



Welcome,

We're excited that you are interested in The Trillium School, Kitsap County's first Sudbury school. Located in Indianola, The Trillium School was founded in 2006, offering an education fully integrated with life – an education for the changing world. With students ages five through 18, we are part of a worldwide movement in education based on the philosophy developed by the Sudbury Valley School, founded in Massachusetts in 1968.

By encouraging self initiated learning, responsibility, independence, self confidence, and creativity, our program prepares students for life in the modern world. Trillium offers an environment that is fully integrated with the “real world,” rather than being artificially separated from it. Where other programs attempt to predict what skills students will need in their lives and simulate conditions that promote learning, our curriculum gives students the opportunity to learn in the same way that they will learn throughout their lives – by pursuing their own interests, under their own direction.

At The Trillium School, students of all ages mix freely with each other and with the staff, sharing ideas, interests and experiences. Learning takes place in many ways, some which look “traditional”, and others which are more organic and playful.

A Sudbury education allows students to learn and grow in an environment of trust, responsibility and freedom. Students at The Trillium School, together, create a dynamic and diverse community. Our curriculum, unlike any other, helps students learn to be flexible, adaptable, and self-motivated – skills that are vitally important in a time when our lives are changing dramatically, and more rapidly than ever before.

In this packet you will find articles and information that describe and illustrate key aspects of The Trillium School, as well as resources for further exploration.

The Trillium School offers year-round admission for students ages 5 through 17. Contact us to schedule your admissions conference or a tour of the school. We are also available to answer questions. We look forward to meeting you and your family!

Sincerely,

The Trillium School
PO Box 492
Indianola, WA 98342
www.TrilliumSchool.org
info@trilliumschool.org
360.297.3733

ADMISSIONS GUIDELINES

Below is a step by step process for enrolling your child in The Trillium School. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us directly.

Schedule an Admissions Conference

- 1) Complete a Trillium School Application and include your \$40 application fee. Upon receipt, we will contact you to schedule an admissions conference.

At your admissions conference we will explore the concepts and expectations of The Trillium School. We will have ample time for all of your questions and concerns.

Set up a Visiting Week

- 2) Prior to enrollment, each interested student is required to participate in a visiting week. The cost of a visiting week is \$150, which may be credited towards tuition should you decide to enroll.

Enroll Your Child

- 3) After our admissions conference and your visiting week, if we and your family decide that The Trillium School is a good fit, our Registrar will work with you to fill out all the necessary paperwork.

The first two weeks of enrollment is an “open window” period. During this time, if you or the school find that the school is unlikely to meet your needs and expectations, then you may withdraw and receive a full refund of tuition, minus a pro-rated fee per week of attendance.



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Application

Contact the school to schedule an Admissions Conference.
In advance of the Admissions Conference, please fill out this application and submit it to the school with a non-refundable \$40 fee.

The Trillium School
PO Box 492, Indianola, WA 98342
360.297.3733

We require **ALL** parents or guardians **AS WELL AS** the prospective student to attend the Admissions Conference.

The Trillium School admits students of any race, sex, sexual orientation, color, religion, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, color, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Student Name: _____

Student Birth-date & Gender: _____ Male Female (circle one)

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent Names: _____

E-Mail Addresses: _____

Best time to contact you: _____

How did you hear about The Trillium School? _____

As a way for us to learn something about you and your family prior to our admission interview, please answer the following questions. Because each person brings their own perspective, it is important to us that the responses to these questions come from both the student and his/her parents. If your child does not yet read or write, please transcribe his or her answers. Feel free to attach additional paper if you need more room.

Please describe your (the student's) educational history: _____

Please describe what you have done (parents & student), so far, to familiarize yourself with our school (read website, read books, came to an open house, etc.):

What aspects of The Trillium School inspired you to apply?

What are you (parents) looking for (hoping for, wanting for your child) by enrolling at The Trillium School?

2009 – 2010 Tuition

Full-Time Tuition	\$6,500	
Full-Time Sibling Tuition	\$3,250	
Part-Time Tuition (4 day/wk)	\$5,200	<i>(only available for students under 8yrs old)</i>
Part-Time Sibling Tuition	\$2,600	
Non-Refundable Enrollment Fee	\$300	
Visiting Week Tuition	\$150	

Tuition Assistance

The Trillium School tuition rate is set and approved annually by the school Assembly, made up of the students, parents and staff. We recognize that some families will not be able to afford the full tuition, and extend reduced tuition rates to families based on their financial ability. The purpose of our tuition assistance program is to make the school available to families with very low incomes or specific financial hardships. The Trillium School will work with families to both enable attendance and to set clear contractual expectations about tuition payments.

The total amount of tuition assistance granted during any given school year depends on the financial status of the school. The school has been able to keep tuition rates low through donations and the generosity of staff willing to work for low or no salaries. We ask that all families seeking assistance review the annual budget and consider the financial needs of the school when making a Tuition Assistance request.

To request a Tuition Assistance Application Form, please indicate your interest at your Admissions Conference.



The Trillium School Explained

The Trillium School is Kitsap County's first Sudbury School, offering an education fully integrated with life – an education for the changing world.

Trillium is part of the worldwide movement in education based on the philosophy pioneered by The Sudbury Valley School since 1968. A Sudbury education allows students to learn and grow in an environment of independence, confidence, and responsibility. Our curriculum inspires students to be flexible, adaptable, and self-motivated – skills that are vitally important in a time when the world around us is changing dramatically, and more rapidly than ever before.

How Does It Work?

The Trillium School curriculum is fully student-driven. Students pursue their own interests in as many different ways as there are students. Some of these may look “traditional”, while most will be anything but. Students interact freely with other students and staff of all ages, blurring the lines of traditional roles such as “student” and “teacher”. All members of the community participate as peers in the School Meeting, the democratic body that debates and votes on day-to-day operations of the school. The school is truly democratic, with no ultimate authority or veto power held by adult staff. In this environment, Trillium students gain the skills, confidence, and experience necessary to pursue any future they choose.

Responsibility

We believe that students learn responsibility toward themselves and others by being given responsibility.

Although many freedoms are enjoyed here, they do not come without responsibility. Being part of a community requires that people take responsibility for their actions and the impact that they have on the community.

Everyone at Trillium is accountable to the community for their actions. As importantly, they are accountable to themselves – Trillium students are fully in charge of their own education, and part of that education is learning to shoulder the responsibility of directing their own lives.

Confidence

With no testing or external assessment, students are free to set their own definition of success. Students also have the freedom and space to truly challenge themselves, and to struggle with difficult situations while being trusted to find their own solutions. Through that trust, Trillium students gain great confidence – to know that they are capable of making their own decisions, to know that they are capable of correcting and learning from any mistakes they make, and to ask for help when they need it.

Persistence

At Trillium, “failure” is not a bad word. Students are given the freedom to fail, and to try again. A mistake is not something to be feared, but an opportunity – something to analyze and learn from before making another attempt. If something becomes too frustrating, too difficult, a student also has the freedom to walk away; but if the goal is important to her, she will come back to it when she feels ready.



Play

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of play and free social interactions in people's effort to build conceptual models of the world. Because this model-building also happens to be very enjoyable, some of the most common activities at the Trillium School are activities which most people would label as "just" playing. We recognize that learning takes many forms, and often doesn't fit conventional ideas of what learning should look like. Since students are free to spend their time however they choose, it is no one's place to tell them that they are "wasting" their time, or that they should move on from one activity to another. Since we believe that people learn in all sorts of ways, from whatever they do, there is also no bias toward traditional academic subjects.

When play is taken seriously it becomes something more than what we normally see on the surface. The development of complex rules and social agreements that arise when people get deeply involved in play is essential to healthy growth.

Adaptability

The skills needed to navigate our world are changing constantly. The skills that may be vital today are not the same as they were 20 years ago, and in 20 more years they will have changed in ways we can only guess at. With that in mind, Trillium students are not force-fed a standardized curriculum. The emphasis of a Trillium education is not on learning the facts and figures that seem pertinent today, but on learning skills that will always be relevant – curiosity, confidence, genuine love of learning, recognizing and following passion, thinking for oneself – skills that allow a person to thrive in any situation.

Social Skills

A large and vital part of the Trillium curriculum is talking – students spend lots of time talking to other students and staff of all ages. These conversations happen naturally, whether as part of game play, collaborative projects, debate in school meeting, or casual discussion. Students learn to relate to people of all ages with confidence, to take a point of view and defend it, and to talk about subjects as far ranging as the interests of the school community.



Recognizing Passion

At The Trillium School, we recognize that learning cannot be forced, and that the greatest growth happens when a people explore a subject or activity that excites and motivates them. Free from scheduled and required classes, each Trillium student is able to explore many options, trying out different activities and finding the ones that are most exciting to him. When a student discovers something he is passionate about, he can delve into it as deeply as he likes. In this way, students can gain deeper understanding of subjects than they otherwise might, while at the same time nurturing passions that may stay with them throughout their lives.

Community

At the heart of the Trillium community is the idea of respect. Staff and students are always available to support each other, as resources, mentors, helpers, and, above all, peers and friends. Not everyone gets along all the time, but the community maintains a clear expectation that people treat each other with respect.

Although the school includes people of many ages, abilities, interests, and levels of experience, it is understood that these differences do not entitle anyone to act as an authority figure or dictate the actions of another. Only the School Meeting and its sub-committee, the Judicial Committee (on which all students and staff serve in turn) have the capacity to direct the actions of school members, and these bodies go to great lengths to make sure that their decisions are made with respect and compassion foremost in mind.

Contact us to schedule your tour and find out more about The Trillium School:

Phone: 360.297.3733

Email: info@trilliumschool.org





What is Sudbury?

The Sudbury philosophy was developed by the Sudbury Valley School, founded in Massachusetts in 1968. Almost by definition, no two Sudbury schools are identical – the exact character of each school is shaped by its students and staff. There are, however, several common elements that define the Sudbury philosophy and curriculum.

Underlying Philosophy: The Sudbury philosophy is the extension of a few basic premises:

- We are all born with an innate drive to understand and master our environment.
- Learning takes many forms, many of which look different from what we may expect.
- Learning happens all the time, in whatever we do.
- No one can decide for another what they should learn (or when, or how), or what constitutes a good use of their time. Everyone has a right to direct their own life and education.
- The only way a person can learn to be truly responsible is by being given real responsibility.

Curriculum: The Sudbury Curriculum is self-directed, with students deciding how to use their time.

- Students are free to discover their passions and explore them to whatever depth they choose.
- The only classes are those specifically requested by students.
- All activities are directed by student interest – there are no academic requirements or testing.
- Staff members are not primarily “teachers”, but act as resources and facilitators for students.
- Every activity is looked on as a learning opportunity – all activities are valued equally as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others.

Governance: Students and staff, regardless of age, each get one vote in a democratic School Meeting.

- School Meeting votes on staff hiring/firing, changes to the school’s lawbook, and other day-to-day matters that impact the school community.
- Conflicts and rule violations are resolved through mediation or by Judicial Committee, a special subcommittee of the School Meeting.

Community: Sudbury schools emphasize a caring, safe, community environment.

- Staff and students interact as peers; staff serve as role-models but not as authority figures.
- The freedom of the curriculum is balanced by the responsibility of being part of a community and being accountable for the impact of one’s actions.
- Respect is the underpinning of a Sudbury school and its community.

Outcomes: Students come away from a Sudbury school with valuable skills for the modern world.

- Students learn to identify and pursue their interests and passions.
- Free, respectful interactions with people of all ages lead students to develop confidence and strong social skills.
- By taking control of their own education, Sudbury students become responsible, adaptable, confident, and self-motivated.
- Students learn how to craft creative, original solutions to problems of all kinds.
- Without being told what to do or learn, students learn how to think and learn for themselves.



uggested Readings About Sudbury Education:

There have been many great books written on education, both directly and peripherally related to the Sudbury philosophy. This list is by no means comprehensive, but lists several great books and important authors to get you started.

Staff, parents, and alumni from The Sudbury Valley School have written many books about the school and their experiences. They can be found for purchase, along with a wide selection of free articles, at www.sudval.org. Here are a few:

The Sudbury Valley School Experience, by The Sudbury Valley School Press

Free at Last, by Daniel Greenberg

Turning Learning Right Side Up: Putting Education Back on Track, by Russell L. Ackoff and Daniel Greenberg

The Pursuit of Happiness: The Lives of Sudbury Valley Alumni, by Daniel Greenberg, Mimsy Sadofsky, and Jason Lempka

Some other excellent books have been written by staff at other Sudbury schools:

Thinking About the Circle School, by Circle School staff (available from www.circleschool.org)

Like Water: The Extraordinary Approach to Education at Fairhaven School, by Mark McCaig (available from www.fairhavenschool.com)

Trusting Children: A Look at Sudbury Education Around the World, compiled by Jen Schwartz, edited by Tara Maher (available from www.segolilyschool.org)

There are also many great books that, while not about Sudbury education, deal with many relevant issues in education. Here are selections from two important voices in educational thought:

How Children Learn, by John Holt

Escape From Childhood: The Needs and Rights of Children, by John Holt

The Underground History of Education, by John Taylor Gatto



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hat Real Learning Looks Like

One of the most commonly asked questions about The Trillium School is: “how do kids learn in an environment where there are no classes?” This is one of the greatest fears of parents, even those who believe strongly in our school. Often the question is asked by parents who will, even in the same conversation, freely acknowledge that they struggled to learn or retain information in classes when they were in school. The parent who talks about how she never learned math in math class may well be the same one who worries that her child will never learn math without a structured class.

This isn’t hypocrisy on the part of these parents – our culture is set up to value learning in the mode that we consider traditional (never mind that schools in their present form have only existed for a little over 100 years), and the fear that one’s child might not get a successful education is deeply ingrained and constantly perpetuated – hence the constant pressure to get good grades, perform well on standardized tests, and get into honors and AP classes.

I’ve had the opportunity to experience a lot of different learning environments, and observe a lot of people in these different environments. When I reflect on my observations, two principles stand out to me as being vital to any conversation about learning in a Sudbury model school. These principles, while sometimes acknowledged in mainstream education, are rarely given any real weight. In contrast, they are fundamental to the way we think about learning here at Trillium.

The first principle is that, in order to really learn, a person has to be genuinely interested in the subject, or they need to be deeply invested in the subject for some other reason – for example, if you really want to be an engineer, you probably need to know a certain amount of math, even if math generally isn’t your favorite thing; someone with a genuine desire to learn will find a way to. You can’t fake this, and you can’t force it. In my high school and college careers I knew a great many people (myself included) with good or excellent grades who felt they had learned little or nothing in a lot of their classes. Someone who isn’t interested in history might “learn”

enough history to pass the test or write that final paper, and even get a great grade, but the information won't stick with them if they don't care about it. Without a *reason*, a genuine motivation that is internal, rather than externally imposed, the energy and focus to really learn a subject cannot be mustered.

The second principle is that what a person is learning isn't always what it seems – but we all are almost always learning *something*. When I was a kid, like many kids, I went through phases of deep fascination with a variety of esoteric things – I checked out books from the library on zeppelins, D-Day, Thor Heyerdahl and the Kon Tiki expedition, and other things that the librarians were often surprised to see in the hands of a six year old. Am I today an expert on any of these things? No, but my interests led me to dive into books that most people would have said were much too advanced for someone my age. The strides I made in my reading during that time were huge, and I would never have made them had I been forced to read things that didn't interest me instead. I didn't grow up to be an aeronautical engineer or World War II historian, but I did grow up loving to read and write.

In the same way, children in classes that don't interest them are learning something – but instead of learning geometry or world history, maybe they're learning how to look like they're paying attention while daydreaming, or how to retain just enough information to pass the test.

Many more 'traditional' school programs acknowledge this fact on some level – the goal of primary and secondary education is often said to be to teach people how to think and learn for themselves – yet the real focus remains on ever more testing and grading. The result is students who are skilled at taking tests and getting good grades.

So how does a school like Trillium work from these two principles to create an environment conducive to real learning? At Trillium, classes happen only when requested by students and the average student probably spends 98% of their time at Trillium *not* in a class. Students direct their own learning, free to go wherever their excitement, passion, and interest leads them. This means that students are able to spend the maximum possible amount of time in a state of excited interest – the optimal condition for real learning to occur. What is learned will differ vastly from one student to the next, but we always trust that what students are doing has value to them.

For example, our school is frequently swept by fads that can last anywhere from a few days to a few months. Four square, freeze tag, and Pokemon cards are just a few that have come through in the past year. The latest is Dungeons and Dragons – several kids are extremely excited about this game right now. While many parents might raise eyebrows at reading this, the learning potential of this game is vast – in addition to being fantastic exercise for the imagination, the game features numerous thick, complex rulebooks written with adults in mind, and not a little

number crunching. I can personally attribute a great deal of my facility with both words and numbers to playing D&D as a kid, and I expect the same will happen with several students – the interest in the game makes the complex rules and numbers exciting, rather than daunting, and provides great incentive to understand and master material that might otherwise seem to be out of reach.

One of the great advantages students at Trillium have is the freedom to dive as deeply as they wish into what interests them, be that a book, a craft, a game, or any other activity. No Trillium staff member will ever say “hey, it looks like you’ve been playing with those Pokemon cards all day. Maybe you should do something else with your time.” If a kid wants to spend his whole day organizing his Pokemon cards, no one will question the decision. And if you’ve ever watched a child organizing a card collection, it’s clear that a lot of thought goes into the process. It’s impossible to know what exactly is being learned – maybe organizational skills or reading, or perhaps something totally different – but hard to deny that something deep and valuable is happening.

Because we recognize that learning is catalyzed by excitement, we allow and encourage students to spend as little or as much time as they like on whatever they find exciting. When a person has gained what he or she needs from an activity, the excitement may fade, and it’s time to move on. When the excitement doesn’t fade, a student is allowed the time and space to really dive deeply into a subject.

So what does real learning look like? At Trillium, it has as many faces as there are students (and perhaps even several per student). It may look like play, conversation, or hard, focused study. It may go in stops and starts, or in continuous hours and days of concentration. It may happen individually, or in groups. It may look like a “class,” with a “teacher,” but more often not, and when it does, the roles of teacher and student may be quite blurry.

What all of these forms of learning do have in common is that they are driven by the learner, from within, and not by external forces such as assessment, pressure from authority, or what a pre-written curriculum states is important. It’s difficult *not* to learn in a state of excited interest, and one of the goals of The Trillium School is to help each student discover that state and spend as much time there as possible. In this way, Trillium creates an environment where real learning goes on all the time, in every form imaginable.