

FAMILY HANDBOOK



The Waldorf School of Philadelphia

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THE WALDORF SCHOOL OF PHILADELPHIA

FAMILY HANDBOOK

Receive the child in reverence.

Educate him in love.

Let him go forth in freedom.

-Rudolf Steiner

Welcome to The Waldorf School of Philadelphia. This handbook for families is designed to outline the mission, philosophy and goals of our school, and to communicate important information about school life, our organization, and current school policies. It is our intent to offer a comprehensive reference that answers the most commonly-asked questions, and that provides a portal into our school community. Should you have a question that is not addressed here, please feel free to speak with your child's teacher or visit the school office.

THE WALDORF SCHOOL OF PHILADELPHIA

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CHAPTER 1

**ABOUT WALDORF EDUCATION AND
THE WALDORF SCHOOL OF PHILADELPHIA**

Section 1: The Foundations of Waldorf Education

Rudolf Steiner and the Origins of Waldorf Education

Shortly after World War I, Austrian philosopher and natural scientist, Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), was invited by Emil Molt, a leading progressive German industrialist, to visit his Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany. Molt asked Steiner to establish a school for the children of his employees. It was Molt's belief that if these children were to help create a brighter future for Germany, they would need an education that went beyond the traditional training of the intellect; they needed an education that would enable them to develop flexible problem solving capacities. Molt's hope was that Steiner could create a school leading to social renewal, that would provide education for the benefit of all, and that would lead to a social order with less damaging ways of resolving conflict than world war.

Steiner responded with an innovative proposal that turned the common educational practices of the day upside down. He wanted a school that, in its curriculum and methods, would address the changing needs of the developing child. Steiner's intention was to found a school movement, based on spiritual wisdom, to renew the art of education so that children could develop the full range of their capacities and become free, self-reliant individuals capable of contributing fresh insights and cultural initiatives to the world. A school is, in itself, a cultural initiative, Steiner believed, and he organized the first Waldorf school with people who believed as he did in the right of teachers to manage this initiative according to their own insight and experience. The organizing principle of Waldorf education is freedom from interference by the state and local school boards whose members are not themselves involved in practicing the art of education. Steiner and his supporters considered this right to be a governing principle for any school. On September 7, 1919 *Die Freie Waldorf Schule*, The Independent Waldorf School, opened its doors in Stuttgart. The curriculum of this first school is still relevant today in achieving Steiner's goals.

Because of its visionary philosophical foundation and creative teaching methods, the original Waldorf school grew, gaining international recognition and inspiring the creation of new schools. By 1933, there were seven Waldorf schools in Germany, three in Switzerland, and one each in London, Budapest, Oslo, and New York City. By 1941, though, all of the German, Dutch and Hungarian schools had been closed by the Nazis. There was no room in the Third Reich for education that taught individuals to think for themselves. Following World War II, Waldorf schools were the first schools re-opened by the Allies in Germany.

Today there are more than 700 independent Waldorf schools and numerous initiatives flourishing all over the world. In the U.S., there are more than 130 schools. Waldorf schools

are independent schools with no church or political affiliation. Each school begins with its own unique initiative and is linked with other Waldorf schools through common educational ideals. In America, Waldorf schools are governed and accredited by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (ASWNA).

Our School's History

Long before there was a Waldorf School of Philadelphia, it was the dream of two Waldorf teachers, Boel and Terry Neville, to bring Waldorf education to Philadelphia. In 1992, a small group met to discuss the possibility of opening a Waldorf-inspired community center or possibly a day care facility in the city. In early 1994 this group came to Philadelphia to perform a puppet play for local children and to talk about Waldorf ideas with local parents. Shortly thereafter, a family volunteered their home for a Waldorf parent study group and play group for preschool-age children. This group met on alternate Saturday mornings for the next two years.

In January of 1995, the Philadelphia Waldorf Initiative was incorporated with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A Board of Trustees was formed, by-laws were adopted, and nonprofit status was acquired. At around the same time, a small group of dedicated parents in the area began to take an active role in planning and organizing public lectures and puppet play performances as they fostered the idea of a Waldorf kindergarten and grade school in Philadelphia. This group was called the Carrying Group, because it carried the vision for our future school. As a result of the efforts of the Carrying Group, a larger circle of people became aware of and interested in the Philadelphia Waldorf Initiative, and soon there was enough support to make the dream of a Waldorf school in Philadelphia an achievable goal. The Carrying Group and Board of Trustees put all of their efforts into opening a school in the fall of 1996.

There was much work to be done, including renting a building, hiring teachers, obtaining licensing, enrolling students, building furniture, making toys, and many other tasks. With the dedication and hard work of many people, the Philadelphia Children's School, as it was then called, opened its doors on September 5, 1996 at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in the Roxborough neighborhood of Philadelphia. That first year we had twenty-eight children in two kindergarten classes led by Boel Neville and Mary McGinnis. The school was invited to become a member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) as an initiative, with eventual plans to become a member.

Our kindergartens spent two years at St. Timothy's and, when a first grade class was added in September 1997, it relocated to Grace Lutheran Church, also in Roxborough. Those two years spent in makeshift classrooms provided a firm foundation for our school to grow on. The faith

and enthusiasm of the pioneer parents and their partnership with the faculty, Carrying Group, and Board created a spirit of community, which is essential for a new school to take root and prosper. As the number of children enrolled grew to 40, it became clear that we were ready to seek a bigger and better home for the school. In September 1998, we opened our doors in the Eagles II building on the New Covenant Campus, located on Germantown Avenue in the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Philadelphia.

Since then, our school and our community have continued to thrive and grow. In 2004 our school sought, and was granted, accreditation from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and in 2006, we were granted developing school status by AWSNA. We also changed our name to The Waldorf School of Philadelphia. With four kindergartens, a nursery, two parent-toddler programs, eight grades, a varied and nourishing program of special subjects, and enrollment increasing yearly, it is clear that our story is just beginning. We look forward to the next chapter in our story with joy, and we look back with gratitude to all the teachers, parents, students and other community members whose love and hard work have brought us to this place.

Our Mission

The Waldorf School of Philadelphia is a vibrant learning community where education based on a deep understanding of the developing child integrates the intellectual with the artistic, the practical with the beautiful, and fosters the ability to engage fully in the world.

We achieve our mission by:

- Applying the innovative educational philosophy and curriculum of Rudolf Steiner in a contemporary context;
- Upholding a standard of excellence and integrity in academics, arts and human relationships;
- Honoring and valuing each child and his or her unique gifts;
- Cultivating dynamic working relationships with and among the faculty, the board, the administration and the community of families;
- Striving for cultural diversity within an urban setting, with a commitment to the importance of nature and its stewardship.

Philosophy of the Waldorf School of Philadelphia

Rudolf Steiner succinctly captured the aims of Waldorf Education when he wrote, “Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings, who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.” The Waldorf School of Philadelphia realizes these aims by seeking to balance the intellectual, emotional, and practical life of the child.

Our Commitment to Diversity

The Waldorf School of Philadelphia seeks to encourage and support diversity, including diversity in race, ethnic heritage, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, abilities the school is equipped to support, and religious, philosophical, political, and personal beliefs. A community that welcomes differences abounds with creativity and with opportunities for enhanced learning and problem solving. Our interest in each other moves beyond tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich diversity contained within each individual and family. Recognizing that each person is unique and has a valued point of view helps to create a positive, nurturing community in which every member is an integral part of the whole.

Section 2: Curriculum Overview

Early Childhood Program

The Waldorf early childhood philosophy is based upon the understanding that young children are open to their surroundings. They absorb everything from the outer physical environment to the inner emotions of the adults caring for them. These impressions are then worked through by the children in their creative play through imitation.

Each child’s innate capacity for wonder, reverence, and awe is valued and nurtured in a carefully planned program and environment in the Early Childhood Program. Teachers bring rhythmic activities into an atmosphere of beauty, warmth, and harmony to nourish the blossoming creative thinking upon which all future abstract thought will be built. Simple materials from nature provide the stimulus for creative play, which develops imagination, concentration and coordination that will be called forth in the elementary school years.

The school day maintains a familiar rhythm that repeats itself each week as the seasons pass. Nature’s cycles define the work of the Kindergarten each day as songs, verses, stories, and crafts that reflect the season.

Grades Curriculum

The teaching of the curriculum in a Waldorf grade school is divided between class and special subject teachers.

The class teacher, who teaches out of authority and soul warmth, ideally moves with a class from first through eighth grade. The three primary responsibilities of the class teacher are: 1) pedagogical leadership of the class; 2) parent work including, but not limited to, student assessment and report writing, parent conferences and class meetings; 3) the teaching of the morning lesson blocks.

Over the course of the eight grades, a class teacher will teach between eighty and ninety separate morning lesson blocks that introduce the children to all the major academic disciplines in an age appropriate manner. This morning lesson curriculum follows an alternating three to four-week block format. Each day's morning lesson runs for the first two hours of the day and is filled with a variety of activities that integrate the faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing (intentional activity). It is during these morning lesson periods that new material in the core academic disciplines of language arts, mathematics, social studies, and the sciences is introduced and explored in depth. Through the integration of a wide range of learning modalities—listening, speaking, drawing, modeling, painting, recitation, singing, and fine and gross motor movement (individually and as a group)—the traditional academic disciplines are enlivened for the children and transformed into inner imaginative experiences. Integral to these blocks is the children's production of beautifully written and illustrated morning lesson books. These books serve as a record of what the class has studied in morning lesson over the course of the child's grade school education.

Specialized subject teachers carry responsibility for the other academic and artistic disciplines—foreign language, eurythmy (a movement art), clay, woodworking, choral and instrumental music, handwork, physical education and, in the middle school years, fine arts. These teachers have expertise in their respective disciplines and teach across the range of the grades. Some of these subject classes run for the whole school year while some disciplines are taught for a half year. Through the work of the teachers the children develop the ability to express themselves intellectually and artistically in a wide range of subjects. Because of the complementary nature of how these subjects relate to the work carried by the class teacher, the children receive a rich and diversified range of intellectual and artistic experiences that are designed to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the individual child and the social group of the class at each stage of development.

First Grade

The first grade is a bridge between the Early Childhood Program and the grade school. The children still carry within them much of the imaginative consciousness of early childhood, but they are becoming more aware of the world around them.

Fairy tales and nature stories provide the context out of which language arts and arithmetic learning grow. The letters of the alphabet are introduced through stories that aid the transformation from picture to symbol. In this way the letters become actual characters to which the children have relationship, rather than abstract symbols. In arithmetic the children first experience the qualities of numbers, after which they are introduced to addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, the four arithmetic processes.

Artistic work such as form drawing, painting, handwork, beeswax modeling, drama, music, pentatonic flute and eurythmy are incorporated into the curriculum. First graders also study Spanish and movement education.

Second Grade

Second grade forms the link between the somewhat dreamy, holistic oneness of first grade and the dramatic metamorphosis of the individual in third grade. The children still carry within them some of the imaginative consciousness of early childhood, but they are becoming more aware of themselves and others. They start to experience the positive and negative aspects of personality – both their own and that of others. The children hear animal fables and other stories that show, in sharp contrast, many positive and negative traits in the guise of animal characters. The curriculum balances the fables with the legends of holy people from various cultures who, in overcoming their weaknesses, have been able to serve others. In language arts the children learn lower case letters and they write and read longer stories. Emphasis in arithmetic is placed on the multiplication tables and the relationship between the four processes, and place value, carrying and borrowing are introduced.

Artistic work and special subjects include handwork, painting, form drawing, beeswax modeling, eurythmy, drama, music, pentatonic flute, movement education, and Spanish.

Third Grade

After a wonderful experience of being one with the world and everything in it, the children begin to experience themselves as separate beings. In Waldorf education we recognize this realization of selfhood as “the nine-year-old change”. Third graders hear Hebrew Testament stories, which nourish the nine-year old’s awakening inner life. In language arts the children formally begin the study of grammar with an introduction to the parts of speech. At this age

cursive writing is introduced as well. During the course of the year the children are connected with the practical experiences of life through learning different kinds of measurement, building, farming and gardening.

Artistic work and special subjects include painting, form drawing, beeswax modeling, handwork, eurythmy, drama, movement education, recorder, music, and Spanish.

Fourth Grade

Fourth graders are passing through the midst of the nine-year change. They still wish to look up to adults, but their reverence of them must be justified. They become more self-confident as their perception of the world sharpens but, at the same time, their experience of separation from their surroundings can be quite painful. The children begin to form their personalities in response to their experiences of the world, consciously choosing those qualities that will become part of their characters.

As the children become more aware of the world, the challenges of life can seem overwhelming. A focus on the Norse myths gives students the strength to face these challenges. In reading, the children continue to develop their vocabulary and comprehension, and in grammar they learn the four types of sentences, the tenses, and they continue working with parts of speech and with punctuation. Fourth graders also begin the study of local geography and history, and this is also the appropriate time for introducing fractions. Zoology is the first formal science block in the curriculum. It focuses on the animal world and its relationship to the human being.

Artistic work and special subjects include handwork, painting, form drawing, woodworking, sculpture, eurythmy, drama, music, recorder, orchestra, movement education, and Spanish.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade in a Waldorf school is usually referred to as the “Golden Year”. Generally, students have achieved a skill level in basic academic work that allows them to meet new challenges with enthusiasm and energy. Their capacities also reflect a facility and confidence in working with various forms of artistic expression. Physically, their bodies move with balance, grace, and agility. Even in the social arena, fifth graders display a harmony and integration that will soon be challenged by the demands of adolescence. The fifth-grade curriculum meets this golden age through a balance of academic, artistic, and movement work.

The fifth-grade language arts and history curricula are based upon the ancient civilizations of India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. In the spring the children participate in a five-event Greek Pentathlon with fifth-grade students from other Waldorf schools. This competition involves the discus, javelin, wrestling, long jump and running, and is held in the same spirit of

truth and beauty as the inaugural ancient Greek competitions. Fifth grade marks an important transition from mythology to history.

Fifth graders learn the geography of the North American continent, factoring and decimals in mathematics and, in science, botany, which focuses on the balance between scientific observation and an appreciation for the poetic qualities and beauty of the plant world. In language arts they continue to work on their grammar, reading and writing skills.

Artistic work and special subjects include painting, form drawing, handwork, woodworking, sculpture, drama, eurythmy, movement education, music, recorder, orchestra, and Spanish.

Sixth Grade

The approach of puberty in the sixth grade often involves a loss of the relatively harmonious and graceful movements of the fifth graders as the children seem to “fall” into gravity. Like ancient Romans, sixth graders stand firmly on the earth. They enjoy “concretizing” ideas by memorizing facts from the subjects they study. The history curriculum extends from ancient Rome and the fall of the Roman Empire to the unfolding of European civilization in the Middle Ages. In science students study the heavens and the earth, astronomy and mineralogy. Their study of physics begins with an introduction to acoustics, progressing to light, heat, static electricity and magnetism. Geometric shapes, which have been drawn freehand in earlier grades, now are explored with the help of a compass and straightedge. In geography the students study Latin America or Europe. Sixth grade is the appropriate year for an introduction to business math.

Artistic work and special subjects include painting, handwork, woodworking, sculpture, drama, eurythmy, music, recorder, orchestra, movement education, and Spanish.

Seventh Grade

Seventh grade students are in the process of experiencing significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. The physical growth changes can often lead to the experience of clumsiness in bodily movement and self-expression. The emotional changes lend themselves to mood swings and increasing self-absorption, while the cognitive capacities begin to move toward increasing reflection, allowing the students to work with cause and effect and overview with greater facility.

The history curriculum that forms the leitmotif for the work in seventh grade spans the Renaissance and the Age of Exploration to the Reformation. Algebra begins with the study of positive and negative numbers and moves into the laws of equations. Students study plane geometry and perspective drawing. They are formally introduced to creative writing, exploring

meter, poetic structure and more. The historical transition from the geocentric to the heliocentric picture of the solar system is the focus for the study of astronomy.

Seventh graders are also formally introduced to chemistry where they study combustion, the lime cycle, salts, acids and bases. The study of human physiology focuses on the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, and reproductive systems. Mechanics is the new topic of the seventh grade physics curriculum, and in geography the students study Africa.

Artistic work and special subjects include painting, drawing, handwork, woodworking, sculpture, eurythmy, drama, music, orchestra, recorder, movement education, and Spanish.

Eighth Grade

Eighth graders are completing their passage through childhood and are entering the territory of youth. The history curriculum begins with the American, French and Industrial Revolutions and proceeds through the American Civil War and to modern times. Eighth-grade geography includes a survey of landforms, ocean currents, atmosphere, climates, and life zones of the entire earth. Some teachers also choose to focus study on Asia. The study of meteorology builds an understanding of weather, while the focus of human physiology is the muscular, skeletal, and nervous systems. In chemistry students study the role of carbohydrates, oils, fats and proteins in nature and in human nourishment. Eighth-grade physics covers hydraulics, aeromechanics, electromagnetism, and motors. Geometry includes Platonic solids and Euclidean geometry, while algebra focuses on quadratic equations and a review of what has been taught in previous grades. Grammar study involves work with subordinate and independent clauses and ongoing review of all previously taught aspects of grammar.

Artistic work and special subjects include painting, drawing, handwork, woodworking, sculpture, drama, eurythmy, music, recorder, orchestra, movement education, Spanish, and German.

Section 3: Organization of the School

Waldorf schools differ from public and some private schools in that they are non-hierarchical and self-administered. There is no school board or principal who makes all decisions. Instead, Waldorf schools strive to work in a consensus model of decision making with four groups tasked with specific responsibilities: the faculty; the Board of Trustees; the administration; and the Parents Association. We refer to these four groups as the “bodies” of the school. The following describes the responsibilities of each school body. Within each body there are individuals and committees who manage certain tasks, and those individuals and committees are also listed.

FACULTY

Pedagogical leadership, curriculum development, and the long-term vision for the school are entrusted to the faculty, and are based on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. The faculty also manages practical matters such as the school calendar, class schedules in the grade school, school events and academic policies, and influences decisions about day-to-day operations. In this way, the child’s needs are never far from thought when administrative and pedagogical decisions are made.

Over one dozen faculty committees take responsibility for various aspects of school life from the Aftercare Program to festivals to gardens and grounds. In addition to a weekly full faculty meeting, the faculties of the Early Childhood Program, the grade school, and the Special Subjects teachers meet weekly.

Faculty Chair

Nominated by the faculty to serve a two-year term, the Faculty Chair’s main responsibility is to keep the faculty informed and involved with the other decision-making bodies of the school. This teacher convenes weekly meetings of the faculty, gathers reports from other school bodies for review and discussion within the faculty, and follows up with faculty recommendations to the other bodies in order to keep the lines of communication open.

Faculty Development Group

This major faculty committee is responsible for the quality of teaching at our school, teacher education, mentoring of teachers, and performance reviews.

ADMINISTRATION

The administration is responsible for the day-to-day management of the non-pedagogical aspects of school life including admissions, facilities, business transactions, recruitment and enrollment, annual giving and other development activities, and general communication. Some management

and business decisions, particularly those that impact students directly, are made in collaboration with the faculty. The administrative staff includes the Administrative Director, the Director of Admissions, the Director of Development, the Business Manager, the Bookkeeper, and the school's administrative assistant.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees holds legal and fiduciary responsibility for the school. The Board consists of current parents, parents of alumni, and other interested parties, including at least three faculty representatives. The Board's primary responsibilities are to secure facilities, arrange finances, and handle legal matters concerning the non-profit corporation that is our school's legal entity. The Board also sets tuition and fees, develops the budget, and oversees the development and implementation of the strategic plan by employing a number of committees that carry out its business and tasks.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION

Parents assist with student recruitment, staffing Open Houses, fundraising, orientation of new families, class socials and wider school activities, and service to the school through committee work. The over-arching purpose of the Parents Association is to facilitate meaningful dialogue and to provide the knowledge and tools to enable parents to contribute to the rich and vibrant development of the school for their children. The Parents Association meets regularly to provide a forum for questions and concerns, to foster a sense of community and to educate parents about Waldorf education. Under the sponsorship of the Parents Association, each class has a Parent Representative who facilitates communication and assists with class meetings and events. Membership in the Parents Association is automatic for any adult who has a child enrolled in the school.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

The Administrative Council meets regularly to facilitate communication between the bodies of the school. This group consists of the Faculty Chair, the President of the Board of Trustees, the Convener of the Parents Association, and the Administrative Director.

COMMITTEES

Much of business of the school is carried by a variety of school committees and participation by parents is welcome. Working on a committee is a good way to meet others within the school community, to assist in the ongoing development of the school, and to get involved in the life of the school. Some ongoing committees include the Holiday Fair Committee, the Diversity Committee, the May Faire Committee, MLK Day Committee, Gardens and Grounds, Hospitality,

and Environmental Health.

Where to Go With Questions or Concerns

Class teacher: Waldorf philosophy, curriculum, classroom concerns, class policies

Faculty Chair: Issues for faculty discussion, communication within the school, Aftercare program, school policies

Faculty Development Group: Quality of teaching, teacher performance, academic programs, Aftercare Program

Administrative Director: Facility management, housekeeping concerns, general information, school bus transportation, school policies, day-to-day school operations, student safety, and parent concerns about non-academic matters

Business Manager: Tuition questions and payments, billing, Aftercare charges

President of the Board of Trustees: Budget, strategic planning, questions about or affecting the corporation

Convener of the Parent Association and Class Representatives: Class activities, committees, questions, parent concerns about the school or about family involvement with the school.

Teachers, staff, the Parents Association, Faculty Development Group and the Board of Trustees have mailboxes in the administrative office in which notes and letters can be left. Phone messages can also be left with the office.

CHAPTER 2

SCHOOL LIFE

Section 1: The Rhythms of School Life

Arrival and Dismissal

Early Childhood children arrive between 8:15 a.m.—8:30 a.m., and should be accompanied by an adult to their “cubby” area to leave jackets and outdoor shoes, and then to the door of the classroom.

Children in the Grades should arrive between 8:00 a.m.—8:10 a.m., and may be dropped off at either entrance. School begins for the Grades promptly at 8:15 a.m. If you park your car, please park only along the iron fence; do not park next to the school building or the playgrounds while school is in session. Please respect your child’s teacher’s wishes regarding accompanying your child into the classroom.

Early Childhood children are dismissed at 1:00 p.m. for half day programs and 3:15 p.m. for full days. Parents picking up their child at 1:00 p.m. may wait in the hallway outside of the classroom. After the 1:00 dismissal, parents may socialize on the playground if they wish until another class arrives to use it. When another class arrives, we ask that you respect their need to use the playground, and that you take your leave. This will be strictly enforced.

Grades children will be dismissed at 3:15 p.m. outside of the school building.

Please be prompt in picking up your child at the end of the day. If you know that you will be late, please call the office at least 30 minutes before your child’s dismissal time. The office can then inform the teacher and reassure your child that you are on your way. A child who is waiting to be picked up will be released automatically to the staff of the Aftercare Program if the parent or guardian has not arrived by 3:25 p.m. A charge of twenty dollars (\$20) will be assessed if the parent arrives late.

Please note that The Waldorf School of Philadelphia will only dismiss a child into the care of a parent/guardian or a designated emergency contact person. If someone else will be picking up your child, you must notify the administrative office prior to dismissal.

Attendance and Punctuality

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that school-age students enrolled in schools attend school regularly according to the laws of the state. In addition, the educational program we offer at The Waldorf School of Philadelphia requires continuity of attendance and participation. Therefore, if a child has three or more unexcused absences, your child’s teacher might contact you to better understand the reasons for the absences.

Please contact the office by 8:15 a.m. if your child will be absent or will be arriving significantly late. If a child is listed by a teacher as absent and the parent has not notified the school of this absence by 8:45 a.m., a call will be made to the parents to confirm the child's whereabouts. If your child takes a bus to school, please remember to notify the bus driver when transportation is not required in such instances as illness, planned absences, and early dismissals.

If your child is in the Grades and arrives late, please do not interrupt the class by walking in as the class will be in the middle of morning circle or morning lesson. Your child should go to the office so that the secretary knows that he or she has arrived, and then knock on the door of the classroom.

The Early Childhood classrooms might begin their day with either free-play, circle, or daily preparation, so please speak to your child's teacher about what is best for that class if your child arrives late. Repetitive lateness in the Early Childhood classrooms often affects the child's ability to engage in play and/or to reap the benefits free play has to offer the child. It is best for the child that he/she can experience the complete rhythm of the school day.

The student's consistent and punctual attendance at school, supported by teachers and parents, is vital to a healthy school environment. Parents are encouraged to help their children understand the importance of punctuality and good attendance.

Festivals, Celebrations, and Days of Recognition

"In the celebration of festivals man and nature can come together in a higher nature, a higher humanity. Individuals can come together, united in a common striving for the truly, the universally, human. Through living with the festivals and seasons we can learn to sense the breath and pulse of the cosmos. We can learn to experience ourselves in the world, the world in us", [Philip Wharton, "Festivals, Seeds of Renewal", from Waldorf Education: A Family Guide].

Celebrations are important to the rhythms of life in Waldorf schools. In particular, festivals adapted from ancient cultures mark the cycle of life and the changing of the seasons. At The Waldorf School of Philadelphia several festivals and celebrations are observed throughout the year. They bring the school community together in a time when human beings are frequently detached from one another by the real and imagined boundaries of time and place. Descriptions of our celebrations follow.

MICHAELMAS

Michaelmas takes place just after the autumnal equinox at a time when days are becoming noticeably shorter and colder and people gather the harvest and collect their strength for the days ahead. Michaelmas is celebrated by all school students on Michaelmas afternoon,

September 29th, or on a day as close to it as possible. We gather in the field for a picnic lunch that includes the breaking of bread baked by the Early Childhood program. The upper grades then present a Michaelmas play after which the children play games, run an obstacle course, and participate in field races.

MARTINMAS

November 11th is the feast day of Saint Martin, a Roman soldier who became a saint for his selfless kindness and ability to bring warmth and light to those who were in darkness. In our school we celebrate Martinmas with a festival of lanterns known as the “Lantern Walk”.

Early Childhood students and first, second and third graders make their own lanterns in the classrooms. At dusk, the children, with their lanterns and accompanied by their parents and teachers, embark on a magical walk. The path is dimly lit by candles and enlivened with many scenes from fairy tales, nursery rhymes and other children’s stories. The scenes are prepared by the upper grades students. This festival gives the children an experience of caring and sharing as we move toward the darkness of winter.

GARDEN OF LIGHT

The Garden of Light is an early winter festival that happens during Advent, usually in the beginning of December. At this time of year many cultures celebrate holidays seeking to renew both inner and outer lights of life. The Garden of Light creates a special mood of quiet contemplation and brings us into a deeper relationship with the four kingdoms of nature: mineral, plant, animal, and human. Early Childhood students and first and second graders walk through a beautiful spiral pathway of evergreens interspersed with crystals and toys. Each child receives an apple with a candle in it. The children light their candles and set them along the path, creating a shining spiral of light.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE

To recognize the significance of one person’s actions and to acknowledge the life of Dr. King, we observe this day at our school as a day of service. A committee of interested parents, staff and faculty organize a program to celebrate Dr. King’s life and work, and to participate in an activity that benefits our wider community.

MAY FAIRE

May Faire is a wonderful celebration of rejuvenating the forces and beauty of nature and life in general. Held in the beginning of May, this festival brings together the whole school community. People enjoy dancing around the Maypole, singing, playing games, making flower crowns,

sharing lunch and just spending time together.

There are some other holidays that do not affect the whole school but are celebrated in some classes. These include Sukkoth, St. Nicholas Day, Hanukkah, St. Lucia Day, Valentine's Day, and Passover.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthday celebrations are a special day in the kindergarten classes. Although the teachers might have different ways of celebrating a child's birthday, all kindergarten teachers invite parents and family members into the classroom to share in their child's special day.

Grades teachers celebrate children's birthdays differently, so please speak to your child's teacher for further information.

Field Trips

Although field trips happen rarely in the kindergarten, Grades teachers take their students on field trips quite often. All parents receive in their child's registration packet a permission slip, which they must sign to authorize their child to attend scheduled field trips. These may include off-site trips for camping, hiking, farming, ice skating, and other activities. All signed permission slips must be returned to the school office before the beginning of the school year. A separate permission slip must be signed and returned to school for overnight trips. Children who do not have written permission to go on a field trip will not be allowed to go. They will stay with another class in school for the duration of the trip or they will need to be picked up by the parent.

Class Performances

Every year, the Grades students prepare and present plays or performances based on some part of the curriculum for that year. Parents are invited to attend these productions, which generally happen in the afternoon after school for younger grades and in the evening for upper grades. Parents may be asked to help with creating costumes, finding props or organizing a post-production celebration.

Concerts

Twice a year, students in fourth grade and up will participate in orchestra and choral concerts. These concerts may take place off campus, and will take place usually in the evening or on a weekend. Student attendance is required unless special permission to be excused is granted. Parents may be asked to help with transportation of students and instruments.

When children are not performing, appropriate concert behavior is expected. They should sit

quietly and be a polite audience for their peers. *They should not walk around the venue or enter and exit. Parents are responsible for their children when they are not on stage.*

Concert Dress

The required dress for concerts is black pants or black skirt with a white blouse or button-up shirt, and black shoes, not sneakers.

Festive Dress

Children may be asked to wear “festive dress” for certain occasions such as some festivals or assemblies. Children should wear their better shoes, nice slacks, and a nice shirt or top with a collar of some kind. If girls choose to wear a skirt or dress the length should be in accordance with the dress code. Make-up, nail polish and jewelry are inappropriate.

School Photos and Use of Photography

Class and individual student photos are taken by a professional photographer each year, which may be purchased by families. Our community also includes a number of amateur and professional photographers who often take pictures at school events, or candid shots of the children at play. From time to time our school might want to use photographs of some children in print media advertisements for the school, in school publications, or on the school’s website. Written permission is requested from families for the use of a child’s picture. Each family receives an authorization form in their child’s registration packet that states the family’s wishes with regard to photography, and either grants or denies the use of pictures. Authorization can be revoked (or granted) at any time by completing a new authorization form in the school office.

Role of Religion

The Waldorf School of Philadelphia honors the innate spiritual essence in every human being. The Waldorf spiritual and philosophical world view is based on an understanding of Christ as an embodiment of the universal principles of light, life and love. Our education is not connected to any church or religious organization. We do not teach religious doctrine to the children. Values such as respect for self and others, found in all religious and spiritual traditions, are taught and upheld by the faculty. Stories connected with the religious traditions of many cultures are studied, as are the lives of spiritual and historical leaders of world civilizations. The Waldorf School of Philadelphia does not require or expect adherence to a religious creed or confession, and leaves the question of religion strictly to the family.

Section 2: Reverence, Respect, and Responsibility

Conduct and Discipline

The conduct we strive to instill in students is based on respect for others and respect for oneself. For the youngest children, teachers model behaviors worthy of imitation and strive to deal creatively and flexibly with situations as they arise.

However, there are certain behaviors that are not tolerated by The Waldorf School of Philadelphia. The following list applies to all students.

1. Disrespect for teachers and staff.
2. The use of rude or foul language.
3. Destruction of school property or the property of others.
4. Writing, drawing or painting graffiti on walls, desks, books, etc.
5. Possession of weapons of any kind.
6. Possession or use of illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco products on school property, class trips or school sponsored outings or events.
7. Aggressive, violent, dangerous or deliberately intimidating behavior.
8. Bullying. Bullying is verbal or physical victimization or harassment of an individual or group by another individual or group. Bullying is not tolerated, and in all instances of perceived bullying, the teachers will meet with all students involved to unravel the situation, and facilitate the students' working together with respect.
9. Harassment or sexual harassment.
10. Physical fighting. In grades 4 through 8, this infraction may result in immediate suspension for all children involved.

Disciplinary Action

When a rule is broken, the consequences will depend on the age of the child and the situation at hand. With any serious infraction, there will be a meeting between the students and teachers involved. If the situation cannot be resolved internally, the parents will be notified. At that time, it will be determined what type of further action is necessary, whether it is a period of service to school, a period of probation or a suspension. If a child is suspended, there must be a parent-teacher conversation before the child can return to school.

Creating a school that is a safe and happy place requires a spirit of teamwork. Parents and teachers must work together to guide the children in our care. Teachers may call upon parents for support in their efforts to bring a disruptive child back to appropriate conduct and harmonious interaction with others. If disruptive behavior continues, a teacher may request that a child be kept at home for a specified time.

Social Inclusion Program

Our school has made a commitment to special training designed to bring greater awareness to issues of social inclusion, courtesy and bullying. Facilitated by a consultant, this training involves the entire school community – parents, faculty, Board of Trustees, and staff – in looking at the roles and responsibilities of being community members. Our school participates in, and supports, The Social Inclusion with the goal of creating a healthy social environment that nurtures children and adults, encourages open discussion, and provides ways of resolving disagreements and conflict that are beneficial to the school community. Teachers who have trained in social inclusion work are helping older students to develop a “code of compassion” that sets out shared values with respect to how students should relate to one another and to adults. The students also learn conflict resolution skills that they can employ in helping younger students on the playground or playing field where conflicts tend to erupt. In addition to the social inclusion work with students, the Social Health Group will be available to adults who are experiencing communication difficulties with other adults in the community that impact the social environment of a class, committee, or working with teachers and staff. Information about the Social Health Group will be distributed to parents in a separate communication.

Academic Probation

Throughout the grade school, we strive to foster students’ care for their work. While one can notice this care from Grade One on, by the upper grades, it becomes evident in a different way as student work begins to be quantifiably evaluated and grades assigned. Academic excellence is one of the goals of our school. If we are to prepare the children for academic success upon graduation, they must be held to high academic standards in the upper grades years.

Each child is considered a unique individual and children with some academic challenges are not automatically refused enrollment at our school. Still, strong academic performance is expected or, at the very least, the child’s best efforts with demonstrable academic support from the family. Should this fail to occur, the Faculty reserves the right to place a student in the upper grades on academic probation. While the precise terms of the probation will be worked out on a case-by-case basis, failure to meet them will result in the student being asked to leave the school.

Policy Concerning Making Up Work During an Absence

A student who is absent from classes during his or her 6th, 7th, or 8th grade year is responsible for making up missed work at the discretion of his or her class and special subjects teachers, and in discussion with the student's parents. Assignments might be modified at the teacher's discretion. As a general guideline, upon his or her return to school the student will be given a period days to make up the work that is equal to the number of days absent , subject to the discretion of the teacher. The student is expected to make up work in blocks and lessons that form the basis for continuing studies so that he or she can take up the work with classmates upon returning to school. Inability or failure to make reasonable efforts along these lines may result in the recording of a grade of NC (No Credit) or F (Fail) on the student's transcript. A grade of NC or F will be assigned by the teacher only after consultation with other grades or special subjects colleagues.

The receipt of a diploma from our school is an honor; these policies are in place to insure that our students have met our academic standards.

Playground and Field Guidelines

Parents may allow their children to play on the playground or the field after school if they observe the following rules:

- Parents must leave the playground when another class comes out to play. This rule will be strictly enforced for students dismissed at 1:00 p.m.
- All grassy areas should be cleared of wood and other equipment before families go home.
- Children should be in view of a teacher or parent at all times, except when using the bathroom.
- Pets are not permitted on campus, even in a vehicle.
- Children must not drop anything into the pipes that stick up from the ground as this can cause sewer system backup.
- Children should not go near the big "chiller." It has been damaged in the past by children playing in this area.
- Parents should check that no clothing or toys are left outside after playing.
- Children are not permitted to enter the fire escape area and they may not sit on the

steps to the fire escape.

- Children may not climb trees.
- Sand toys are only to be used in the sand. Digging in grassy areas is not permitted.
- Children may not smash stones or take stones from the garden path.
- Children may not swing on light posts.
- Children may not play in the creek or under the bridge.
- Baseball and football should be played in areas away from the building.

Dress Code and Appearance

It is important that the children's clothing supports their full participation in our daily activities. Clothing needs to be sturdy and able to withstand our active program and time spent outdoors. It should also reflect an aesthetic awareness, the overall values of the school, and in no way diminish the learning environment by distracting either the child or his or her classmates. The following outlines the expectations for the children's clothing:

General Expectations:

- Clothing should allow ease of movement. Simplicity of color and design are paramount;
- Clothing of natural fibers is desirable;
- All clothes should be clean and in good repair;
- All clothes should be the proper size for the child, i.e., no oversize T-shirts or pants that need a belt to stay up, that reveal underwear, etc;
- Sleeve length and pant length should allow free movement;
- No advertising on any clothes.

Shirts:

- No blatant name-brand labels/logos, including Waldorf school logos;
- Pictures on shirts:
 - ▶ Grades K-3: No images or pictures; no writing;

- ▶ Grades 4 and up: Small images (no bigger than hand size), curriculum-related pictures acceptable;
- No glitter or iridescent fabrics;
- No camouflage or paramilitary gear;
- No midriff – revealing shirts. Shirts must meet this standard during all activities of the class;
- No spaghetti straps or straps narrower than 1” for summer shirts;
- No huge sport logos or big player numbers on shirts;
- No professional sports apparel is to be worn indoors.

Shorts and Skirts:

- Length must measure 2/3 way down the thigh from swim suit line.

Shoes:

- No flip flops or clogs (sandals with backs or sports sandals are acceptable);
- Shoelaces need to remain tied;
- No light-up footwear;
- No wheeled footwear.

Jewelry:

- All children: No jewelry of such monetary or sentimental value that loss would present more than an inconvenience.
- Grades 4-6: Bracelets, necklaces, rings—simple, tasteful, no more than one at a time;
- Grades 7-8: Wearing jewelry is at the discretion of the teacher;
- No electronic watches with alarms. (Many classes do not accept digital watches).
- Earrings, K-6: No dangly or hanging down earrings; studs only.
- Earrings, grades 7-8: Minimally hanging earrings at discretion of class teacher

Hats:

- No hats or hoods in the school building.

Hair:

- Must be clean, groomed, out of the child's eyes
- No hair coloring

Make-up:

- Grades K-8: None.

Nail Polish:

- Grades K-6: None.
- Grades 7-8: At teacher's discretion

The faculty thanks parents for all efforts made to support their children's education in this way.

Media Issues

Our teachers have observed that exposure to media and the use of video and computer games significantly interferes with the educational work of the school. We ask for your cooperation and support in our efforts to bring the best possible education to your child by limiting or eliminating such influences from the classroom and the home.

The curriculum in a Waldorf school is designed to nourish the feeling life of children. A mood of sympathetic concentration, which demands not only the full art of a teacher but also the united effort of a class, allows subjects to touch the hearts as well as the hands and minds of students. Children who are exposed to excessive amounts of media, or who regularly interact with technological devices such as video games, computers, and MP3 players or iPods, find it more difficult to join this mood in the classroom.

Even educational television programs can be counterproductive to our goals because the intellectual slant of such shows tends to permanently color the child's reactions to a subject and undermines the imagination. Children exposed to a lot of television have more difficulty sustaining an imaginative train of thought, which requires will and effort. Exposure to ready-made images reduces the child's ability to visualize inwardly in response to written or spoken stories or information.

Those families who have consciously decided to limit or eliminate the amount of media their children are exposed to do so partly because they have made the important realization that time engaged in such activities curtails the time family members have to spend together and the time children have to engage in more productive activities. Instead of watching television or playing computer games, children can be involved in creative projects, household chores, playing indoors and outdoors, and helping to prepare meals.

We appreciate the challenges that such a decision involves. For parents making the transition to less media exposure, we want to support you in any way we can. We encourage you to talk to other parents in the school who may have helpful insights and experiences to share.

Toys at School

We provide a variety of beautiful, natural materials for children to use at school, and the children come to understand that these materials belong to everyone. We have found that items from home can sometimes change the friendly dynamic of children's interactions, leading to jealousy and fights and to broken treasures and hurt feelings. You can help us to keep harmony in the classroom by ensuring that your child leaves toys, jewelry, money, gum and treats at home.

Guidelines for Early Childhood Students:

If a child stays for rest, he/she may bring **one** soft animal or doll to school. The soft animal or doll may stay in your child's cubby until rest time.

Guidelines for Grades Students:

Please speak to your child's teacher about what he/she feels is best for the class.

Cell Phone Use

The Waldorf School of Philadelphia recognizes that some families provide their child with a cell phone for ease of contact. Students may carry a cell phone; however, during school hours the cell phone must remain "off" to prevent disruptions in class and in other activities.

Cell phones may not be used anywhere on school grounds except in the parents' car or on a bus if permitted by the driver. Students may contact their families by requesting to use a land line telephone in the school office. Messages for students can also be left with the school office.

Section 3: Health and Nutrition

At The Waldorf School of Philadelphia we support families in making sensible and holistic health choices for their children. We recognize that many families who are drawn to our type of schooling are also drawn to alternative health practices such as homeopathy and the limited use of antibiotic medications and immunizations. As a school we are faced with the fact that children get sick, and that children who are sick often pass illness on to others. We ask each member of the school community to balance their own personal view of childhood illness against the ability of the larger community to deal with what a sick child requires. As such, we have drawn up the following guidelines for the management of acute and chronic illnesses.

Acute Illnesses

Acute illnesses are those that sweep rapidly through the class and school community, often accompanied by runny noses, fever, stomach upset, or coughing. Colds, flu and viruses fall within this category, as do other illnesses such as chicken pox, measles, and croup. Various skin infections and topical illnesses such as impetigo, ring worm, lice, and scabies also fall into this category.

Whether a family chooses to treat such illnesses with conventional or alternative approaches is a matter of personal choice. **However, a child who carries any form of contagious illness or condition may not return to school until the condition has been treated and is in no danger of being spread.** If an illness or condition that falls into this category is discovered once the child is at school, the child will be sent home. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact numbers on file for the child will be called. Please make sure that contact information is kept up to date by notifying the school office of changes.

A trip to the doctor, time at home, the use of medications or creams may be needed before the child returns to school. We also recommend that a feverish child remain at home for an extra 24 hours once the fever has broken to allow enough time for him or her to regain strength. For serious infections that require antibiotic treatment, we ask you to let the child rest at home for the first day of the antibiotic treatment course, when possible. **Do not send medication with your child for administration at school unless it is in its original packaging with clear instructions from your health care provider, and you have the agreement of the class teacher.**

Please be sensitive to what your child needs and respectful of other families' situations. Many families are unable to take time off from work to care for a sick child who has contracted a contagious illness from another child.

Chronic Illnesses

Chronic illnesses are those that affect the child on an on-going basis, but are unlikely to be spread to others. Serious allergies, asthma, low blood sugar, recurrent ear infections and other conditions of these types fall into this category. You should speak with your child's teacher about the precautions and treatment for a specific illness. It is also important to make note of allergies and illnesses on the Emergency Information Form that the school office is required to have for each child. **As with acute illnesses, we ask that you not send medication with your child for administration at school unless it is in its original packaging with clear instructions from your health care provider, and you have the agreement of the class teacher.**

School Nurse

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides school health services to nonpublic schools under an act of the Pennsylvania legislature. The act provides for funding the services of a visiting school nurse who is responsible for maintaining students' health records, insuring that immunizations are up to date (or that an exemption from immunization is on record), and for providing State-mandated health and growth screenings for weight, vision, and hearing. The nurse visits the school regularly on a four to six-week schedule. She may notify families by letter when a routine screening detects a potential health problem that might require follow-up by the child's health care provider.

General, non-emergency first aid is provided to students by qualified staff in the administrative office.

Outdoor Play and Weather Conditions

The Waldorf curriculum has a strong outdoor component. A portion of each day is spent participating in outdoor activity and play. To make this experience the richest possible, it is important that children be properly dressed for the weather. It will be at the teacher's discretion whether or not the children will go out in the event of extreme weather, such as when it is too cold or too wet. To ensure an enjoyable experience for your child, we ask that parents provide practical, sensible clothing. Make sure your child is protected from wind, dampness, mud, rain, ice and snow, and send along back-ups for items likely to get wet during play, so that we can keep your child warm and comfortable. Use the checklist on the following page to stock your child's cubby or backpack.

Extras to help your child stay warm: Accidents happen. Make sure your young child is prepared with an extra set of clearly labeled clothing in his or her cubby or coat peg. We suggest putting everything in a bag with your child's name on the outside. Include socks, underwear, a shirt,

pants, sweater and mittens. Children grow fast, so check the bag a few times a year to make sure the clothing still fits and is appropriate for the season. In fall, winter and early spring, stock extra layers (especially socks and mittens in winter). If your child brings home a bag of wet clothes, send him or her back with a new set of spares the next day. Older students should keep an extra pair of socks on hand, and a sweater or light jacket for “transitional weather days”.

The old stone building that houses our school can be unusually warm or cold during seasonal weather changes before air conditioning or heat is turned on. Keeping an “extra layer” on hand will insure that your child remains comfortable at school.

Clothing Checklist

For Autumn	For Winter	For Spring
Sturdy shoes and mud boots	Warm snow boots	Sturdy shoes and mud boots
Warm sweater and long pants	Snow suit	Waterproof pants and coat
Waterproof pants and coat	Mittens, scarf	Sun hat

Snack and Lunch

While the Waldorf curriculum is nourishing the child’s heart and soul, healthy foods are needed to nourish his/her body. We ask that children come to school having eaten a nourishing breakfast sufficient to carry them through an active morning.

In the Early Childhood program, a midmorning homemade snack will be provided. Teachers may ask parents to bring in fresh fruit and/or vegetables to help with this meal. Children will also need to bring in a lunch. Grade school children need to bring a snack and a lunch each day.

The quality of the food children eat at school can have a strong impact on their ability to participate throughout the day. Please send only healthy foods to school which are low in sugar and artificial flavorings. We do not recommend sending candy and soda for snack or lunch.

Section 4: Communication

Whom and How to Contact

See “Where to Go with Questions or Concerns” on page 23.

In addition to the individuals and roles discussed on page 23, the school’s administrative office provides a central source for information and for communication. The office is open from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday during the regular school session. Hours during school breaks and over the summer vary, and are usually announced in the school newsletter. The office can be reached by telephone at (215) 248-1662, by fax at (215) 248-6167, or by e-mail to philawaldorf@verizon.net. Office staff are available to assist families with questions or in need of general information.

Each teacher, staff member, and program has a mailbox in the office where messages or materials can be left.

Parent-Teacher Conferences and Student Reports

Twice each year, in the fall and spring, individual conferences are scheduled between parents and class teachers. The parent-teacher conferences are important opportunities to discuss your child’s development and to ask any questions that you may have. All parents are expected to take part in both conferences. Parents may also request a conference with a special subject teacher.

In the summer all families will receive a comprehensive written report for their child. These written reports outline the work done by the class during the year and focus on the child’s accomplishments and development.

Class Meetings

The family’s primary connection to the school is through their child’s class teacher. Class meetings are scheduled throughout the year to enable parents and the teacher to discuss the curriculum, the class as a whole, important aspects of the Waldorf approach, and to provide a space for parents’ questions and insights. Attending these meetings is in the best interest of your child; to miss them is to miss a significant link in understanding your child’s education and a chance to connect with other parents in the class.

The Waldorf Weekly

The Waldorf Weekly is the school’s community newsletter that is posted to the school’s

website each week, or distributed in print to those families who request it.. It has up-to-date calendar information, news, school events, special requests from the teachers, and other information of interest to families.

Yahoo! Group

This is a parent-run, online discussion and resource group that all families are invited to join. To join, please watch for information in *The Waldorf Weekly*.

www.philadelphiawaldorf.org

The school's website provides information for families on the "Community" page. Here families can find current and archived issues of *The Waldorf Weekly*, updates to the school calendar and other information.

Philly Waldorf Blog

Our school's blog is designed to provide a fly-on-the-wall view of daily life at The Waldorf School of Philadelphia. It is meant to convey the richness and vibrancy of the school environment as well as the casual side of life. The blog also links to websites, articles, and short media pieces that discuss topics of interest to families such as Waldorf philosophy, parenting, the role of education in the twenty-first century, and others. The blog is accessible from our website by clicking on the button on our home page.

Facebook

Another way of staying current what is happening at school is by visiting our Facebook page. You can find our Facebook group by searching The Waldorf School of Philadelphia at www.facebook.com.

Bulletin Boards

The school maintains two bulletin boards (one near each entrance) where information of interest to families is usually posted. A board for school-related information is maintained near the main (east) entrance to the building. Typical postings include volunteer sign-up sheets for upcoming events, a hard copy of *The Waldorf Weekly*, minutes from meetings of the Parents Association, news about Waldorf faculty and staff, or flyers for school-sponsored events. "Lost and Found" notices are also posted on the bulletin boards.

A bulletin board for non-school community events that might be of interest is maintained inside the building near the west entrance ("sandbox entrance").

One Call Now

Our school utilizes an automated communication system called One Call Now to deliver time-sensitive information or reminders of general importance. Information can be sent via phone, e-mail, or text message. We make every effort to send messages that are important and to avoid inundating families with a barrage of messages.

School Directory

Each fall a community directory is produced that lists contact information for all faculty, staff, and families in the school. The directory is an important resource and is often kept by the telephone in most households. Changes in directory information are announced via One Call Now e-mail message when *The Waldorf Weekly* is posted, or are printed as an insert to print copies of *The Waldorf Weekly*. To protect the privacy of families, personal contact information is not printed in *The Waldorf Weekly*.

Class Phone Lists

Class events – potlucks, parties, brunches and other celebrations – are endemic to healthy social development in a class. Families frequently pass on information about these events through the use of a phone list that is distributed in the early fall, and then redistributed as needed with updated information. The phone list makes quick work of locating other families in the class, and is as important a resource as the directory.

Letters Home

Direct communication via letters sent home is one of the most effective and timely means of informing families of unusual situations that occur at school. The purpose of sending a letter home is to communicate **factual** information and, if necessary, to advise families of follow-up actions that might be recommended or required. Examples of situations that warrant a letter to be sent home include unusual activity in the building that might require a call to first responders; a time-limited change on the campus that might impact families or, more typically, a notice that a child in a particular class is discovered to have head lice or viral warts. Each of these situations is time-sensitive, and the school will endeavor to issue a communication as quickly as accurate information can be made available. In cases involving contagious illnesses or conditions within a class, families in that class will be notified. Should an illness or condition become widespread, all families will be notified as a precaution. In most cases a letter sent home will be the primary means utilized for communicating time-sensitive information that requires an explanation or further discussion than can be conveyed by telephone.

CHAPTER 3

GENERAL INFORMATION AND BUSINESS MATTERS



Section 1: General Information

Aftercare Program

The school offers an after school program from 3:15-5:45 p.m. for enrolled students as a service to families who cannot pick up a child at dismissal. During this time a snack is provided and the children enjoy outdoor play.

Aftercare is provided on a regularly scheduled basis and on a limited, “drop in” basis. Aftercare is not available during school breaks or on early dismissal days. A late fee of \$20 will be assessed of families who arrive after 5:45 p.m., or whose children have not been picked up by 3:25. Please call or stop into the office for rates and to enroll your child in this program.

Special Services

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Department of Education, through its Office of Nonpublic School Programs, provides some academic support services such as tutoring and speech therapy to our school through local agencies. If you believe that your child should be evaluated for these services, please talk with your child’s teacher.

Faculty In-Service Days

The school calendar lists two days during the year on which school is closed for faculty in-service programs. On these days, all faculty members are required either to take part in a planned teacher development activity or to visit another Waldorf school. We understand the burden this puts on parents to find child care on these days, and we appreciate your support. In-service days are one of the ways the faculty demonstrates their commitment to their own continuing education and to providing the best education they can for the children.

Driving and Parking on Campus

The New Covenant Church campus is home to other schools, professional offices, the church, and a senior citizen residence, making it very active at the beginning and at the end of the school day. For safety reasons, we ask families to observe the following “driving rules” at drop-off in the morning and at pick-up in the afternoon:

- ***Drive in one direction only.*** Please enter the school grounds via the driveway between New Covenant Church and Eagles I (under the church’s portico at the rear of the building). You will be making a loop behind our building and exiting the grounds from the Eagles II driveway near the building’s main entrance.

- Older children can be dropped off at either entrance to the building; however, you must pull your vehicle to the side of the roadway to avoid creating traffic congestion.
- Nursery and kindergarten children should be escorted into the building to their classrooms, and out of the building at the end of the day.
- Please observe the 15 mph speed limit on school grounds.

If you park your car, **please park only along the iron fence**. Do not park next to or in front of the school building or the playgrounds while school is in session.

Most of our students are transported to school by their parents. We urge you to consider forming or joining a carpool to share the time and costs of driving.

Bussing

The Waldorf School of Philadelphia does not offer student transportation services, however, local public school districts are required to provide transportation services to families in their districts who have chosen nonpublic schools for their children. Each district has its own eligibility requirements in terms of the child's age and the distance that the family lives from the school. If you are interested in transportation services for your child, please contact your local public school district for eligibility requirements. If your child is eligible, please call the school's Administrative Director or stop into the school office. Our school is responsible for communicating student information to district transportation offices.

School Emergencies, Snow Days, Late Openings, Early Closings

All families are required to provide the school with emergency contact information prior to the child entering school. **A student who does not have an emergency form on file will not be permitted to stay in school until such information is provided.** Families must notify the administrative office immediately if there is a change in contact information.

Most school emergencies are generally due to inclement weather. However, in any emergency, whether due to weather conditions or for other reasons, the school will contact the parent/guardian first, followed by the individuals designated as emergency contacts.

Weather Emergencies

Winter storms as well as other weather conditions can affect the school schedule in one of three ways: cancellation of school, delayed opening, or early dismissal. Families should have plans in place for transporting children or for child care in the event of severe weather that impacts the school schedule. The decision to cancel school or alter the schedule is based on

considerations of road conditions, safety, and weather predictions. In general, our school follows the decision of the School District of Philadelphia; however, you should expect communication from our school through *One call Now*, or you can check local radio station KYW (call number 1060AM) for our school closing number, which is 108. School listings are also available at www.kyw1060.com or at www.6abc.com. In addition to these methods of communication, we will change our outgoing office Voicemail message to reflect our school's status.

Cancellations

If school is cancelled for the day, families will be notified very early in the morning, usually around 6 a.m., or the night before if the decision is known at that time.

Delayed Opening

If road conditions appear to be improving and driving is deemed safer following severe weather, the decision might be made to open school after 8:15 a.m. In this situation school will typically open one or two hours late.

Early Dismissal

School may dismiss early if a storm develops that creates unsafe road conditions after the start of the school day. Every effort is made to allow families a two-hour window in which to respond to this kind of emergency. No Aftercare services will be available if school is dismissed early so a parent/guardian must make arrangements for a child to be picked up by someone else if he or she is unable to come to the school. The office must be notified if the child is authorized to leave with someone else.

Special Information for Families of Bus Riders

In weather-related emergencies, your local public school district may make a different decision from that made by our school. District transportation offices will follow the decisions made by their district offices. You will need to check your local district's status as well as our school's status to determine how transportation will be affected. If your local district is open for the regular school day and we have delayed our opening, you should expect the bus to arrive at its regular time. In this situation, someone will be at our school by 8 a.m. to receive bussed students. Alternatively, if the local district dismisses early and our school is in full session, the bus will arrive early to pick up your child. Please understand that we cannot influence the decisions of local districts with respect to the status of transportation services. We urge all families to have a contingency plan in place for weather-related emergencies.

Lost and Found

Lost articles of clothing and other items can be turned in to the administrative office, where they will be held for claim. A list of lost and/or found items will be posted on the bulletin boards or in *The Waldorf Weekly* regularly. Due to space considerations, we cannot hold items beyond 30 days. Unclaimed items that are in useful condition will be donated to a community organization.

Fairy's Wing

Our school store, The Fairy's Wing, is a vital resource for the teachers and families of the school. A variety of Waldorf-inspired items are available that help further educate the community about Waldorf education and that encourage the use of natural and handmade materials. Such items include art supplies, dyed silks, simple wooden toys, crystals, games, children's books and resource books.

Section 2: Admissions, Tuition and Tuition Assistance

Admissions Process

Early Childhood

The Waldorf School of Philadelphia offers a variety of Early Childhood Programs. The Snowdrop Early Years Nursery Program accepts children who will be between the ages of one and three and a half at the beginning of the school year. The 3-Day and 5-Day Programs are mixed-age preschool/kindergartens classrooms where the children range in age from three to six years.

1. Parents who are applying for admission should read the school's materials thoroughly.
2. Prospective parents should attend one of our Open Houses and/or Observation Mornings to learn about our educational philosophy and facilities, and to meet our faculty and staff. If parents are not able to attend one of these events, they may schedule a meeting with the Director of Admissions.
3. After the above orientation, parents may apply for their child's admission to the school. The completed application form and non-refundable application fee of \$50, payable to The Waldorf School of Philadelphia, should be mailed or delivered to the office.
4. Once the application and fee are received, the Director of Admissions or a member of the Early Childhood faculty will contact the parents to arrange an interview at the school with the teachers and the family.
5. If the child is accepted for enrollment, a letter of admission and an enrollment contract will be sent. In order to guarantee a place for the child in a class, the contract must be returned with the appropriate tuition deposit by the specified deadline.

Grades:

1. Parents who are applying for admission should read the school's materials thoroughly.
2. Prospective parents should attend one of our Open Houses and/or Observation Mornings to learn about our educational philosophy and facilities and to meet our faculty and staff. If parents are not able to attend one of these events, they may schedule a meeting with our Director of Admissions.
3. After the above orientation, parents may apply for their child's admission to the school. The completed application form and support documents (see below) should be mailed or delivered to the office.

- a. Teacher Reference: parents should complete a reference form with their child's name and grade, and give it and the confidential envelope provided to the child's previous teacher for completion. The teacher should return the form directly to The Waldorf School of Philadelphia. The form and envelope are available through the Director of Admissions.
 - b. Requests for records: parents must sign an authorization for our school to request the child's grades and teacher's reports for the past two years from the current school.
 - c. Application fee: a non-refundable fee of \$50, payable to The Waldorf School of Philadelphia should be submitted with the application.
4. Once the application and support documentation are received, an interview will be scheduled for the parent and student with a teacher.
 5. After the interview, the parents will be contacted to arrange for the student to visit the school. Where possible, a visit of three full days is generally desirable.
 6. If the child is accepted for enrollment, a letter of admission and an enrollment contract will be sent. In order to guarantee a place for the child in class, the contract must be returned with the appropriate tuition deposit by the specified deadline.

Tuition Payments

The Waldorf School of Philadelphia sends an enrollment contract to the family upon a child's acceptance into the school. This contract is a binding agreement that details the costs of attending our school. To insure a child's enrollment, the family must return the signed contract with a tuition deposit by the specified deadline. The deposit amount is \$250 for children enrolled in the two and three-day Early Childhood Programs, and \$500 for children enrolled in all other programs. Several convenient payment plans are available to families for meeting their tuition obligations. Families should contact the Business Manager or Bookkeeper in the administrative office to discuss payment options.

Tuition Assistance

Like other independent schools, The Waldorf School of Philadelphia expects that paying for schooling is primarily the family's responsibility. However, our school makes available some tuition assistance to bridge the gap for families of limited resources who choose to enroll their children. In most cases, families will also need to avail themselves of resources outside of the school such as the Children's Scholarship Fund Philadelphia (CSFP), the Bravo Foundation, the

Black Alliance for Educational Options, or other organizations that support educational choice.

Tuition Assistance is available for all children in the Grades and for children in the Early Childhood Program who are in their last year of Kindergarten before First Grade.

Families who request tuition assistance must first submit their financial information to the School and Student Service for Financial Aid (SSS) of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Submission can be done online at www.nais.org/financialaid/sss or by submitting a paper application form, which is available in the school office. The school code for The Waldorf School of Philadelphia is #4125. SSS will estimate a family's ability to pay school costs based on an analysis of the family's income, expenses and family assets. SSS will then provide this estimate to our school's Tuition Assistance Committee, where it will be taken into consideration in determining aid awards.

Families will then be asked to submit a copy of their last year's income tax return to the Tuition Assistance Committee to verify the information provided to SSS. Tax returns should be dropped off or sent to the administrative office in a sealed envelope marked to the attention of the Tuition Assistance Committee. All information provided will be held in strictest confidence.

The Tuition Assistance Committee will make award decisions based on the information provided by SSS and taking other special circumstances into account. An appeal process is available for families whose assistance award is insufficient to meet their financial obligations.

If, after appeal, the assistance award is still insufficient to enable a family to complete enrollment of the child, the deposit will be refunded in full before June 15th. After June 15th the deposit becomes non-refundable.

Families must apply for tuition assistance each year. Assistance is awarded annually and is not guaranteed from year to year.

The school does not offer sibling discounts.

Families with unpaid tuition balances at the end of the year will not be considered for tuition assistance for the following year until payments are made current. Further, end-of-year teachers' reports will not be released to the family or to another school unless the family has arranged a payment plan and is actively making payments.

Annual Giving and Fundraising

The school's budget comes from two sources: earned income from tuition and contributed income through the Annual Fund. Like most other independent schools, The Waldorf School of Philadelphia relies on contributions donations to support basic expenses such as faculty salaries and benefits, and rent. Contributions from families above and beyond tuition costs are essential to the financial health of The Waldorf School community, and we ask for 100% participation in the annual giving campaign. Contributed income or fundraising makes up roughly 11% of the school's yearly budget. Contributions are accepted at any time during the school year and are fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. We also host several fundraising events during the school year such as the Holiday Fair and a Silent Auction.

Other ways you can help include:

- ◆ Shopping online at some of your favorite retailers through our website. For each purchase, the school receives a commission of the sale, usually up to 6%, with NO additional cost to you. One of the biggest retailers that we receive the most amount of commissioning sales is AMAZON.com. So don't shop at Amazon without going through our website first! To shop so that we get the commissioning credit, go to www.philadelphiawaldorf.org, click on development and then click on online shopping. From there, just click on the store logo of your choice. Remember to bookmark this page so that you can quickly revisit this page in the future.
- ◆ Signing up with Escrip at escrip.com. Escrip will make a contribution every time you use grocery loyalty cards or debit/credit cards registered online with Escrip. To sign up for the program: go to www.escrip.com, click on "Sign Up." Follow the instructions to register your grocery cards and your existing credit/debit cards. **Our school group ID is: 150239907**
- ◆ Designating your target REDcard - Use your Target REDcard and Target will donate up to 1% of your purchases back to the school. To designate WSP on your REDcard, visit: www.target.com/tcoe. Alternatively, you can visit an in-store kiosk to sign up. **Our school group ID is: 126486**
- ◆ Clipping your "Box Tops for Education" coupons and deposit them in the collection container available at the WSP on the third floor in front of the office.
- ◆ Dropping your empty printer cartridges off at the WSP office on the third floor. Look for the drop box outside the door.

If you have any questions about our fundraising programs, please contact the Director of Development in the administrative office at (215) 248 1662, extension 225, or by email at development-philawaldorf@verizon.net.

CHAPTER 4

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1: The Role of Families

Families are an integral part of The Waldorf School of Philadelphia. You send your children to school; join in both class and school-wide events; volunteer time, energy, money and resources; and support one another through friendship and acts of service. There are many opportunities for parents to be involved at The Waldorf School of Philadelphia. Some examples of work in which parents can participate include:

- Attending class meetings and events;
- Attending Parents Association meetings;
- Participating in Parent Study and Parent Handwork;
- Helping with the Holiday Fair;
- Joining school committees such as Diversity, Hospitality, Gardens and Grounds, and Environmental Health.
- Volunteering for school-wide events such as Open Houses, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, and May Faire.

Opportunities for Families

We encourage family involvement because it strengthens the school and the wider community. Individually, parents can provide a rhythmic home life, limit or reduce media use, educate themselves through reading and attending lectures, and contribute to the annual fund. Within each class, families can participate by attending class meetings, volunteering for class activities, joining in class social events, and helping with grade-specific tasks to support school-wide festivals or events. Within the larger school community, parents can participate in the Parents Association, of which all families are members. There are many ways to become involved, some of which are listed below:

Summer Work Days

These days are a great way for families to support the class teacher in preparing and cleaning his or her classroom for the opening of school and to become acquainted with other families, teachers and staff. They also help to introduce or reintroduce the child to his/her teacher, classmates, and the school. There are two work days prior to the start of school, usually in August. Parents and children are encouraged to attend at least one. It is helpful if parents bring supplies like buckets, rags and natural cleaners, and tools such as cordless drills, sanders, and

step ladders. And don't forget to pack a picnic lunch for your family as there's always time for socializing!

Garden and Grounds Committee

This parent group works with a designated teacher to organize periodic clean-up days at our school during which volunteers clean and mend the playgrounds and spruce up the gardens. A picnic or potluck usually follows. Sometimes a bulb sale is held to raise funds for these efforts.

Open Houses

Parents are asked to help at our school's Open Houses in a variety of ways from providing snacks and helping with decorations, to greeting newcomers and cleaning up. Prospective families find it particularly helpful to talk with other families about their experience with Waldorf education. Interested families can talk with the Director of Admissions at any time about helping with an Open House, or check off "Open House" on the Volunteer Pledge Form.

Hospitality Committee

These parent volunteers work primarily with the Administration to beautify the building and to provide wholesome, homemade refreshments for school-wide programs, Open Houses and other events to convey a warm welcome to the school's guests.

Holiday Fair

Held the weekend before Thanksgiving, the Holiday Fair is the school's most important annual fundraising event. This event not only raises money for our school, offsetting tuition costs, but it strengthens our sense of community while also reaching out to the wider community. Attendance at the fair grows each year, with over 400 guests welcomed over the two-day event in the last two years. The fair requires an enormous volunteer effort to make it a success. Many hours of work lead up to the fair in cooking, craft making, and community outreach. Therefore, all families are asked to participate prior to the event, and by working two-hour shifts (each adult) during the fair.

May Faire

May Faire is a wonderful event held each spring. Families bring picnic lunches, children play games and there is dancing around a maypole. Parents help with the initial organization of the day, staff the games, make flower garlands, and bake for, and run, the food sale table.

Parents Association

All families with children enrolled at The Waldorf School of Philadelphia are members of the Parents Association (PA). Many activities and events fall under the PA umbrella. The Parents Association meets four times per year and everyone is invited to attend. This is a wonderful opportunity to hear what is going on in many areas of the school, to learn about and have input on upcoming PA activities, school decision making, and to socialize with fellow parents. Childcare is provided.

The Parents Association serves to:

- Support quality Waldorf education at the Waldorf School of Philadelphia;
- Provide a place for parents' voices through discussion within the school community;
- “Hold” the school community through its support, response, and involvement in all aspects of its work;
- Educate, support and challenge ourselves as parents in the transforming work of Waldorf education.

Family Mentors

Our school reaches out to new members of the school community through a family mentoring program. Current, “veteran” families will be matched with new families for their first year in the school, if they so desire. New families include families who have just enrolled at our school for the first time, have relocated from another Waldorf school, or have joined the Early Childhood Program from the Parent-Tot program.

The mentoring family can help to make the new family feel a part of our community in many ways by inviting them to events, explaining upcoming festivals, answering everyday questions, or having them over for dinner.

If you would like to be a mentor family or be assigned to a mentor family, please contact the office.

Class Representatives

Each class has one (or two) Class Representatives who offers support to the teacher, the Parents Association, to the class families, and to the school community. The representative is a liaison between the parents and the teacher, and between the parents and the wider school community. Class Reps help parents, especially new parents, feel welcome and appreciated at

our school, answer questions or direct parents to resources within the school. In addition, Class Reps chair, delegate, or help to organize PA-led events, festivals, fairs, work days, etc.; write one class-focused article for *The Waldorf Weekly*; and assist in orienting the Class rep for the following year.

Each teacher determines who will represent his or her class. Each representative will be asked to help for a one-year period, assuming the role at the end of the school year and beginning his or her duties in the summer. A Class Rep should be someone who is interested in learning about and supporting Waldorf education. Good communication and organizational skills, as well as the ability to delegate tasks, are useful qualities to bring to this position.

Responsibilities of Class Representatives are as follows:

- Communicate through phone, e-mail, letters, and at class meetings any general information parents need to know;
- Help organize class-specific activities (e.g. drivers for field trips, etc.);
- Coordinate meals for class families with new babies or with emergencies;
- Arrange potlucks, social gatherings, or parent discussions (as needed) for your class;
- Collect for, and distribute, teacher and specialty teacher gifts at the holidays;
- Attend all Parents Association (PA) meetings (4 per year).
- Help to disseminate information to class families about the Holiday Fair;
- Coordinate parents to help the class teacher and school during summer work days;
- Chair, delegate or help to organize PA-led events, festivals, and fairs .

Parent Study Group

The purpose of Parent Study is to read, study, and discuss material related to Waldorf Education. This could mean anything from readings about the curriculum to the philosophy underlying it (anthroposophy), to parenting issues. Parent Study also provides a place where parents can connect around common concerns. The goal is for parents to educate themselves and have fun in the process. Parent Study is parent-led, and currently meets on a weekday morning at the school. All are welcome. For more information, check *The Weekly* or contact the school office.

Parent Handwork Group

All families are invited to join with others to learn, share, and create handwork projects for themselves and for the Holiday Fair. Good food and company add to the enjoyment. This parent-run group meets once a week at the school. For more information, check *The Weekly* or contact the school office.

Open Board Meetings

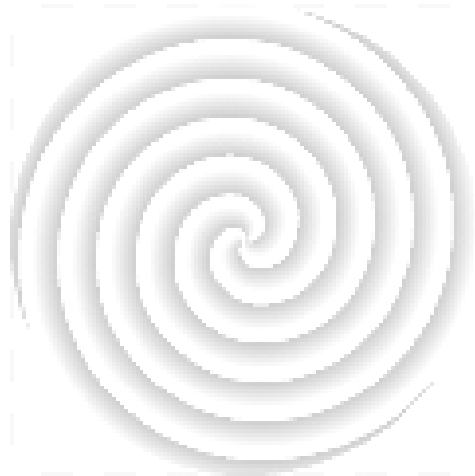
The Board of Trustees holds one or two open meetings each year at which all parents are encouraged to attend. One learns about the financial and legal well-being of the school, and has the opportunity to ask questions at these meetings. The Board can also be contacted through e-mail or the office.

How Parents Can Support Teachers and Our School

1. Learn about and embrace the principles of Waldorf Education. Throughout the year the school will sponsor lectures and teachers will have meetings to discuss various aspects of Waldorf Education. We grow stronger as a community when the parent body is well represented at these events. The more we know about Waldorf pedagogy—individually and collectively—the better equipped we will be to support the education we have chosen for our children.
2. Communicate with teachers regularly. Teachers want and need to hear from parents about how various aspects of the curriculum unfold within each child. If you have particular concerns, voice them early. If you notice specific changes – positive or negative—in your child at home, make these known to the teacher.
2. Treat your child’s teacher with respect.
4. Create a home environment that supports the teacher’s work.
5. Make sure your child arrives on time and is appropriately dressed for the weather.
6. Encourage children to play imaginatively and limit the amount of media exposure your child has.
7. Volunteer to assist with special activities such as class trips, plays, and fundraisers.
8. Provide a regular time and space for homework and musical instrument practice.
9. Take an interest in your child’s day. Your interest in all subjects- main lesson, handwork,

eurythmy, foreign languages, musical instruments, and games – will communicate their importance to your child. Share with your child’s teacher information about stories, activities or images that seem to strike a chord in your child. Understanding the subjects that take hold of a child’s imagination helps the teacher to better know – and teach— that individual child.

10. Make a meaningful gift to the annual fund and join in the work of the school.



Section 2: Recommended Readings for Families

For families who are interested in gaining a more complete understanding of the view of the child inherent in Waldorf pedagogy, we suggest the following books:

***You Are Your Child's First Teacher* by *Rahima Baldwin*.** Based on the philosophy behind the Waldorf schools, this book prepares parents through a host of practical and innovative ideas to serve as their children's first – and best – teachers.

***Simplicity Parenting* by *Kim John Payne*.** More and more children are being affected by the stress inherent in our daily lives. Kim John Payne offers parents a way to simplify life again for the well being of our children. This book is scheduled for release in fall 2009. In the interim, a CD can be ordered directly from Mr. Payne at www.thechildtoday.com.

***Childhood* by *Caroline von Heydebrand*.** This is the classic work on the Waldorf Kindergarten. Heydebrand worked with Rudolf Steiner at the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, and her book contains a wealth of insight about working with preschoolers.

***Creativity in Education* by *Rene Querido*.** Rudolf Steiner recognized that all children are born with the capacity for wonder, gratitude, and responsibility. The Waldorf teacher's task is to awaken these faculties, thereby helping young people to discover within themselves the strength, enthusiasm and wisdom to become creative shapers of civilization, rather than passive onlookers. In these seven lectures given at the San Francisco Waldorf School, Rene Querido describes an educational approach that has as its goal the balanced development of the whole child – hand and heart as well as mind – an approach that is now being practiced in over 700 Waldorf Schools throughout the world.

***The Education of the Child* by *Rudolf Steiner*.** This book provides a good introduction to Waldorf pedagogy, as well as to anthroposophy in general. It is one of the few lectures Steiner gave in 1909 that he revised for publication ten years before the first Waldorf School was founded. A main theme here is the "birthing" of the "sheaths" of human individuality. Study of this essay will lead the reader to a rather profound grasp of the Waldorf impulse as an "education towards freedom." Although the content may make for difficult reading as a first glance into this field, it should be readily understandable if read as the second or third of these recommended books.

***Encountering the Self: Transformation and Destiny in the Ninth Year* by *Hermann Koepke*.** Between the ages of nine and ten, as the child's "I" incarnates more deeply, he or she often experiences him/herself for the first time as separate individuals, different from their parents and peers, and essentially alone. This inner experience is sometimes precipitated by a first

encounter with death in the child's environment, a first inkling that life is fragile. Koepke provides a lucid and highly readable explanation of the outer signs and symptoms of this essential turning point in the life of a child. He demonstrates the significance of this crucial moment by showing how the destiny and achievements of such personalities as Dante, Schliemann, Kokoschka, Steiner and Bruno Walter rested upon a fateful encounter or event in their ninth year.

Festivals, Family and Food by Diana Carey and Judy Large. This is a resource book for exploring festivals – those "feast days" scattered throughout the year which children love celebrating. It was written in response to children and busy parents asking, "What can we do at Easter and Christmas? What games can we play? What can we make? How can we prepare for the festivals as centers of stability in our family life?" This book is written with families, and especially with children, very much in mind – for children can remind us of the wonders that we might otherwise forget. The underlying theme is a simple but bold suggestion – that if celebrating festivals was formerly the focus of community life, then rediscovered in the modern context, such seasonal activities may enrich family life.

Festivals with Children by Brigitte Barz. Celebrating festivals is an important part of a child's life. Brigitte Barz describes the nature and character of each Christian festival, its symbols and customs, and gives practical suggestions for celebrating these festivals in the family. This book is much more than a craft book describing what to do; it awakens an understanding in parents of the festivals and stimulates creativity toward a meaningful family festival.

The Four Temperaments, an Early Steiner Lecture (1909), is an interesting introductory booklet. Here the reader can get a feel for Rudolf Steiner's own style as a teacher of anthroposophy while gaining valuable insight into human character – Steiner's understanding of the four temperaments. Class teachers as well as many of the special subject teachers "teach to the temperaments" to a considerable degree. This lecture also presents the four-fold aspect of the human being in a brief, engrossing context, and is therefore an ideal glimpse into the whole of anthroposophical literature.

The Kingdom of Childhood by Rudolf Steiner. Steiner presents the idea of the three seven-year periods of child development and gives many classroom examples.

Phases of Childhood by B.C.J. Lievegoed. The author describes the development of the child in phases of around seven years, each phase having its own character. The changes in the body are well known: for instance, change of teeth, puberty, and completion of physical growth. Psychological development parallels physical development and is as important.

Examining the relationship of children to the world around them, Lievegoed describes the experience of the preschooler, school child and teenager in a clear and concise way. The latter part of the book is concerned with the practical application of these insights, allowing a method of education in harmony with the stages of development.

***The Recovery of Man in Childhood* by A.C. Harwood.** In this absorbing study of Rudolf Steiner's educational work, Harwood argues that childhood is a time of losing, as well as gaining, capacities. Is there a connection between the loss of a childhood faculty and the acquisition of an adult one? In fact, there is a three-fold connection. Harwood gives an insightful survey of the three seven-year stages of child development depicted by Steiner, presented in connection with numerous examples and anecdotes on Waldorf education, such as foreign languages, eurythmy and music, and the temperaments. These lucid explanations qualify this book as the most intelligent and stimulating introductory work on the unique approach to "education as an art."

***Rhythms and Turning Points in the Life of the Child* by Eugene Schwartz.** This is a "must read" concerning changes in a child's life around the ninth year.

***Rudolf Steiner Waldorf Education* by David Mitchell.** This colorful pamphlet with photos, drawings and simple text is an excellent introduction for interested parents.

***Steiner Education: in Theory and Practice* by Gilbert Childs.** This thorough and detailed account of Rudolf Steiner's view of the child's development toward a whole personality shows how the teaching practice of Waldorf schools is firmly grounded in a rational approach that perceives the child's past, present and future. For the child to mature into a unique and responsible adult, "free" from distorting and harmful influences, certain fundamental human truths, both individual and social, must be respected. The curriculum of Waldorf schools is explained, together with approaches to subjects both familiar and unfamiliar.

***The Way of the Child* by A.C. Harwood** provides an excellent and surprisingly deep and thorough introduction to this "new" approach to child psychology. Several of the themes discussed in the book were first brought by Steiner to the group of teachers he trained in his rigorous 1919 lectures entitled *Study of Man*. Here the same themes are made remarkably transparent by Harwood, arising from his obvious love for children, long years of experience and facility of written expression. In his Preface he notes: "I have not endeavored to distinguish between what is immediately contained in Steiner's own works and anything that my own thought and experience have taught me, or that I may have added by way of illustration. Rather have I tried (as I think he would have wished) to present in my own way that limited part of his work which I feel I have best understood and made my own." If parents want to read only one book to more fully appreciate and

support their children's class teachers, this would be it.

Waldorf Education: A Family Guide, edited by Pamela Johnson Fenner and Karen L. Rivers. This book grew out of a handbook for families at the Marin, California Waldorf School. It is an accessible, parent-focused guide to understanding the Waldorf curriculum and child development from Steiner's perspective.

Other Resources

Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education, published twice a year by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), and available by subscription.

www.whywaldorffworks.org—The official website of The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), www.whywaldorffworks.org provides information and resources about Waldorf education. Families can find school information, a philosophical overview of Waldorf education, FAQs, an online bookstore, and links to Waldorf and non-Waldorf Internet resources that encourage further exploration of Waldorf education, Rudolf Steiner, and anthroposophy.

Many thanks to Shannon Stevens for compiling this list of suggested readings. Shannon is the parent of a current student, and of two Waldorf School of Philadelphia alumni.