

WALDORF SCHOOL OF PRINCETON

Parent Handbook 2011/2012

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Introduction & Basic Information

This handbook is a compilation of procedures and policies of the Waldorf School of Princeton for the use of parents of children in the Early Childhood classes through Eighth Grade. Parents may have questions not addressed in this handbook. If so, please ask your teacher, class parent representative, or anyone in Administration to assist you. For your convenience, an up-to-date listing of faculty, staff, and Board of Trustee members, as well as other current information, is included each year in the *School Directory*. Updates of school and community events and official announcements are published in the monthly school e-newsletter, Willow, the Friday update email, Coming Up Next Week, and the School's website.

School Address & Telephone Number

1062 Cherry Hill Road
Princeton, NJ 08540

Phone: 609-466-1970
Fax: 609-333-9991
Website: www.princetonwaldorf.org

Administrative Office Hours

8:15 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Individual staff members may not be available at all times during the workday; calling ahead for an appointment will help you make the best use of your time.

Calling the School and Using the Voicemail System

The school's phone number is (609) 466-1970.

The voicemail system answers all calls to the school. An extensive menu will guide you through the voicemail system, or you may use the extension numbers listed in the School Directory to navigate the system. School employees have a voicemail box through which they receive messages. Administrative staff members have telephone extensions that ring at their desks. To access the employee voicemail directory, press '8' during the Main Greeting.

Obtaining General Assistance: If you do not select a menu option or dial an extension or box number during the Main Greeting, your call will be transferred automatically to the Front Office at the end of the greeting. Dialing 'zero' during the greeting will also transfer your call to the Front Office, where you can receive help with general questions and problems. If no one is available to answer, your call will be transferred into the Front Office voicemail box, and your message will be returned as soon as possible.

Emergency Calls: If you have a true emergency but cannot reach the Front Desk, pressing '6' during the Main Greeting will transfer your call to the Emergency Phone line that will be answered by someone in the building. Please use this extension for genuine emergency situations only.

School Closings and Delayed Openings

In case of severe weather conditions, such as snow or ice, school closings and delayed openings will be communicated to you early in the morning through ParentReach, an automated phone alert. You can also get up-to-date information by calling the school and listening to the Main Voicemail Greeting, or by tuning in to certain radio stations.

Radio stations:

- 101.5 FM
- 94.5 WPST FM

In general, we follow the lead of local public school districts when deciding whether to close or delay school. Three snow days are accounted for in the school calendar. If more closings occur, the school year may be lengthened accordingly.

When inclement weather causes the start of school to be delayed, the schedules listed in the chart below will apply. Traveling may be difficult for some families, particularly those who come from a distance, so when there is a delayed opening, the late pass policy will be suspended and your child may go directly to the classroom.

If the school needs to close early due to weather conditions or other unforeseen events, parents will be contacted. **STAFF MEMBERS WILL REMAIN AT SCHOOL UNTIL ALL STUDENTS HAVE BEEN PICKED UP.**

If severe weather conditions make you late for Grade School pick up, your child will be placed into the After School Program **WITHOUT** charge until 4:00 p.m. Please call the school if you will be later than that, and regular charges will apply from 4:00 p.m. For Early Childhood parents, if bad weather makes you late for your regular pick up, your child will be placed into the EC Afternoon without charge until 1:00 p.m., after which regular rates apply. If you cannot be at the school by 6:00 p.m., make alternate arrangements for someone to pick up your child and then let the school know – there is no After School care available after 6:00 p.m.

One-Hour Delay

Early Childhood Programs

9:30 start.....Modified program
After School Program as usual

Grade School (grades 1 through 8)

9:30-11:30.....Morning Lesson for all grades
11:30-11:55.....Snack and recess
11:55-12:40.....Last morning class period
12:40-3:05.....Lunch, afternoon classes as scheduled
After School Program as usual

Two-Hour Delay

Early Childhood Programs

10:30 start..... Modified program
After School Program as usual.

Grade School (grades 1 through 8)

10:30-12:40..... Morning Lesson for all grades
12:40 -1:20..... Lunch and recess as usual
1:20 -3:05.....Afternoon classes as scheduled
After School Program as usual

School Hours

Parent-Child Hours	9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
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Nursery / Kindergarten Hours					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start Time	8:30 a.m.				
Morning Dismissal*	12:00 p.m.*				
<i>10 minute grace period for pickup; late charges begin at 12:10 p.m.</i>					
Full Day Dismissal	3:00 p.m.				
<i>10 minute grace period for pickup; late charges begin at 3:10 p.m.</i>					
After School Program	Daily until 6:00 p.m.				

* An EC Afternoon program to 3:00 p.m. may be available by monthly contract

Grade School Hours					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Start time	8:15 a.m. Grades 5 - 8				
	8:30 a.m. Grades 1 - 4				
Dismissal					12:55 Grades 1 – 2*
			2:25		
	3:05	3:05		3:05	3:05 Grades 3 - 8
<i>10 minute grace period for pickup; late charges begin as indicated below:</i>					
ASP Charges Begin	3:15	3:15	2:35	3:15	3:15
After School Program	Daily until 6:00 p.m.				

* Friday Afternoon care for children in Grades 1-2 is available at no charge until 3:05

How Our School Is Organized

The Waldorf School of Princeton is a non-profit organization, accredited by both AWSNA, the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and NJAIS, the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools.

As members of a growing school, our parents, faculty, staff, and friends work within a structure that calls for appropriate individual responsibility, accountability, and healthy group process. Open and clear channels of communication and participation are essential. The following is a description of how responsibilities are shared at the school.

Waldorf School Association of the Princeton Area

The legal governing umbrella for the school is the Waldorf School Association of the Princeton Area. All faculty and school parents are automatically members of the Association, and friends of the school may join. At the Association's annual meeting, reports are made and members of the Association's Board of Trustees are present.

Board of Trustees

The Board is composed of parents, faculty, and outside community members. They are responsible for the fiscal, legal, and long-range planning decisions made on behalf of the school. The Board carries out much of its work through committees.

A nominating committee, comprising representatives from the Board, Parent Council and Faculty, is formed in the spring of each year. Members of the community may nominate themselves, a parent, or a friend who wishes to offer his/her services as a trustee. The nominating committee evaluates the needs of the upcoming Board, interviews the nominees, and develops a slate of candidates. The slate is presented for approval by the Board of Trustees in the spring. New Board officers are installed at the June Board meeting.

The Faculty and Administrative Staff

The Faculty is responsible for matters pertaining to the education of children at the school. The Administration is responsible for non-pedagogical issues and the day-to-day business operations of the school. Both Faculty and Administrative staff work together along with the Board and Parent Council to lead the school.

The College of Teachers

The College of Teachers is the decision-making body for pedagogical issues within the school. The College is responsible for:

- programs and curriculum
- faculty personnel issues, including hiring and dismissal of teachers
- guiding the long-range development of the school
- significant pedagogical questions
- parent-teacher relations

The College meets weekly, and more often if needed. Full-time employees are eligible for College membership after a year of employment at the school.

The Parents

Parent participation is essential to the school's well being. To sustain and nourish our community, parent support is needed for trustee and committee work, class meetings, workshops, lectures, assemblies, festivals, and fairs. Fairs, open houses, and fundraising events support our work and allow us to reach out into the greater community. Parents can find opportunities to participate through the following channels:

- The **Parent Council** is an organization that supports, educates, and connects the parent body to the rest of the school. It works in tandem with the Faculty, the Board of Trustees, and the Administration.
- The **Class Parent Representatives**, two per class, are chosen by the class teacher. They are responsible for supporting their respective class teachers and parents by helping to organize class activities, promoting school-wide initiatives, and communicating information to families. A current list of class representatives is included in the *School Directory*.
- **Ambassadors** support the school by reaching out into the wider community and spreading the word about the Waldorf School of Princeton. Ambassadors also support families new to the school as they navigate in their first year.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT?

I would like to discuss my child's academic progress or social experience. Please speak with your child's **class teacher** and/or the appropriate special subject teacher. It is always advisable to let the class teacher know if you have concerns with regard to your child's work in a special subject area. If, after addressing the situation with the teacher(s) involved, you feel that a problem persists, you may contact the **Faculty Chair** for further assistance.

With whom can I discuss a situation involving a particular teacher? The first person you should contact is the **teacher**. If your concerns persist, you may seek assistance from the **Faculty Chair**.

I have a financial question about an invoice, enrollment agreement or tuition assistance. Please direct these questions to the **Business Office**.

How can I learn more about Waldorf education? The **class teacher** is a good source of general information on Waldorf education and he or she will be able to direct you to other resources as well. In addition, we encourage you to attend class meetings, all-school parent education evenings, and any adult enrichment opportunities.

I have a question about the Annual Giving campaign or other areas of fundraising. Contact the **Development Office**.

Who handles my child's school records? Contact the **Registrar's Office** about academic records. Questions about health records should be directed to the School **Nurse**.

I have questions about school policy, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, etc. The **Front Office** can answer questions of a general nature, or assist you in contacting the appropriate office or person.

School Communications

The school utilizes a number of methods to communicate with enrolled families, including email, web site updates, mail, and ParentReach, an automated phone alert system. However, another method of communication is through notes and letters sent home with the students. Therefore, please check lunchboxes and backpacks regularly!

Contacting Faculty and Staff: Although the school does not distribute the home addresses and telephone numbers of faculty/staff, each employee has a mailbox and a voicemail box at the school. Mail addressed to the employee in care of the school will be placed in the appropriate mailbox. Employee voicemail is accessed directly from the school voicemail menu. If you don't know the extension number, press '8' to use the employee directory.

Class Meetings are held several times during the course of the year. The meetings provide important information about Waldorf pedagogy and class activities, and are an excellent opportunity to socialize with other parents and to become acquainted with special subject teachers who may attend. The class teacher sets the schedule for these gatherings at the beginning of the academic year. The teacher also uses these opportunities to discuss child development and curriculum issues that specifically pertain to your child's growth and education. Try to attend all meetings if you can!

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice yearly, in fall and spring. All parents of nursery through grade school students are expected to meet with their child's class teacher, as well as with any special subject teacher who contacts them to request a conference. (Parents are welcome to initiate conferences with special subject teachers, as well.) Conference dates are announced prior to the start of the academic year, and additional information is distributed via email prior to the conferences. Appointments are made on a first come, first served basis.

Contacting a Teacher: Parents are invited to request a phone conversation or appointment by leaving a message in the teacher's school voicemail box or with a note placed in his/her school mailbox.

Windy Hill, the school's annual publication, presents examples of student writing and artwork, as well as articles on topics of interest to the wider school community. The school's growth and development, alumni news, and the Annual Report are also included in this publication.

Willow, the monthly e-newsletter, is the major channel of communication between school and family. It is emailed on Wednesdays available online at www.princetonwaldorf.org.

Willow FAQs

May I submit something to the Willow? Yes. All submissions are subject to approval and due on the 15th of the previous month. Submissions are to be sent electronically to jquirk@princetonwaldorf.org.

What is the advertising policy? We limit announcements in the e-newsletter to 1) events at our school, 2) events at other Waldorf schools, and then, if there is space, 3) to events of interest in the community. Advertising is not accepted. (Contact the Development Office for information about advertising opportunities.) Business cards, classified ads, notices about community programs, etc., may be posted on the side of the Community Bulletin Board nearest the swings.

Yearly Progress Reports: Evaluation of a child's progress in the grade school is also shared with parents through a comprehensive written report at the end of the school year. Waldorf school reports take the form of a narrative describing the child's educational progress, participation in class, interests and habits, as well as areas in need of attention or improvement. Reports may begin with a note or poem addressed to the student; the rest of the report is addressed to the parents only, and should not be read by or to the child.

Transcript Record: Parents of 7th and 8th grade students receive mid-year and end-of-year evaluations of progress in each area of study. These evaluations are in transcript form, consisting of a lettered scale measuring both achievement and effort, and optional teacher comments. All transcripts are sent to the parents. Attendance/Tardy records are also a part of the official transcript. With parental permission, 7th and 8th grade transcripts may be sent to other schools as part of the student's high school application process.

The School Day

Arrival

The opening of each school day is a special moment for the teachers and children at a Waldorf school. In the Nursery and Mixed Age Kindergarten classes, doors open at 8:30 a.m. when the day begins. Parent Child classes begin at 9:00 a.m. Grades 1-4 begin at 8:30 a.m. and grades 5-8 begin at 8:15 a.m.

Grade school children should arrive at least five minutes before the start of class, so they can use the bathroom and get a drink before their lessons begin. This way, the class as a whole will experience a harmonious beginning and the rhythm of the day will not be disturbed by late arrivals getting settled. Children in grades 1-4 may arrive as early as 8:10 a.m. and children in grades 5-8 may arrive as early as 8:00 a.m.

Please be considerate of your child's class teacher at the start of the day by limiting your conversations with him or her. Concerns requiring active dialogue with the teacher should be scheduled for other times.

Attendance

Regular attendance helps a child to receive the full benefits of the unique, experiential nature of Waldorf education. The habits and comfort that are provided by the school rhythm are an important factor in the developing child's life and can be significantly upset by absence from the classroom. Additionally, missed schoolwork is often very difficult to make-up, sometimes affecting the students' confidence and ability to keep up with the class.

The Waldorf School of Princeton strongly urges that families avoid having children miss school for reasons other than for illness, a death in the family, or religious reasons. Schedule doctor/dental appointments outside school hours. Plan family vacations during regularly scheduled breaks throughout the school year. Eighth grade families should consult their child's teacher(s) when scheduling high school visits.

If your child will be absent from school, please notify the Front Office by phone (Ext. 110) and any supplemental education support or music teachers your child sees no later than 9:00 a.m. **each day** the child is absent. So that we may alert all exposed families, also indicate if your child has a communicable disease (privacy of names will be honored).

In the case of an extended absence, please give one week advance notice to the Front Office, class teacher, special subject teachers, and any educational support or music teachers that your child sees.

Make-Up Work

Given the interactive learning experience teachers strive to provide, and the fact that each new capacity builds upon prior knowledge, making up work can be a challenge for both teacher and student. Still, families should plan to cover material missed and arrange with each of their teachers and/or their classmates to do so in a timely fashion.

Note that teachers devote considerable time and effort to develop living lessons that will inspire the class as a whole. It can be very difficult for teachers to additionally provide a packet of self-explanatory work to do at home, particularly when for reasons other than illness, a death in the family, or religious basis. Families planning extended absences for other reasons (i.e. vacation) are encouraged to stay in school or to design comparable lesson plans with minimal teacher input.

Below are some make-up work guidelines to consider by grade:

Grade one to three - Families are welcome to make up work if it is the child's desire and can easily be done. Reading, writing and arithmetic can incorporate seasonal themes as they are gently practiced.

Grade four and above - Children are expected to make up any missed work that results from absenteeism. Classmates can often be helpful in relaying homework or offer main lesson books to copy for an absent student.

Grade seven and eight – At this stage, transcripts are given which include formal academic grades by subject area. Substantial absenteeism can negatively impact a student's transcript, or ability to earn a diploma. Comparable work will need to be completed in order to earn a grade or to graduate. Each main lesson block is considered one course. Projects done during school such as handwork projects, sculptures, and fine arts projects must be completed in a manner commensurate with the grade given. Teachers will require students to attend Project Completion Day(s) after the last day of school as necessary.

Late Arrivals

One of the greatest gifts we can give one another is the practice of punctuality. It is a gesture of deep respect for others and a virtue that will hold children in good stead throughout their lives.

The prompt arrival of your child allows the class as a whole to experience a harmonious beginning. All are affected and disappointed when the rhythm of the day begins with the interruption caused by tardiness. Repeated lateness can have surprisingly far-reaching consequences for a child's self-image and sense of well being in the class. It is best for everyone that your child arrives on time!

The school's lateness policy requires all grade school students to have a late pass to be allowed into their classroom once the teacher has started the Morning Lesson (8:30 a.m. for grades 1-4 and 8:15 a.m. for grades 5-8 graders). No grade school student will be allowed into the classroom without a late pass once the teacher has started. The parent (or responsible adult, such as the carpool driver) must accompany the student to the Front Office to sign in the student and pick up a late pass, then escort the student to class.

Note: Many class teachers close the classroom door before beginning morning lesson; late children must wait in the hall until they are invited in.

EXCEPTION: When there is a delayed opening, the late pass policy will be suspended and students arriving after the start of class may go directly to the classroom without a pass.

Early Departures

For your child's safety, it is important that the school knows with certainty who is in school and who is not. Please help by keeping us informed of your child's whereabouts.

When picking up your child during the day while school is in session, the parent (or responsible adult, such as the carpool driver) must first go to the Front Office to sign the student out. Then the parent may go to the class and pick up the student. If returning later the same day, please go to the office to sign back in before escorting the student to class.

Dismissal

No matter what class your child is in, your punctuality at pick up time is greatly appreciated. Children who have to wait may become tired, anxious or hungry, so please make every effort to be on time. Children who are not picked up within 5-10 minutes of dismissal time, or whenever a teacher cannot wait with the child in the pick up area any longer, will be escorted to the After School Program, and the parents will be charged accordingly. Please review the "School Hours" section of this handbook for specific dismissal times. Also, review the dismissal times for special events listed in the school calendar and published in the e-newsletter, as the children are sometimes dismissed early prior to a holiday or following a special event.

If you are delayed for any reason, or have an unforeseen change in pick up plans, please notify the Front Office **no later than a half hour before dismissal**, and the class teacher will be notified. Calls placed within an hour of dismissal cannot be guaranteed delivery, except in emergency situations.

In the grade school, teachers accompany their classes at dismissal, waiting in designated areas in front of the Golden House for parents or other authorized adults to pick up the children. Children will be dismissed only to adults designated by the parent at the beginning of the year. Please notify the Front Office of any permanent or long-term changes to your pick-up instructions. Notify the Front Desk about pick up changes due to play dates, or early pick up due to appointments, etc. This information will be delivered to the class teacher on their clipboards

USE CAUTION at pick up time, obey the parking lot rules (see below), and encourage your children to walk with extreme care around the parking area. At dismissal, the class teacher says goodbye to your child with a handshake and makes a written notation on the attendance clipboard. At this time, you or your designated pick up person assume responsibility for your child and all children in your carpool, and they should remain in your sight at all times. Rough play, running, and ball playing are not allowed at pick up time. Group games are allowed **ONLY** after 3:30 pm (2:30 pm on Wednesdays), and only with attentive adult supervision. You may personally supervise continued free play with your child or carpool, but this should happen in the lower field, the swing area, or other safe areas well away from the dismissal area and the parking lot. Your immediate presence is required in these situations. Help us keep dismissal a safe and orderly time for all.

Parking Lot Protocol

- **If you are getting out of the car, always park the car** in a designated spot or in the gravel lot.
- **Always stop at the crosswalks** and drive with care.
- **Never get out of your car** if you are in the pickup line that forms along the curb.
- **Never leave your car running if it is unattended** or with keys in the ignition.
- **Never double-park** next to cars waiting in the pickup/fire lane.
- **Never park or drive in the gravel fire lane** on the left side of the Golden House. This must be kept open in the event of an emergency; it was not designed for two-way traffic.
- **Never drive behind the Grade School Building.** By agreement with our neighbors, this road is only to be used for emergencies. (Morning tardiness is *not* an emergency situation; it only seems that way.)
The car noise disrupts classes already in session.
- **Obey the parking lot speed limit of 5 mph.**
- **Do not bring pets along for pick up.** (For more information about animals on campus, see “School Policies.”)

Carpooling

Families who live near one another often arrange carpools. Families new to the school are encouraged to look in the School Directory or contact the Front Office for assistance in finding other families in your area.

Snack and Lunch

Mealtime is a time for thankfulness, for nurturing our bodies, and for coming together in community. In the lower grades, mealtimes begin with the lighting of a candle and the singing of a blessing to create a feeling of love and appreciation.

In the Early Childhood programs, a snack is provided each day. We offer items such as whole grain breads, cereals, soup, fruits, vegetables, and juice or tea that the children help prepare. If your child has a specific dietary need, please contact your teacher.

Some rooms on campus are “nut-free zones” to ensure the safety of all our students. Class teachers will inform parents if a nut –free lunch/snack is required. Other class parents are valuable resources when finding food alternatives for your child to bring from home.

In the grade school, individual class teachers may have suggestions about snacks and lunches, and about how food should be handled and contained. In general, please do not send junk food, candy, gum, or caffeinated or sugary drinks. In order to reduce the amount of trash and support the environment, we encourage you to send food in reusable containers, packed in a lunch box or basket free of commercial slogans, decals, or distracting pictures.

School Supplies

Class teachers provide their students with school supplies such as crayons, pencils, main lesson books, painting materials, eurythmy shoes, and recorders. Parents are requested to make or purchase other necessary items, such as the crayon case, various draw string storage bags, a handwork box, etc. Your child’s teacher will give you details.

Field Trip Forms

Class overnight field trips begin with the 3rd grade farm trip followed by annual class trips in grades 4 through 8. Permission slips sent home by the teacher must be completed and signed and returned to school before a child will be allowed to accompany his/her class on a field trip, whether this is a day trip or involves an overnight stay. Sometimes teachers will request that some parents accompany a class on a field trip.

After School Programs

The school provides after school care until 6:00 p.m. each day. For Early Childhood children, an EC Afternoon program is available from 12:00-3:00 each day on a full year basis and, depending on openings, on a monthly contract basis. These families may also participate in the After School Program which includes grade school children until 6:00 p.m. Charges for use of the After School Program are based on an hourly rate, or families may sign up for a monthly contract. Contact the Business Office or see website for details.

Children staying on for the Early Childhood Afternoon have some free playtime before eating a lunch prepared by the staff. The school provides mats for the afternoon rest period.

If your child (either Grade School or Early Childhood) is staying for the After School Program, advance sign-up is requested (before 3:00 p.m. the prior day). This will enable us to arrange for sufficient staff and supplies for the expected number of children. However, if you need care on a particular day and have not signed up in advance, you may still arrange for care (at a higher rate of payment) by calling the Front Desk.

When extreme inclement weather strikes during the school day, the After School Program may be cancelled but staff will remain on campus until all students are picked up. If severe weather conditions make you late for Grade School pick up, your child will be placed into the After School Program WITHOUT charge until 4:00 p.m. Please call the school if you will be later than that, and regular charges will apply from 4:00 p.m. For Early Childhood parents, if bad weather makes you late for your regular pick up, your child will be placed into the EC Afternoon without charge until 1 pm, after which regular rates apply. If you cannot be at the school by 6:00 p.m., make alternate arrangements for someone to pick up your child and then let the school know. There is no care available after 6:00 p.m.

After School FAQs

How are After School Program charges determined? After School Program rates are published each year. Contact the Business Office for information or with questions about your invoice. Monthly contracts are available; non-contracted users of the Grade School After School Program are charged on an hourly basis. After 10 minutes' grace, you are charged for a full hour.

The lowest hourly rate is charged for those who sign up in advance (before 3:00 p.m. the prior day)

A higher hourly rate is charged for children who are signed up with less than the required advance notice (before 11:00 a.m. the same day).

If your child is brought to the After School Program and the school has not received any notification (after 11:00 a.m. the same day), you will be charged a flat fee in addition to the hourly rate.

What if I am late picking up my child from the After School Program? Please call the After School Program cell phone to alert the teacher that you will be late. Parents of children who are picked up after the program closes at 6:00 p.m. **will be charged \$1 per minute**. Please avoid costly fees by picking up your child on time.

My child will not be attending the After School Program today, or our pick up plans have changed. What should I do? It is essential that you notify the school of any changes in your After School schedule. Advance notice can be given by calling the Front Office. Between the hours of 2:30 and 6:00 p.m., you may contact the Grade School program by calling the After School Program cell number listed in the School Directory.

I'd like to use the First or Second Grade Friday Afternoon program. How does it work? If your child is staying on a particular Friday or every Friday for early Aftercare (12:55 to 3:05 p.m. – no charge), be sure to notify the school. If you have not picked up your child at 3:05 p.m., he/she will be signed into the After School Program in the Grade School and you will be charged accordingly.

I am volunteering my time for the school. May I put my children into the After School Program at no cost? Our school is blessed with many wonderful parents who generously give of their time, energy and expertise in so many ways. If you are doing substantial volunteer work for the school when the After School Program is in session, with prior permission you may place your child in the After School Program without charge. No child is allowed to be unsupervised on campus, so we would prefer that your child is safe in our program. Remember, only students enrolled in our school may be placed in the After School Program, and the hourly fee is waived for the time that you are actively doing unpaid work for the school, but lunch and other program fees are not included in the waiver. Please contact the Business Office in advance for permission.

Health and Safety

Health Forms

Health forms are required of all new students, and returning students who are 5 by Oct. 1 of the school year, entering sixth grade, and participating in any after school sports (5th through 8th grade). The forms must be completed and returned to the school by August 15 or, if a student begins during the year, before the first day of attending classes. Original forms are required, no faxes or copies. Part 1 of the form is to be completed and signed by parents or legal guardians and Part 2 by a qualified medical practitioner: Advanced Nurse-Practitioner, Doctor of Osteopathy, or Doctor of Medicine (M.D.).

Immunizations and Tuberculosis Test

Children must receive all immunizations as required by the State of New Jersey. A religious exemption is to be used for valid religious reasons only: moral or philosophical reasons are not accepted. Medical exemptions may be requested for valid medical reasons only and are to be provided by a Medical Doctor or Doctor of Osteopathy. Please be aware that unimmunized children may be asked to stay home if there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

For more information, refer to the letter included with your enrollment materials or call the State of New Jersey Immunization Program at (609) 588-7512, the State of New Jersey Tuberculosis Program at (609) 588-7522 or your local health department.

Emergency Cards

The emergency card must be completed and returned to the office **before** the first day of school and kept up to date afterwards. It is important that you tell your “emergency contact” that you have listed him/her at the school. Parents should select someone who, in their judgment, could assume responsibility for your child if he/she is ill or needs to be picked up from school. Please choose someone who could make decisions for your child if you are unavailable. Your emergency contact should be easily reached by phone and have available transportation to the school.

Illness at Home

Parents sometimes have difficulty judging whether a child should come to school. An ill or overly tired child may not be able to participate fully in all the day’s activities. We suggest that if you are unsure, it probably means he or she is not well enough and needs to rest at home.

Children who have contracted a contagious illness of any kind should not come to school. Such illnesses include the following:

- *Chicken pox
- *Scarlet fever
- *Pertussis (whooping cough)
- *Measles
- *Fifth’s disease
- *Conjunctivitis
- *Any disease with draining lesions

Once your child is feeling better, he/she should be fever free without medications and without nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. Children with contagious illnesses may not return to class until they present a document signed by a qualified medical practitioner stating the diagnosis and that the child poses no health threat to others.

Please stress at home, as the teachers do in class, such simple and effective habits as frequent hand-washing and keeping fingernails clipped to help decrease the spread of infections among the school children.

Illness, Accidents or Injuries at School

The school nurse is present at the school only on a part-time basis. When she is not in attendance, the teachers or staff will assist children.

First aid is administered to students at school with minor injuries, such as scratches, insect bites, splinters or bruises. If necessary, an ill child is allowed to lie down in a quiet place, such as the “nurse’s room” or office. If the nurse decides that a child should not continue the day at school, parents or the emergency contact will be called. Please pick up your child promptly – **within one hour** – when called.

If urgent medical attention is required, the nurse or school staff will call an ambulance, and then contact the parents. If the situation is determined to be less critical, the staff will first contact the parents or the emergency contact specified on the student’s emergency card. If neither party can be reached, an ambulance will be called to take the child, accompanied by a staff member, to a nearby hospital emergency room. The school will utilize parents permission stated on the student emergency form allowing a physician to proceed with treatment.

Current medical information is kept in the office for quick reference. If your doctor or emergency contact information changes in any way during the year, please inform the school office.

Medications

Written authorization from parents and an authorized medical practitioner is necessary if your child is to be given medication during school hours by his or her teacher. Medications include prescription medication, homeopathic remedies, and over the counter products. Written authorizations need to be updated every year.

Head Lice

Head lice are not an uncommon occurrence at any public or private school. If a child is found to have live lice, or nits (eggs) within one inch of the scalp in his/her hair, the parents will be called to take the child home to treat, or remove the nits, whichever is appropriate. Special shampoos can be bought over the counter or by prescription to take care of the problem, but combing is the best method.

Although it can be quite a bother, there are some good preventative methods: keep long hair contained, use tea tree shampoo, or put rosemary or tea tree oil around the hairline before coming to school.

Helpful websites include: www.headlice.org and www.safesolutionsinc.com.

If you discover head lice or nits within one inch of the scalp, please tell the teachers immediately. Children may not return to school until all the live lice and nits within one inch of the scalp are removed from their hair.

Lyme Disease and Ticks

Since the children spend considerable time outside, it is necessary to check them regularly for ticks, especially during the spring and early summer months. Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of Lyme disease so that it can be detected and treated as early as possible.

School Policies & Guidelines

Media Policy for the Waldorf School of Princeton

We, the Waldorf School of Princeton, appreciate your choice in selecting our school for your child(ren). Most parents are drawn to our school because of our unique pedagogy, philosophy and shared values. One aspect of our philosophy includes our outlook on the use of media. For our purposes, media are considered to include: Television, radio, portable listening devices, movies, video and electronic games, computers, and recorded music.

Policy

No electronic media (i.e. portable music devices or electronic games) is allowed on the school premises and will be removed by the teacher or an administrator until the end of the day. The exception is cell phones, which may only be used only with specific permission of the teacher, usually at dismissal. Cell phones are to be kept in backpacks and turned off. Students not adhering to this rule can have their cell phone confiscated.

Suggested Guidelines

While we acknowledge and respect parents' freedom to choose what is right for their children, we feel a responsibility to raise potential issues that stem from a variety of media exposures. We provide these insights in the spirit of creating a school environment that is holistic, rich, and creative for your child and all other students attending our school, and we strive to offer it without judgment. We have a full range of resources and can connect you with parents who are media-free. For more precise guidance, please discuss with your child's class teacher what she or he thinks is an appropriate level of media exposure for your child. This may be a topic at a class meeting and an adult education session during the year.

Media and its Effects on Children

External, artificial images inhibit the viewer's inner picturing ability, which limits the developing capacity for our thoughts and imagination. Developing this capacity is the cornerstone of Waldorf education. The nature of electronic light, swiftness of images, and the quality of sound of television, computers and videos can adversely effect the healthy development of the child. Recent research, including that of the American Academy of Pediatrics, on the effects of exposure to electronic media cites resulting learning and behavioral disorders, sleep disturbances and physiological damage - see <http://www.aap.org/family/smarttv.htm>. In addition, the content of many programs and recorded music includes violence, lewd language and sexual overtones. Exposure to media has a rippling effect on the healthy atmosphere of the classroom.

The Formative Years (birth to age seven)

The faculty strongly urges you to eliminate your child's exposure to electronic media in its various forms. We know that this is not easy, but again, we can offer resources to assist you and your family in this transition. The Waldorf approach to the care and education of the child recognizes the first seven years to be the principal formative phase of life. The development of bodily organs, the foundations of speech and thought are affected by what the child absorbs from the surrounding environment. Children learn through their natural openness and through their gift for imitation. We are committed to nurture, protect, and provide young children with a learning environment that enables them to be creative and productive individuals. Children in this age group do best playing, running, jumping, and getting lots of fresh air rather than sitting in front of a machine that over stimulates and provides no benefits to the physical body.

Achieving a Peaceful Inner Life (ages seven to ten)

The faculty strongly urges parents to continue to limit media both for its physiological effects, as well as the impact that the content can have on a child's developing consciousness. To support our work in school, please avoid all media during the week (Sunday evening through Friday afternoon). Children in this age group are developing their inner feeling life and their imagination needs a peaceful environment in which to unfold and an atmosphere worthy of imitation. At this age, your child might complain, "I'm bored." Out of their boredom, children develop their will forces -- the foundation for future love of work. What a wonderful opportunity for you to help your child create activities on their own, such as reading, painting, cooking, gardening, and healthy outside play with peers.

Balance and Awareness (ages eleven to fourteen)

When children reach the upper grades - fifth through eighth grades - there is a greater pressure and growing curiosity regarding technology. Steiner recognized long ago that technology may not be completely avoided, but should be used with awareness. Our experience is that children in this age group may state that "Everyone in the class has a cell phone, email..." We suggest that the parents stay in close communication with each other, as this may not be the case. Teachers find that technology at this age can create a social discord between those who use technology and those who don't. Again, we ask parents to use their judgment about media usage at home and to consider the larger issues that this may create in the classroom of your child. A suggestion is that if you do allow your child to use computer games, iPods, videos, etc., that it be limited to only a few hours on the weekend with no media exposure during the school week.

Parent Communication

Please remember that if you have sleepovers and parties, to be mindful of those families who choose to live media free. Again, please avoid media from Sunday evening through Friday afternoon.

Again, we recognize how difficult it is to avoid media while living in a technology-driven society. We respect your efforts and applaud your sincere desire to provide the very best environment for your child(ren). Please speak with us about your questions and concerns.

Photography Policy

Primary to Waldorf education is the child's direct and active participation in experiences and events. For each large gathering, such as an assembly, there is an intention to create a certain mood and experience for our students. Flash photography and the use of lights for videotaping can be distracting to the children and work against the effects that the faculty is trying to achieve. For these reasons the school policy allows photography and videotaping but forbids the use of flash or auxiliary lights for recording at indoor events, unless an exception has been arranged ahead of time with the Faculty Chair. An exception may be granted for the school year-book photographer, for example.

While the school would prefer that parents also experience these gatherings directly, instead of through a lens, we understand that many of you treasure the recorded memento of something as very special as your child's class play. Therefore we ask your cooperation so that when you videotape or take photographs (non-flash only for indoor events), whether indoors or outdoors, you make every effort to be as unobtrusive as possible. Many classes assign one photographer for the year.

Class teachers will make every effort to gather their classes for photographic opportunities before or after a significant event such as the Opening Assembly and Graduation. We aim to keep the overall health of the children as the guiding factor in our decision-making.

Finally, we appreciate your help in allowing children their own first hand experiences and the joy of the moment, too. Seeing oneself in a video can alter one's memory of the actual experience and waken self-consciousness pre-maturely. Students may no longer perform freely or they may be hindered if they have watched an earlier performance. Please refrain from showing children what you have captured until they are much older (i.e. It can be nice to review plays and assemblies at the end of 8th grade).

Discipline and Conduct

At the Waldorf School of Princeton we wish to foster respect for our school, all human beings and property as well as maintain an atmosphere of peaceful cooperation that promotes learning and guarantees the children's physical safety. It is to these ends that the expectations outlined in the School's Discipline Policy have been defined. These policies apply whenever students are on school grounds as well as during any school function or outing. The complete policy elaborates on what constitutes minor infractions, major infractions and repeated minor infractions as well as appropriate responses on the part of teachers and the school. Following are some **highlights of the school's discipline policy**:

- No student may strike or intentionally attempt to physically harm another student.
- Students will refrain from throwing things, running, rough-housing or engaging in other rowdy behavior during class or in the school building.
- Students must comply with playground rules. Specifically, tree climbing, fence climbing, skateboarding, and roller blading are prohibited.
- Students will respect the right of all to a quiet learning environment whenever the teacher requests it.

Dress Code

It is up to parents to ensure that the school's dress code is upheld. Free, outdoor play is an important aspect of our curriculum and appropriate clothing makes movement easier. Please use common sense in choosing your children's clothing. Dress should be plain and in good condition. The school **does not allow**:

- strident designs or colors
- logos or pictures
- flamboyant jewelry and accessories
- shirts that do not cover the torso
- "spaghetti straps" (straps must be 1 1/2 inches or wider)
- short shorts (must reach past tip of pinky finger)
- skirt length that restricts easy movement
- torn clothing
- body piercing (except for ears)
- bathing suits
- bare feet
- flip flops
- synthetic fragrances

These include: colognes, hair products, scented hand creams, aftershaves, strongly scented soaps or deodorants, fabric softeners, and scented laundry detergents. Natural oil essences are acceptable.

The school prohibits the wearing of clothing displaying logos or other commercial images. Unlike adults, who screen out so much of what impacts their senses, children absorb and are influenced by everything around them. Even simple tee-shirts sporting familiar media images or phrases can be surprisingly disruptive in the way they affect a child's imagination and disrupt the learning environment. In the event of a question, the teachers reserve the right to determine whether the dress code is being honored, and will sometimes require a student to change into other clothing. If you have any questions about the dress code, please contact your class teacher.

Parents, use these tests before coming to school to help determine whether your child is dressed appropriately or not. If there is any uncertainty, please have your child change her/his clothing.

- **TORSO TEST:** Can you raise your arms above your head, or touch your toes without exposing your torso?
- **SPAGHETTI STRAPS TEST:** Are shirt straps 1 1/2 inches or wider? Do any undergarments show?
- **SHORT SKIRT TEST:** Can you easily sit cross-legged or jump without undergarments being visible? Are regulation length shorts or capris underneath?
- **HAIR TEST:** Are your eyes fully visible? Is peripheral vision restricted when looking down?
- **FLAMBOYANT ACCESSORIES TEST:** Can earrings be caught on something? Are watches, particularly digital ones, needed? (Watches before 3rd grade are not allowed.) Are necklaces and bracelets being played with during school? Is nail polish iridescent, distracting, or unsightly?
- **LOW RIDER TEST:** Are undergarments visible above the waistband when standing or walking?
- **SAG AND DRAG TEST:** Does any part of any garment touch the floor?

Clothing policy for cold days

If the temperature is less than 39 degrees, hats and coats are required at recess. Children in our early childhood program and grades 1 and 2, however, must wear coats and hats everyday during wintry weather even when temperatures rise above 39 degrees. Rain or snow pants are required for sledding.

It is important that your child's clothing reflect outside weather conditions and the activities planned for the day. Children should dress so that they can play freely and comfortably, keeping in mind that classes often take walks in the woods. Essential gear includes:

- a pair of boots (high rubber boots to wear over socks, not over shoes, and marked with your child's name) for walking in mud and water
- warm clothing for cold weather, including extra hats and mittens/gloves to keep on hand at school
- raincoats and hats for rainy days
- a change of clothing stored at school, especially in the lower grades. All items should be carefully labeled and placed in a closeable, marked bag.

Missing Clothing

Please mark your child's clothing with at least your last name on the tag inside jackets, sweatshirts, hats, etc. Clothing found outside on the field or playground areas is placed in a "missing clothing" bin in the school basement. The school donates accumulated clothes to a local charity at the end of the academic year.

Personal Items Brought to School

Children should not bring personal items to school. These include such things as:

- toys
- collectible items
- money

However, if there is something that you and your child feel would be of interest to the class as a whole, please call your class teacher to request a time to share it with the class.

Use of School Grounds

We encourage parents to enjoy our school grounds with their children when the school facilities are not in use. While socializing after school helps to foster community connections, staying on campus too long can interfere with other school programs. Please be aware that students use various outdoor areas as classrooms including recess until 6:00 p.m. when the After School Program ends.

Both early childhood and grade school dismissal flows most smoothly when families leave soon after pick-up time.

Recognizing that early childhood families may wait for 1st or 2nd graders on Friday's early dismissal, we ask that they convene away from the grade school recess areas by 12:30 to give the grade school students the ability to play freely and use the spaces as needed.

For any family staying on campus, it is important for children to experience consistent authority among teachers and parents by carrying the school's rules into these "parent hours." To do this we ask the following:

- Parents must maintain close supervision of children's play after school
- Games and play must not interrupt any official program (including recess and after school care) using the facilities. If a group of students arrives where you and your child are playing, please move to another area of the campus.
- Children should not enter any building without an adult
- School rules, such as no tree climbing and no going to the creek without an adult must be followed (see Discipline and Conduct section of this handbook for a few rules)
- Facilities should be left in the same or better condition in which they were found
- All ball games must wait until after 3:30 and must be supervised closely
- Early childhood play yards are extensions of the classrooms and should not be used during the school day

Pets on Campus

Pets can be a wonderful and beloved part of a family. However, animals can be unpredictable. Children and adults are sometimes afraid of an animal, which often affects the animal's behavior. Even dogs that are very friendly with people can exhibit aggression towards other dogs or a high prey-drive towards babies. Additionally, some people have allergies to different animals. In order to maintain a safe, hygienic and orderly environment at our school, we ask that animal owners follow these rules when bringing their pets to school:

- Do not bring your pet to school at pick up time.
- Do not leave your pet unattended, whether tied up or left in the car.
- At all other times, dogs must be kept on a leash while anywhere on our campus.
- If you are bringing a pet (including cats and dogs) into any building, it must be contained in a cage, crate, carrier, tank or bowl as appropriate. You are responsible for obtaining the permission of the teacher before bringing any pet into the classroom.
- You must clean up after your pet. Dispose of waste properly and place it in the outside dumpster only. The trash by the bulletin board is emptied by students -- animal waste and rain make this a very difficult job.
- Supervise the interaction of your pet with children.
- Please use common sense and keep dangerous, sick or hurt pets at home.
- Animal adoptions are not appropriate on school grounds.

Gift-Giving Policy

From time to time, students, parents, or other family members of students want to express their appreciation to their teachers or staff by giving a gift. We do not want to discourage the kindness of our students (such as in offering handmade items that they have created for their teachers). However, due to the potential for conflicts of interest (such as with regard to grading, student promotions, awards, etc.)—as well as the potential for inappropriate “competition” among parent gift-givers, faculty and staff members are not permitted to accept gifts that are reasonably estimated to be worth in excess of \$25. For example: A \$25 gift certificate to a bookstore may be accepted; an all-expenses-paid vacation and use of a summer house may not be accepted.

Larger gifts may be received only when they are given by official groups (parent council, class parents, parents of a sports team, etc.), the identity of the givers is not attached to specific sums of money/goods, and there are no restrictions on who might participate in the giving.

Philanthropy in our school

Annual Fund

The Waldorf School of Princeton, like all non-profit, independent schools, relies on a combination of tuition and fund-raising to support its annual operating budget. The Annual Fund receives annual gifts from parents, alumni, grandparents, WSP employees, and friends to support such areas as academic, artistic, and athletic programs, faculty professional development, campus maintenance, and tuition assistance. Since tuition covers approximately 80 percent of annual operating expenses, gifts to this fund are essential.

Fund-raising and Donations

All class or individual fund-raising activities must be approved in advance by the development office. All donations, restricted or non-restricted, whether in cash or in non-monetary assets, and proceeds from all fund-raising activities, should be given to the development or business office. Donations may not be made to, or accepted by, any other school personnel.

For questions about the Annual Fund or other fund-raising activities, please contact the Development Office.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer participation is important to the spirit and vitality of our school. It builds a strong sense of community and gets our work accomplished. It also serves as an important role model for our students. There are many ways to get involved that match your interests, talents, and availability, and all are welcome. Please contact the Development Office.

Community Activities & Events

Dates and times for activities and events at the school as well as other pertinent information appear in the Willow and the school website.

Special Events

- These include:
- Open Houses, for prospective families interested in our Early Childhood or Grade School programs
- Information Evenings, open to the parents of current and prospective students
- Lectures featuring speakers who address topics pertinent to Waldorf education
- Grandparents' and Special Friend's Day
- Fairs and Festivals
- School assemblies, held twice a year. These are an opportunity for the grade school students to present what they have been learning in their respective classes, often in the form of poems, songs, and dances.
- Grade School Class Plays

Festivals

The Waldorf School of Princeton, like other Waldorf Schools, is attended by children of many different religious and cultural backgrounds. Although anthroposophy, the philosophy underlying Waldorf Education, seeks to honor the spiritual nature of the human being, there is no attempt to teach a particular religious view. The school strives to awaken and foster the child's natural reverence for the wonder and beauty of life.

Seasonal festivals are observed in the classroom and at school assemblies. The curriculum itself, through Hebrew Scriptures, Norse, Indian, Egyptian, Roman and Greek mythologies, provides many opportunities to share other religious traditions in the classroom.

The following are some of the seasonal festivals we celebrate:

Autumn

- Michaelmas: at this autumn celebration of St. Michael, stories of courage are told for Grades 1-8 and special autumn activities for the Early Childhood classes.
- Martinmas: children from nursery to grade two make lanterns and sing lantern songs for weeks before this magical mid-autumn event. Families and parents join together by class at the main campus for a story. Then they light their lanterns and venture out winding along the property's paths to illuminate the cold, dark night.

Winter

- Winter Garden is usually held early in December. Accompanied by gentle music, children from nursery to grade two walk one by one into a spiral path of evergreen boughs carrying a candle to “light the way” as dusk gives way to Winter darkness.
- St. Nicholas Day (December 5th or 6th): St. Nicholas visits children from nursery to grade two.
- Hanukkah: candle lighting and other holiday traditions (songs, latkes, etc.).
- Christmas: during the final week before the December holiday, the faculty often presents a play from the medieval *Oberufer* trilogy for the entire Waldorf community and friends.

Spring

- The May Fair is a celebration of spring with music, Maypole dancing, food and children’s crafts and games.

Some in-school celebrations or events are open for sharing with parents. On these occasions your class teacher will solicit help for activities connected to the event. Other events are sometimes held only for the students and teachers. We ask that you respect these more intimate celebrations.

The Windy Hill Store

The school store is a resource where the families of the school and interested members of the community can purchase a variety of items that support the school’s mission. Items available often include books about Waldorf education, children’s books, art supplies, dyed silks, handmade items, woolens, and more. Check the calendar on the school website for the store’s regular days and hours.