



Integrative Student Support

A Waldorf Approach

There is no such thing as a dominating or disobedient student...
only a disoriented one

Among the challenges that face us today, isolation and disorientation are experiences that stand out in terms of the emotional distress in childhood and teen years that can color the rest of our lives. Rudolf Steiner gave us a Motto of Social Ethics in which he said:

The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each one is living.

Yet when a child is subtly excluded from his/her class community or feels disoriented and behaves badly, the reflection both the class and the students hold of each other, and the relationship with the teacher can be strongly affected. Exclusion, emotional, learning and behavioral problems carry the possibility for distress and the feeling of being stigmatized, but if resolved in an insightful and warm way it brings the opportunity to experience dynamic human encounters through which the essential individuality of the child and teen grows.

At the core of this approach is the belief that...

There is no such thing as an antisocial or disobedient child, only a disoriented one.

What this means in practice is that when a social, emotional or behavioral problem comes up, teachers and parents are given support to find the tools they need to help orient the child. This is much more than just a kind of way of talking about difficult issues; it can be a paradigm shift.

What Makes the Integrative Student Support Process Different?

- Unlike standard mediation, behavior modification and diagnosis based “labeling” practices, this approach, developed and refined over 30 years, is specifically designed to address support issues in the context of the Waldorf curriculum.
- It forms a “four legged stool” of support for a student. So often behavioral, learning, cultural and social issues tend to come together and need careful coordination and consistency. This process establishes and ensures the smooth running of the Social Inclusion, Restorative Discipline, Learning Support and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice work within the school
- Keeping the child and teen in the center, it creates teamwork between parents and teachers rather than allowing strain in adult relationships to simmer, build and distract.
- This process sees conflict and challenging behavior as being a part of social and emotional learning that all students experience at times.
- Without blaming and shaming the children or teens who are disoriented, it helps them see the implications of their actions and be involved in planning how to put things right.
- It is a whole community approach spearheaded by a small group of trained faculty and parents who form a Student Support Coordinating Group. The parents in this process focus on parent education and support.
- It creates a transparent process and communication. This means that parents, teachers and the student know where they stand and what strategies are being used to help improve the situation.
- Student ‘citizenship’ is fostered by establishing a Student Social Action Committee made up of older students who help with social issues in the younger grades.
- Students see that this approach is a fair and effective way to work through social and discipline issues, that helps rather than punishes them.
- It makes life easier for the teachers and helps keep their focus on the class and the curriculum.
- It is sensitive to the personnel limits of the school and does not overburden the teachers with unreasonable extra committee work.

An Overview...

The Integrative Student Support Process

The process has two phases. The first phase is spread over three years. The second phase gives on going support.

Phase One:

Faculty Professional Development

This involves the faculty being given access to a library series of short videos with Kim that overviews the key principles and also gives specific social and behavioral tools. These videos can be either viewed individually at home or during a faculty meeting. Written material is also available in the schools ISS online library that we curate and update. The Student Support Coordinating Group usually facilitates a discussion with the faculty after each video has been viewed.

Video material – Approx. 3-5 hours per year

Faculty discussion – Approx. 15-20 minutes each week

Student Support Coordinating Group

This is a small group of teachers and administrators who help parent and teachers assist students in need of extra social, behavioral or therapeutic care. They lead faculty discussion of the training material provided and establish transparent and consistent student support processes. The SSCG meet via video conference with Kim on a regular basis.

Meeting time – 60 minutes per month

Student Social Action Committee

In addition many schools form a Student Social Action Committee. This is made up of students from the upper grades that help foster a healthy social culture on the playground and also assist if problems arise. A series of short videos and a booklet helps with their training.

Meeting time – 40 minutes per week

Training time – 3-5 hours per year

Parent Enrichment

A series of short videos hosted by Kim giving an overview of the process can help parents work with their child in a way that is supportive and consistent with the schools inclusive approach.

Video material – 1-2 hours

Phase Two:

Sustainability & On-going Maintenance. Our monthly meetings with the Student Support Coordinating Group continue. This helps...

- Orient new faculty members
 - Keep the ISS process alive and strong
 - Allows for students of concern to be discussed and supported
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ABOUT THE TRAINER...

Kim John Payne, M.Ed., is an Australian who has worked for more than 30 years as a Waldorf teacher, counselor, adult educator, researcher and consultant. Out of his research, Kim has



implemented the Waldorf based Integrative Student Support process in many Independent and Public (Charter) Waldorf school communities. This approach helps address behavioral issues, bullying, and teasing in school.

He was the Co-Director of the a Waldorf school based research project, sponsored by the Anthroposophical Society of America, exploring and developing a drug free approach to attention-related disorders. He was the founding director of *The Challenge of Adolescence*, a training course for therapists, teachers, and parents hosted by Michael Hall Steiner School in the UK. Kim John Payne is the Director of the Center for Social Sustainability. He also served as the Director of the Antioch University Waldorf Collaborative Counseling Program. He was a faculty member at Emerson College (UK), Lesley Universities Peaceable Schools Program, the founding co-director of the Eastern European Institute of Bothmer

Movement/Spatial Dynamics (Hungary), and co director of the Bothmer Movement/Spatial Dynamics (England). He is the founding Director of The Simplicity Parenting Institute.

He has appeared on frequently on television including ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox; on radio with the BBC, Sirius/XM, CBC & NPR and in print including being featured in Time Magazine, Chicago Tribune, Parenting, Mothering, Times Union and the LA Times and New York Times. He writes for the Huffington Post.

Kim is based in Western Massachusetts USA. He is the author of *Games Children Play* (Hawthorn Press, 1996) and *Simplicity Parenting* (Ballantine Books/Random House, 2009 & 2019), *Beyond Winning* (Globe Press, 2014) and *Soul of Discipline* (Penguin/Random House, 2016) and *Being At Your Best When Your Kids Are At Their Worst* (Shambhala 2018), *The Waldorf Games Handbook for the Early Years* (Hawthorn Press 2021) *Games Children Play II* (Hawthorn Press, 2022) and *Emotionally Resilient Tweens and Teens* (Shambhala 2022). He strives to deepen understanding and give practical tools for life that arise out of the burning social issues of our time.

WHAT PARENTS, TEACHERS & STUDENTS SAY...

"Introducing the Waldorf Student Support process in our school has not just been like fresh air, it actually 'is' the air. I feel like I can breathe now. I feel like there is a clear way that we can work out the behavior problems that inevitably arise. My confidence in the school and trusting relationships with the teachers has really improved." Jessica Lopez. Parent of three children.

"Being bullied is absolutely the worst thing that can possibly happen at school, really the worst. A lot of us knew it wasn't right but since Social Inclusion has come to our school we know that we can speak up without feeling that we will get picked on. I guess it's because no one gets blamed but everyone has to try and work it out. It's really better now, much better." Stephanie 9th Grade Student.

"Initially I thought this process was going to mean a lot of extra work for me. The way it has turned out is that I can keep the class moving along because I am supported to work with the individual children who need extra help. It has made things more manageable." Edwin Gonzales 6th Grade Teacher

"I am so relieved that there is a clear process to improve communication with the parents when a child's behavior becomes disruptive." Robin Younger 2nd Grade and Handwork Teacher.

"It used to be sort of hard to know when joking around became teasing. I think that's where a lot of trouble started. Now that the teachers and older kids are helping us more, it doesn't get out of control." Jake 5th Grade Student

"I've been so impressed at how willingly the children take on the his work. I'm the kind of teacher that stays pretty close to the kids but I was very surprised how much more I could do with Integrative Student Support. We still have problems that come up but now we have a process that all subject teachers and parents can use. I used to have a lot of pretty complex situations to deal with, now we can all work through it in a much more practical way. It takes a lot less time and has seemed to build a healthier social life in the class." Jean McCann, 5th Grade Teacher