healthier step forward in their own evolving lifeline.

The therapeutic, prophylactic impulse of Waldorf School education is based on experience gathered over 90 years.

Waldorf pedagogical practice includes the integrated therapeutic approach as a fixed component of schooling. This is where individual as well as small groups of pupils receive specific support and assistance.

The primary thrust of such therapy is in the sense of prevention, in order to provide specific help for the respective child's development, and is not conceived as medical treatment of diseases or disorders. In Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner schools, this therapy takes place as a cooperative effort between teachers, school physician, therapists and parents.

This means that the eurythmy therapist can only practice his or her therapeutic profession within the context of the school community, and as a rule is also paid by the school to do so.

An early recognition and treatment of developmental abnormalities and disorders is also currently being demanded by competent pedagogical and medical experts at non-anthroposophical institutions as well:

- Professional Association of Paediatricians in Germany (along with calling for full-time school physicians in schools)
- The Ottawa Charta with the concept of the health-promoting school
- The German Federal Centre for Health Education (*Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung*, BZgA), which has developed the science of salutogenesis for the routine school day
- The WHO, which defines health according to seven criteria (as per Hildebrandt):
  - stable self-esteem
  - positive relationship to one's own body
  - ability to make friends and maintain social relationships
  - an intact environment
  - meaningful work and healthy working conditions
  - knowledge of health and access to health care
  - decent conditions in the present and the reasonable hope of a decent future

Health in the sense of salutogenesis means health in a holistic understanding of well-being, and may not be reduced to absence of pain or the simple presence of a good mood. Health is energy, something active. It is the prerequisite for being able to learn and work, to enter into positive cooperation with others, and to show perseverance, high performance, and creativity.

On these principles, the teaching staff at Waldorf schools should always include a school physician who is informed about the health status of the pupils and can both give teachers specific instructions as well as provide medical diagnoses to the school therapists.

The therapy area at a Waldorf School includes eurythmy therapy, artistic therapy, speech therapy, music therapy and remedial teaching (special tuition).

Waldorf pedagogy thus takes a leading role in actively implementing salutogenetic principles in the public debate on education and health.

## Objective

The basic objective of school-based therapy is to make it possible for pupils to be integrated in classroom activities, to prevent school failure on the part of endangered children and adolescents, and primarily to promote good health. This includes developing a healthy sense of self-confidence (a feeling of coherence: being able to be understood, meaningfulness, manageability).

## Education and training (see eurythmy therapist professional profile)

The eurythmy therapist working in Waldorf Schools basically has the same training as eurythmy therapists working in hospitals, free medical practices, and institutions specialising in curative education, with the respective additional training module of school eurythmy therapy practice. Naturally he or she is a member of the Eurythmy Therapy Association (BVHE) and is obliged to continue job-related advanced training. This applies particularly to persons who switch from other fields of practice and institutions as well as for eurythmy therapists who want to return to the profession after an interruption.

## Responsibilities

*In times long gone, a thought lived  
Powerfully within the souls of the initiates:  
That every human being  
Is by nature ill.  
And education was seen  
As being the same as healing  
Which provided health for the child  
As it grew and matured  
Toward a being-human rounded off by life.*

R. Steiner

### The specific responsibilities (full teaching load = approx. 22 school hours):

- Taking care of pupils referred to them for eurythmy therapy from a pedagogical or therapeutic session
- one epoch period = approx. 7 - 8 weeks
- 3 – 6 times a week (due to therapeutic efficacy of rhythms)
- 8 – 10 individual therapeutic sessions a day are possible
- maintenance of close contact to teachers, physician and possibly other therapists and parents
- conduct of regular therapy conferences with all therapists and the school physician
- documentation of the exercises, course of treatment and time period
- conduct of practical tutorials

### The basic school responsibilities include (pro-rated to volume of teaching load) e.g.:

- supervision
- substitutions
- conference work
- class conferences
- parents' evenings
- planning and conducting festivities
- own advanced training in specialist conferences in eurythmy therapy / pedagogy / medicine

Furthermore, the eurythmy therapist maintains contact to the Medical Section in Dornach. With sufficient experience, the supervision of eurythmy therapist trainees can be an additional responsibility.

Apart from the recognised diploma certificate, the authorisation to conduct eurythmy therapy on children is derived from the anthroposophical study of humans of R. Steiner. Every eurythmy therapy measure must be discussed with the physician (school physician).

If required, the professional work of the eurythmy therapist also includes the care of colleagues. In individual cases a mother or father will practice eurythmy therapy movements together with the child.

**Possible indications for school children are:**

Poor concentration, fidgetiness, dyspraxia (motoric, emotional), anxieties, aggressiveness, rhythmical disturbances, tension, deformations of all kind, problems with teeth or eyes, language and auditory processing disorders (pedaudiology), mixed dominances ranging from posture anomalies, dyslexia, and reduced performance to child depression, anorexia and obesity.

The science of constitutions and temperaments according to R. Steiner gives us special information (microcephalic, macrocephalic, etc.).

Furthermore the work will naturally also include involvement with common disorders such as allergies, neurodermitis, asthmatic diseases, constipation, bed-wetting, etc..

The therapeutic measures take place primarily in one-on-one sessions or in group therapy.

As part of the curative process, the following disorders are primarily treated in the form of concomitant therapy:

- allergies
- diseases of the spine
- recurrent head or stomach pain
- bedwetting, etc.

In a Waldorf School working under the motto of EDUCATION = HEALING, three terms play a central role: hygiene, prophylaxis, and therapy.

**Hygiene** in this context means normal personal hygiene, i.e.:

- nutrition
- clothing
- conditions of sleep and wakefulness
- rhythms
- leisure activities
- understanding of development
- handling media
- drugs
- sexual education
- talks with parents, and much more.

In contrast, **prophylaxis** here means: detecting delays in growth and development, perceiving the beginnings of the illness so that an attempt is made to help the child or adolescent deal with difficulties and problems which if left unnoticed would lead to future illnesses and disorders (see eurythmy therapy course and conference of 6 Feb. 1923 given by Steiner).

Whilst in the case of **hygiene** the teacher largely acts alone (supported by suggestions of the school physician, the therapist and of course also the parents), **prophylaxis** involves guidance by the physician and therapeutically trained persons skilled in starting therapy on the basis of preliminary diagnoses, exchanging observations within a team, individually adapting various therapies and providing teachers and parents with appropriate ways of behaviour to address the situation.

In Waldorf schools a treatment period of approximately 7 weeks has proven to be effective and promising, with a weekly rhythm of 3 or 6 days in succession, lasting 15-20 min. plus rest period afterwards per therapy unit.

The Waldorf schools observe these guidelines as employers.

The concept, structure, and profile of a Waldorf school has been prescribed by R. Steiner and Anthroposophy. This includes the mission of educating humans through science, art and religion to practice freedom in thinking, feeling, and acting. The prerequisite for doing so is health, which is promoted by the pedagogical approach and assisted by school physicians and school therapists.

Practice Field of School Eurythmy  
in the Professional Association Eurythmy Therapy /  
Germany

Remshalden, February 15, 2010

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