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# PARENT HANDBOOK

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Grade 1 - 8

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2016-2017

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**Welcome**

Welcome to the Waldorf School of Orange County. The role of parents in the life of our school is a vital one. The participation of all parents is important, not simply because we are a non-profit endeavor, but because we are building a community and demonstrating this community-building spirit to our children.

The most successful educational experience for the child comes when home life and school life work in a harmonious fashion to provide a solid base from which the child can venture into the world. Many recent studies indicate that the key to improving student achievement is the involvement of parents or the student’s family members in the educational process. With the goal of understanding the child’s experience, either at school (for the parents) or at home (for the teacher), regular communication is essential. It is the parents who are responsible for bringing their children to school well-rested and well-nourished for learning.

By contributing to the healthy functioning of our school, whether through volunteer time, specific skills, or imagination, our parent body can support our school with its cooperative effort. The value of our community-at-large is the sum total of all its parts. So, we welcome you and encourage you to become a valuable, integral part of our school and truly experience Waldorf education at its finest.

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

WSOC is committed to providing academic excellence through awakening in our students genuine enthusiasm, an interest in the world, a love of learning and a sense of purpose in life. The Waldorf curriculum meets the student’s age-related capacities and develops the student’s initiative, creativity, critical-thinking, and self-reliance. Our educational approach encourages balance, engaging the student cognitively, emotionally and actively across all disciplines. We recognize and welcome the unique gifts brought by each student.

## **WALDORF EDUCATION**

### **History of Waldorf Education**

From its beginnings some 85 years ago, Waldorf education has become one of the fastest growing independent school systems in the world. The foundations of this educational impetus were laid by Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian scientist, philosopher, and educator widely known in Europe and increasingly studied in America.

In 1919, at the request of a leading German industrialist, Steiner opened the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart for the children of workers at the Waldorf-Astoria Company. International recognition for the school came quickly, and similar schools started up in other European countries; within a decade the first American Waldorf school was launched in New York City. Today there are over 1000 Waldorf schools in 40 countries with over 145 schools in North America.

Each school is in every sense independent, with ties neither to church nor state. The schools are linked with one another only through commonly shared educational ideas and approaches. In this country, many belong to the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). WSOC has achieved Full Membership Status with AWSNA.

### **History of Our School**

Our school began with a small group of parents who shared a strong concern for educating their children in the most positive way. These committed individuals had been involved together in a study group. As the idea of a Waldorf school began to germinate, a Board of Trustees was formed in the fall of 1987, and the first kindergarten class formed in January 1988. A room was rented in a church in Costa Mesa, where five children joined our founding teacher, Phyllis Gilmer. That room was shared with a twelve-step group, which meant that Phyllis and her parents had to daily construct and deconstruct the kindergarten room. As anyone who has ever been in one of our rooms knows, this is no small task. This kind of service is indicative of the level of involvement we have fostered ever since.

### **Rudolf Steiner**

Rudolf Steiner developed Waldorf education. He was born in Austria in 1861. He was a prominent figure in the cultural life of central Europe. In 1902, he played a key role in the Theosophical Society, whose basic beliefs were that human beings have an eternal spiritual essence and that the aim of our evolution is the discovery of this divine nature. Steiner moved on from the Theosophical Society in 1909, lecturing and writing on a variety of topics, including philosophy, religion, history and art. He soon attracted a large, international and sophisticated following.

Rudolf Steiner firmly believed that the material view of the world that underlies modern life is both incorrect and disastrous. It is incorrect in that it is blind to the reality of the spiritual world, which creates, nurtures, surrounds and penetrates the visible world, and disastrous in that it causes much of the disorder and suffering of the modern age. Humanity must awaken, he said, to its own spiritual origin, nature and destiny, and must re-create all of modern life and society with this spiritual nature in mind. Only then will the fulfillment of the individual and the peace and harmony of society be possible.

Emil Molt, who owned the Waldorf-Astoria factory, commissioned Rudolf Steiner to develop a school for the children of his factory workers. Steiner saw an opportunity to design a system of education that would meet the spiritual needs of humanity. This was a time in Europe when tensions were mounting, as the industrial revolution was leading man into a more mechanized role. He believed there was a need for a school that would educate individuals who were able to create a peaceful and just society. His hope was to build a model for education in a new epoch of history.

In autumn 1919, the first “Waldorf” school opened in Stuttgart with eight teachers and 175 pupils, mostly the children of Waldorf-Astoria factory employees. The curriculum included activities for the hands, the heart and the mind. It contained strong moral and spiritual elements. The school’s explicit purpose was to create free, creative, independent, moral and happy human beings.

### **Aspects of Waldorf education**

- Emphasize the harmony of nature
- Respect the individuality of the student
- Foster self-determination in the student
- Develop the student’s creative and critical abilities
- Stress cooperation rather than competition
- Stress the active involvement (as contrasted with passive learning) of students in a wide range of educational situations.

Waldorf education emphasizes the need for children to fulfill their childhood during each developmental phase without being hurried ahead into the abstract materialistic thinking. This is supported by many of today’s foremost educators who are now seeing developmental problems as the result of early academics and influence of the media. Age-appropriate curriculum is an educational concept gaining wide acceptance.

Waldorf education aims to support a harmonious development of three faculties—willing, feeling and thinking—taking full account of the physical and emotional growth phases of the child. There is a particular emphasis on the development of the will (determined purpose or self-discipline) during the first seven years of home and kindergarten education. The children learn most by what is worthy of imitation through activities. During the second seven years, the feeling life of the child is nurtured through the guiding authority of the teacher, integrating artistic, imaginative elements into the learning process. During the third seven years, the faculty of thinking is more directly emphasized by challenging the adolescents to individual judgment, a quest for truth and to more conscious participation in their education.

It is recognized that Steiner developed a new view of life and our place in it. He recognized the individual as body, soul, and spirit. Each component is considered in determining the needs of the child, and the curriculum is adjusted accordingly. A Waldorf school begins and ends with the children enrolled at any given time. Our teachers do not seek to impress a rigid set of structures on the children, but to recognize what their children are ready for and most eager for. In a like manner, the students respond to what is placed before them hungrily, with a natural love of learning.

Each subject is introduced to the child when he or she is most ready for it, and in a manner to which the child is naturally receptive at that stage. Year by year, the content of the curriculum expands with the ever-growing powers of the child, nourishing the inner life successively through stories from folk tales, legends, myths and history and nourishing the outer life with the development of individual and social skills.

**Waldorf schools seek to engender in each student a desire:**

- to become an enthusiastic contributor to society.
- to face the challenges of life with creativity, optimism and flexibility.
- to be able to express his or her maximum intellectual, artistic and practical potential with strength and sensitivity.
- to be able to cope with the complexities of social and family life.
- to act out of freedom in the spiritual path chosen.

*The child goes forth each day  
And what he sees that day,  
that he becomes.*

—WALT WHITMAN

**WALDORF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

As is customary in Waldorf schools, Waldorf School of Orange County is governed by a three-fold structure comprised of the Board of Directors, which is responsible for legal and financial matters, the College of Teachers, which is responsible for pedagogical matters, and the Administration, which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.

**The College Of Teachers**

The College of Teachers is the guardian of the curriculum, the identity and the mission of the school. This is the body which makes final decisions about which teachers join or leave the school and which programs are offered (within budgetary limits). The College meets weekly and works collaboratively and through consensus. Its primary mission is to nurture and support the ideals of Waldorf Education within the school. It is comprised of experienced teachers, who have been at the school for at least several years, and others who may be invited to join.

**The Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is comprised of parents, alumni, faculty, and friends of the school who have been invited to join as members, plus one Parent Representative from the Parent Association. All four administrative directors sit on the board on a rotating basis.

The Board supports the work of the administration and the College of Teachers by discussing and making recommendations on budgets and finance, legal matters, fundraising and development, and long-range planning. Regular members serve for a term of three years. The Board has several standing committees, including a Finance Committee and a Strategic Planning Committee, and may establish temporary committees and Task Forces to accomplish special tasks. Members of the community are welcome to refer matters of concern to the Board through written communication with the chairperson. Board minutes are kept in a file in the Main Office and are available to the community.

### **Administration**

Professional administrative staff brings support and oversight to a wide range of administrative and business matters. The Administration carries out the necessary day-to-day business activities of coordinating and operating an organization. The Administration has five main roles: Business Manager, Development Director, Admissions Director, School Administrator and Faculty Coordinator. These five positions carry out the decisions and standing policies of the Board and College of Teachers and strive to serve the needs of the faculty, parents, and students.

### **The Parent Community**

The community of parents consists of all parents who have children attending the school. The parents support their children and the teachers by learning about Waldorf education and by striving to bring their home life into harmony with the school life. Each family is expected to participate so that the responsibilities and accomplishments of the school are shared by all. As a community we provide support to each other as parents who share the goals of Waldorf education.

The Parent Community provides vital support to the operation of the school by participating in various volunteer committees as well as by lending assistance to events such as: Festivals, Faculty and Staff Appreciation Day and Parent Education.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **General School Policy Statement**

- To create an environment that nurtures the development and growth of the child in order to enable each to realize his/her full potential.
- To respect and safeguard the professional status of teachers.
- To strive for cooperation between teachers, other educators, parents and children.
- To apply the latest findings from education, psychology and related fields as the College of Teachers shall consider relevant to the improvement of learning within the school.
- To stimulate public interest in education in general, especially approaches to learning indicated by the published works of Rudolf Steiner.



- To provide for the delivery and holding of lectures, games, concerts, dramatic or other entertainment, exhibitions, public or other meetings, classes and conferences directly or indirectly to advance the cause of education.

**Consistent with the preceding policies:**

- the school shall be non-denominational
- the school shall be coeducational
- there shall be no principal or head master
- there shall be no school uniform
- there shall be individual assessment and noncompetitive examination
- there shall be no corporal punishment
- the school shall not discriminate against any student for any reason, and every effort shall be made to integrate a student within the school.

**Standards of Student Conduct**

This policy is intended to set the standards of student conduct that are necessary to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunity presented at the Waldorf School of Orange County. By being enrolled in this school, students and their parents acknowledge these standards and agree to abide by them and to cooperate in their application. These are guidelines, and are not meant to be exhaustive in every detail. The Waldorf School of Orange County and the faculty reserve the right to apply these standards with the authority and judgment inherent within its jurisdiction, as indicated in the enrollment agreement.

Students at the Waldorf School of Orange County are expected to meet the following standards of conduct:

1. Students should demonstrate self-respect by ensuring their conduct enables them to take full advantage of school. This is accomplished by keeping up with class assignments, by following instruction and by being on time for class. Examples of conduct that is not tolerated include: the possession or use of drugs, tobacco products or alcohol on campus or at any school function; disruptions in class; or the unauthorized use of electronic devices which includes cell phones.
2. Students should demonstrate respect for teachers, staff and other adults. Speech and action should be appropriate. Foul or abusive language is not tolerated. Students should not leave class or school grounds without permission.
3. Students should demonstrate respect for other students. Aggressive or threatening physical behavior, including hitting, punching, pushing or kicking, is not acceptable, nor is foul or abusive language. Bullying in any form (see definition below\*) is not permitted. Weapons are not allowed on campus. Sexual behavior is not permitted, whether it is sexual harassment or sexual activity between students.
4. Students should demonstrate respect for property—the school’s, other students’, and their own. Destroying, harming, defacing or misusing school property or

property belonging to others is not tolerated. Stealing is unacceptable. Students are responsible to help maintain the campus and facilities.

\*Bullying is defined through the California Department of Education as follows:

*Bullying* is exposing a person to abusive actions repeatedly over time. Being aware of children's teasing and acknowledging injured feelings are always important. Bullying becomes a concern when hurtful or aggressive behavior toward an individual or group appears to be unprovoked, intentional, and (usually) repeated.

Bullying is a form of *violence*. It involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, with the more powerful child or group attacking those who are less powerful. Bullying may be *physical* (hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing), *verbal* (taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, threatening), or *emotional* (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, extorting, or intimidating). Bullying can occur face-to-face or in the online world.

Bullying is also one or more acts by a pupil or group of pupils directed against another pupil that constitutes sexual harassment, hate violence, or severe or pervasive intentional harassment, threats, or intimidation that is disruptive, causes disorder, and invades the rights of others by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment, and includes acts that are committed personally or by means of an electronic act, as defined.

An "electronic act" is defined as transmission of a communication, including, but not limited to, a message, text, sound, or image by means of an electronic device, including but not limited to, a telephone, wireless telephone or other wireless communication device, computer, or pager.

### **Discipline Policies and Procedures**

The philosophy on discipline emphasizes a positive approach, in which the student is gradually led towards an experience of self-discipline. We expect that students behave in a respectful way toward their teachers, adults, and classmates and toward the property of others. Each teacher is fully responsible for the discipline in his or her classroom. Students will be approached in a dignified manner and asked to comply with the standards of behavior. If unacceptable behavior continues, parents will be informed and a plan of action will be created. In cases of continuous problem behavior, a student might be put on detention, probation, suspension, and in severe cases, expulsion. Each case will be approached individually and worked out with the ideas of the child's development and environmental influences as references.

The goal in applying any form of discipline is to bring about correction of a behavior that does not meet the standards set forth above. The Waldorf School of Orange County reserves the right to apply discipline that, in the judgment of the faculty, is most appropriate to accomplish that goal. Each case will be approached individually and worked out with the ideas of the child's development and environmental influences as references. It is understood that the types of discipline will not be applied sequentially in every case. For example, although a probationary period may in some instances precede a suspension, a student may be suspended without probation if the faculty determines that circumstances warrant that action.

The types of discipline that the Waldorf School of Orange County may apply include, but are not limited to:

- Student is approached and reminded of the standards of behavior.
- Conflict resolution conversation/peer mediation with all concerned takes place.
- Notification of parents occurs and a plan of action is formulated.
- Detention is assigned (grades 4 – 8). This is a one-hour period from 3:00-4:00 P.M. during which the student will be assigned specific work and should have the opportunity to discuss the behavioral issue with the teacher. The child will be given a detention slip that has to be signed by a parent to acknowledge the reason for detention, as well as the time and date which detention is held. The signed slip must be returned to the detention supervisor teacher on the day of the detention. If the assigned date does not work for a possible excusable reason (e.g. doctor's appointments), the student should take responsibility to see the teacher to determine an alternative date to complete the detention. It should happen within three weeks from the originally assigned date.
- Probation— The teacher communicates with the parents and the child, to define the duration of the probationary period and the teachers' expectations during that period. If those expectations are not met, suspension or expulsion may follow.
- Suspension is a period in which the student is not allowed to come to school. A teacher may immediately suspend a student by sending that student home or by giving a suspension up to one day in length. Suspension for a period longer than one day must be approved by the College of Teachers.
- Expulsion is the decision to dismiss a student from the school. This decision is made by the College of Teachers with review by the Board of Trustees.
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### **Emergency Preparedness**

In the event of a disaster, the school has all needed supplies for up to 72 hours. We have on-hand: first aid, food, water, blankets and supplies. Our safety plan calls for drills and campus safety inspections at regular intervals, as well as CPR, First Aid and Incident Command training conducted every summer for all paid staff members. In addition, every classroom also has an emergency backpack filled with needed supplies, including the child's emergency information.

Each year the students are led through drills and briefed on how to respond and follow direction in the event of an emergency. The local fire marshal performs regular inspections for safety on and around our campus.

In the event of an emergency such as an earthquake, we will assess the situation at the school and, if phone service is available, we will activate our broadcast calling system to provide you with detailed information and instructions. If we ask that you come pick up the children or if phone service is down and you come to pick up your children, we have the following procedure in place for releasing students:

As you approach the school, there will be staff positioned at the end of Canyon Road directing traffic and letting you know where to park. You will then be guided to a release gate. At that gate you will give the name(s) of the child(ren) you are picking up and, while you sign off on the release form, a staff member will get the child(ren) and bring them to you. We will not allow parents on campus during this procedure as a measure to ensure all children are released appropriately. While there will be wait time involved with this procedure, it will nevertheless be the most efficient way to make sure that each and every child is accounted for and correctly released.

Please be aware that during this procedure we will NOT release your children to anyone whose name does not appear on your emergency list.

A copy of all emergency release forms are kept on file in our office, and a duplicate copy is kept in our disaster bin located on campus. It is imperative that you keep your emergency release form current. In the event of an emergency or disaster your child will **only** be released to those individuals who have been identified in writing on that form. In the case of an emergency, please follow the instructions of the person in charge when picking up your child.

### **CPS Protocol**

**In the event Child Protection Services and/or the police come to the school to see a student the following is the protocol in place:**

**A. If the student interviewed is a suspected victim of child abuse or neglect:**

- The agency has the right to interview the suspected victim on School premises during the school day. (Pen. Code § 11174.3(a).)
- The agency investigating the suspected child abuse is obligated to inform the student of his/her right to be interviewed in private or to select any school employee, or volunteer, to be present during the interview. (Pen Code § 11174.3(a).)
- If selected, the School employee or volunteer has the right to decline to participate.
- If the School employee or volunteer agrees to participate, he or she must maintain confidentiality. The purpose of his/her presence is to lend support to the child, not to participate in the interview. The School is permitted to require that the interview take place at a time when it is not an expense to the School. (Pen. Code § 11174.3(a).)
- Except when the student elects to have a School employee or volunteer present during the interview, School employees do not have the right to be present during the interview.
- The investigating agent may, in his/her discretion, permit a School employee to be present.
- If the police take the student victim into custody, the School should not inform the parents, and should provide the address and

telephone number of the student's parents/guardians to the police officer. (Ed. Code § 48906.)

**B. If the student interviewed is NOT the suspected victim of child abuse or neglect:**

- The School may release the student to be interviewed by law enforcement officials so long as the School acts within the proper standard of care. This would include ascertaining the identity and official capacity of the peace officer, the authority under which he/she acts, and the reason for his/her action.
- A minor's parents need not be notified before the police can question a minor who has been temporarily detained but not taken into custody for the purpose of identifying the minor as a suspect, obtaining his/her full name and date of birth. (34 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 93, 95 (1959).)
- The School must inform the student's parents if the student has been removed from school by law enforcement. (Ed. Code § 48906.)

**Informing the Parents:**

**A. In cases of suspected child abuse by the parent:**

- The school will not discuss with or inform the parents of the suspected victim of the report of child abuse, or that the report is being investigated by law enforcement or another agency. The police or other investigating agency should determine whether and when a parent should be notified of the interview or claim.

**B. In cases of suspected child abuse by an individual other than the parent:**

- The school will coordinate with the investigating agency to determine whether they would like the School to either inform or not inform the parents.

**Campus Safety Guidelines**

Waldorf School of Orange County maintains a "zero tolerance" policy toward weapons on campus.

The California Legislature amended *Education Code (EC)* Section 48915 (c) to fulfill the federal mandate. California law also adds a requirement for the mandatory suspension and the recommendation for expulsion of students who:

Possess, sell, or otherwise furnish a firearm  
Brandish a knife at another person  
Sell a controlled substance  
Commit or attempt to commit a sexual assault or sexual battery  
Possess an explosive

Additionally, Waldorf School of Orange County extends this zero tolerance policy to all weapons, defined as any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; airguns; pellet guns; BB guns. Devices or instruments having the appearance of a weapon including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or nonfunctional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon. Knives, belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc. shall be considered weapons if they are used to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

The safety of our students is of the highest priority. The College of Teachers and the Faculty are ultimately responsible for the supervision of students at all times. Students are to be brought to order before entering the classroom. The teacher must take attendance at the beginning of every lesson and post it outside the classroom for Administration to pick up.

Recess provides an opportunity for students to “let off steam” as well as interact socially. The students are encouraged to respect others’ personal boundaries, even while being spontaneous in their play. The Faculty is responsible for playground supervision at all times. The Faculty oversees the supervisory team, which has some discretion in their duties. However, we expect the following procedures to be adhered to at all times, in all areas of the school.

- Children are expected to treat themselves and others with respect.
- Children are expected to treat the school campus with respect.
- Shoving, pushing, or other rough play is discouraged.
- Rude or abusive language or behavior is unacceptable.
- Playground equipment is to be shared.
- Only balls and Frisbees are to be thrown outside, and only soft balls may be used.
- Sticks may be used for digging and building only.
- Permission from the class teacher is required before sports equipment may be brought from home.
- There are clear rules governing the use of all playground equipment.
- No one is permitted in the classrooms during recess time without a teacher in attendance.

- Children are expected to remain in the area designated for recess. Parking lots are off limits at all times during the school day. The school store and the office area require permission from a teacher or staff member.
- Children must stay within view of the yard supervisor and follow his or her instruction at all times.
- Chewing gum is not permitted at any time.
- The unauthorized use of any type of electronic equipment is not permitted on campus at any time.
- In case of an emergency, the office phone may be used.

The playground support team completes incident reports whenever an incident occurs ("incident" being defined as anything which would warrant the notification of the administrator or a parent).

### **Closed Campus Policy**

In the Waldorf curriculum the teaching is not limited to the classroom. The teachers need to feel free to take the students onto the playgrounds or walkways at any time. In light of this fact, and for the safety of our students, we would like the campus free of non-staff, non-students and non-volunteer parents during the school day. If you are on campus working as a volunteer, please sign in with the office before going onto the campus.

Please drop and/or pick up your children promptly to and from their classrooms and then either depart the campus or feel free to congregate near the Company of Angels to shop, partake in delicious baked goods and/or coffee and tea. Younger siblings of students are welcome to play in the gardens surrounding the Company of Angels with proper supervision but are not to be on campus at anytime during school hours. If you are waiting for a sibling that is in class until late dismissal, we ask that you use the play space near the Company of Angels, or may we suggest coordinating snacks and games at the adjacent Fairview Park. We encourage you, however, to make it a priority to return home when the school day is over.

For the safety of our children, the campus opens only at 8am at which time there will be yard supervision. The campus will close at 3:00pm, and the students remaining at school will be signed into day care. All students with parents not by their side will be signed into after care. This is important for the after care program to function and for our students to be safe.

Please be aware that the children are distracted by parents who arrive early for pick-up and wait outside the classroom. Please wait in the community area near the Company of Angels if you are here before the end of the school day. The same is true for morning drop-off, and we encourage you to take your conversations there after 8:30 A.M.

### **Respect Class Time**

Class time is a very special time for your child's class and teacher. Please respect that time and save communications with your child and/or the teacher until the end of the school day. The school campus is to be kept free of social gatherings and conversations.

Parents are encouraged to congregate in the area of the school store where coffee, tea and baked goods are available. This ensures a conducive learning environment for the children.

### **The Front Office**

The office is the hub of all school activity, around which teachers, volunteers, parents and prospective families converge. The office staff focuses on the business, communication and administrative needs of the school. To help the office staff function more efficiently in serving the community as a whole, we ask you to consider the following courtesies:

- Please respect the work environment and keep conversations low.
- As with any working environment, where office machinery is in use, please see that your children are supervised.
- The copy machines and general office facility are for school business only.
- Dogs are not permitted on campus.
- Smoking is not permitted on campus.
- Absences should be reported to the teacher by informing the school office. It is very helpful for the teacher to know the reason and probable length of the student's absence.
- The office cannot relay messages to children or make car-pool or after-school arrangements (apart from their normal interaction with the After care staff). Please do not call upon the office to relay messages except in cases of real emergency. This enables the office staff to stay on task without constant interruption to their workday.

*Updated school rosters, committee listings and board member listings are available from the front office upon request.*

### **Punctuality**

Please do whatever you can to ensure that your child is punctual and you are not rushing her/him to school every morning. Young children learn through imitation of the adults and when they see us striving to be punctual, they will begin to realize its importance. School starts at 8:30 a.m. Try to arrive 5 minutes earlier so that the children can visit the bathroom, get a drink of water, etc. before the bell rings. The children feel left out and uneasy if they aren't there to start the day with everyone else. At pick-up time in the afternoon, children that remain 15 minutes after school dismissal time will be escorted to after care.

There may be special regulations, especially for the higher grades.

### **Attendance**

Good attendance is necessary for good learning. When children are absent, even for one day, they miss something and feel a loss. However, when your child is not feeling well or is ill, please keep her/him at home. The children need the loving, nurturing care of home at such times, and we wish to avoid infecting other classmates. When a child is absent, please call the office.



Please do not plan your vacations to include Fridays or Mondays. We want the children to feel that school is important. If circumstances necessitate a prolonged absence, please consult with your child's teacher in advance. As with most tuition-based schools, we cannot, under normal circumstances, make tuition adjustments for such absences.

### **Dress Code**

The dress code is an outward expression of the feelings of courtesy and respect that all members of the school community have for each other, and for the school. Through it, distractions are minimized so that the students are better able to focus on their education rather than on commercial, political or fashion statements.

Physical warmth is vital to the healthy development of the child. Layering is wise.

- Hair must be short or pulled back from the face, leaving the eyes uncovered. No hats and head coverings are to be worn indoors unless for religious reasons.
- Functional footwear is to be worn every day, and for games lessons athletic shoes and pants/shorts are required.
- Clothes should be clean, comfortable, and in good repair.
- Clothing with cartoon characters, monsters, demons, media-oriented images/slogans and negative imagery is not allowed.
- No spaghetti straps, no exposed undergarments.
- No short shorts or short skirts.
- Raingear is required if the student wants to go outside on rainy or muddy days.

Consequences for dress code infractions are at the discretion of the class teacher. Please be supportive of your class teacher's requests.

For comparison purposes here are the dress standards as written in the high school handbook:

### **HS Dress Standards**

A student's appearance is expected to support a mood of serious academic and artistic work. Appropriate dress in an educational setting means simple, neat, clean clothing that does not call unnecessary attention to the student, or detract from either the student or the educational process. Individual expression needs to be balanced by support for the atmosphere needed for learning.

We ask parents to assist their daughter or son in being appropriately dressed for school.

Visible undergarments will not be tolerated, and may result in disciplinary action. Beyond this, specific clothing requirements or restrictions may be instituted by individual teachers based on health and safety precautions for their classes.

## **Electronic Media and Television**

Waldorf education seeks to nourish and develop each child's creative capacities. The creative faculty is of profound importance to each human being's ability to resolve life's riddles, to take up the tasks of destiny, and to grow and live in a spirit of fulfillment and positive contribution.

The young child's ability to picture, to envision and to see inwardly is crucial to the development of creativity. This delicate faculty is overwhelmed and eventually crushed by the constant bombardment of media images. Chief among them is television. In the process, the child is also taught a passive relationship to the world (outer stimulation and inner emptiness) that is very similar to that of drug or alcohol addiction. Children are also unnecessarily exposed to much that is not appropriate for their age. Recent studies also show the debilitating and distorting effects of television and other media watching (regardless of content) on the nervous systems of growing children and its contribution to learning disabilities.

As with all Waldorf schools, our faculty is extremely concerned about the effect of television/media on the young child. We prefer that our students not be exposed to television, videos, computers and computer games. The developing child is simply too young and too open to cope with the physical effects of these electronics and their substitution of electronic for human voices. Excessive screen time contributes toward nervousness, inability to concentrate, anti-social behavior, a dimming of the imagination, and a general passiveness that is deadening and harmful to learning. The younger the child, the more vulnerable s(he) is.

The following guidelines are based on our own experiences and observations at the Waldorf School of Orange County. We are convinced that television/media has an adverse effect on child development.

*We urge you to institute the following guidelines:*

Pre-kindergarten through third grade -- no television. It is in these years that the children initiate the action that they are bombarded by, and it inhibits their creativity and discovery. The images remain with the children and become their class images during the imaginative content of the main lesson.

Fourth grade and older -- no television during the school week. Avoid cartoons and other animated programs. Avoid programs that are over-stimulating and those that feature violence. The child is in the hands of your discretion. Please preview material for its age-appropriateness.

*"The radio is already breeding a generation who cannot listen, and there is a real danger that television will make a generation who cannot see."*

—A.C. HARWOOD -1940's

### **ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES ON CAMPUS:**

- All electronic devices (including but not limited to: cell phones, ipods, gameboys etc.) *will be confiscated if heard or seen* and must be picked up by the parent in the front office.

- If you have a need to contact your child/children during the school day you must call the front office and the information will be relayed to the student in a manner appropriate to the urgency of the call. For students in aftercare they can be reached by calling the main phone line and entering the extension:

Little aftercare – 106

Big aftercare - 214

### **Monday Mornings**

Please plan your weekends so that you are home early on Sunday and your child can have a "settling-in" time. Your child cannot be alert, calm, and fully receptive on Monday mornings if (s)he is still recovering from a weekend full of stimulating, over-tiring activities. The lesson planned for Monday morning is crucial to all that happens during the remainder of the week, and it is important that your children be fully rested and ready to receive it properly.

### **Family Sabbatical and Leave of Absence Policy**

If a parent will be taking a professional sabbatical that would require the child to be withdrawn from the school:

The parent must write a letter to the school informing the length of the sabbatical and stating the family's intention for reenrollment. The College would then decide what would be needed for reenrollment (i.e. full application, updated records) AND if a spot would be held for the child's return.

If the student will be leaving the class due to travel (leave of absence) for a month or longer with the intention to return to the school:

The parent must write a letter to the school informing the reasons and length of LOA. The College would then decide what would be needed for reenrollment (i.e. full application, updated records) AND if a spot would be held for the child's return. If there is a waiting list for the class to which the student would be returning, then the College may request the family to pay all or part of the tuition during that missed time to hold the spot.

### **Health**

If your child is sick, especially with contagious diseases such as conjunctivitis, flu, or a bad cough, please keep him/her home until the illness is no longer in the contagious stage. Sick children will be sent home. If your child is diagnosed with mumps, chicken pox, strep throat or staph infections please notify the office. This will benefit your child as well as his/her classmates. Children who have experienced high fevers should not be sent back to school until 24 hours have passed since the fever has abated.

Head lice have no respect for age, education or economic situation. If you discover head lice on your child, please tell his/her teacher immediately. Conversely, if head lice are discovered in your child's class, you will be notified at that time. In any case, the school's policy follows the regulations of the California Department of Health.

If a student is unable to participate in the full curriculum due to mental and/or physical challenges, the school requires a physician's note indicating the diagnosis as well as specifics of the student's capabilities and limitations.

If the student's inability to attend the full curriculum continues for an extended period of time, there will be a review process to determine the best course of action.

### **Driving on Campus**

When driving on campus for any reason, please be aware that children may be found unexpectedly in parking areas or drives. Please reduce your speed and exercise extreme care and caution while entering, exiting and driving in the parking lot. The curbs in front of the kindergarten and administrative offices are strictly no parking any time. These are fire lanes and must be kept clear for emergencies. Please do not park in front of the gates near the kindergarten curb as this blocks trash pick-up. Parking spaces on the east side of the lot (against the Eurythmy Hall) are reserved for faculty, staff and those who will not be moving their cars during drop-off and pick-up times. At drop-off, please pull up to the red curb in front of the administrative offices and have your child(ren) enter through the main gate. If you choose to park, there are spaces in the main lot, in the north lot in dry weather, marked spaces on Canyon and in the neighborhood. Please aid in ensuring safe and efficient parking and pickup by driving with a courteous and careful attitude.

### **Carpooling**

Most parents find carpools invaluable in transporting children to and from school. While the office maintains information on parents in all areas of the county, the program itself is organized and administered by parents working outside the aegis of the school itself. For reasons of insurance and liability, our school cannot be directly or officially involved in carpooling to and from the campus. We expect that car-poolers are aware of local seat belt laws and that young children are not seated with an airbag. Be aware that it is the individual liability insurance carried by the driver that will apply to your child in the event of an accident.

### **Photography and Videotaping at School Events**

Class plays and all school assemblies are part of the curriculum. They are presented to the community as a gift from the children. Class plays and assemblies should be treated with the reverence in which they are given. All videotaping or photography needs to be approved by the teacher prior to the day of the performance.

### **Social Networking Photo and Personal Identification Posting Policies**

There are times when parents wish to post photos of a child on a social networking site to share with others. Parents may choose to post photos of their own child at school or on field trips, but to respect the privacy and confidentiality of other enrolled children, parents are not at liberty to post photos of other children on social networking sites, even if those children are photographed during play with their own child. No one is allowed to post identities or personal information regarding staff, children, or parents on any social networking site.

## **Medication**

If your child is to take any medication at school, we must have your, and your physician's, express written permission detailing the method, amount and time schedule by which the medication is to be taken. Medications are substances used to prevent, diagnose, cure or relieve signs and symptoms of disease. The Education Code regulations for medication administration in school include over-the-counter products. The school must have written permission from the parent, as well as written permission from the physician, for all medications given in school. The school must have a "Medication in School" form filled-out for **each** child requiring medication during school hours. Without this documentation, the school is unable to dispense any medication. It is essential that the child's name be on the original container. No medication will be administered from anything other than the original container. Similarly, if two siblings require identical medication, they each need their own separate, original prescription or container with his/her name on it.

## **Lost and Found**

It is the nature of childhood to freely unburden the body of unwanted clothes. Our lost and found is located near the family cubbies. Uncollected items are regularly donated to charity. Please check regularly if you lose something. As extra insurance, please label your children's clothing and accessories.

## **Fundraising**

The school conducts several fundraising events each year earmarked to support the general operating budget. Examples of fundraising events are: the Annual Gala/Auction, the Golf Tournament, and the Move-a-Thon. There are many different ways for a family to support each of these events, and any effort made toward the success of those fundraisers is greatly appreciated and highly needed.

Scrip is a very successful and user-friendly fundraiser which makes a large contribution to our operating budget each year. Generating \$275 of Scrip profit per year is part of each family's enrollment agreement. Profits beyond \$275 per family are split between your child's class (or children's classes if multiple children are enrolled) and the general school operating budget.

Annual Giving is the cornerstone of the school's giving program. Each of our families is asked to make a heartfelt gift to the Annual Giving Campaign each year, in addition to paying tuition. The goal is to achieve 100% participation by all our attending families AND for these gifts to collectively make a significant contribution to the Operating Budget each year. When the Annual Giving ask is made, we request each family to thoughtfully consider their ability to make a gift that is significant for their own family, and then to make the gift promptly. Gifts may be made in lump sums or monthly installments. A volunteer team of Annual Giving callers will try to reach any families who have not yet contributed, in an effort to reach 100% participation. Please recognize these volunteer callers are from our own parent community, they have already made a gift, and they are working on the school's behalf.

Occasionally the school embarks on a capital improvement, such as a new building, or a large piece of equipment, that cannot be achieved within the scope of the general

operating budget. The school will launch a capital campaign in order to raise funds to fill the need.

### **Class or group fundraisers and philanthropy**

Classes (grades 1 – 12) and school groups (sports team, spirit team, or a club) may conduct fundraisers to benefit their class or group. Funds raised by classes are generally saved and used toward either the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or 12<sup>th</sup> grade class trip. Funds raised by a school group could be used for something such as a new uniform. All classes or groups wanting to conduct a fundraiser, must first submit a proposal to the DOMG (Development and Outreach Mandate Group). There is a form requiring answers to specific questions prior to the consideration of any proposal. It is the DOMG's goal to honor each class' or group's idea for fundraising, while balancing the needs of the whole school, and being sensitive about the numbers of times and manner in which we ask our parent community to support various endeavors.

With the approval of the teacher leading the class or group and the DOMG, classes or school groups, may also raise funds for the benefit of outside philanthropic causes. (Example – collecting canned goods during the holiday season).

### **Individual fundraising**

We encourage every student or parent who is fundraising for causes near and dear to their heart. While we would greatly enjoy supporting and promoting each of your individual efforts, it simply is not possible. The school is already managing a large fundraising effort, while balancing the fundraising needs of our classes and school groups. Please do not use the physical campus or the school-wide or "class of" email rosters for solicitation of your individual fundraising efforts. This is not to say that you cannot ask your WSOC friends to support your cause via other methods. It is our desire for you and your chosen charities to be successful. Thank you for your understanding.

### **Party Invitations**

If your child wishes to invite all of the children in his or her class to a party, you are welcome to distribute the invitations at school. However, if invitations are selective, we ask that they be extended away from school. Socialization is very important in these early years. Children are sensitive to feeling left out.

### **After care**

Although the main school program finishes by 2:50 P.M. each day (there are exceptions in higher grades), an after care program is in place that provides a secure environment for the students to continue playing and working until 5:00 p.m. After care is included in the tuition up until 2:50pm for grades to accommodate regularly scheduled early release days.

After care is not a continuation of the main school program, but seeks to provide safe and caring surroundings where constructive, artistic activities plus reading and play are encouraged. There is a separate "Little" after care, for children in kindergarten, while

the grades have an opportunity to catch-up with their homework at study hall in our "Big" after care.

- All children on the school grounds after school are expected to be with their parents or in After care. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- Parents are given a grace period of twenty minutes to pick-up their children after school.
- For children not picked up by 5pm there is a \$1 per minute charge for any time after 5pm.

***"Little" After care – to reach little aftercare enter ext: 106 from the main phone line.***

After care is available for children who have reached a minimum age of 4 years 9 months. Kindergarten will be in "Little After care" until 4:00pm (the hour of 3pm – 4pm requires an advanced reservation).

***"Big" After care - to reach big aftercare enter ext: 214 from the main phone line.***

First grade through eighth grade students will be together in "Big" after care, supervised by one after care supervisor and an after care assistant. There is a regular program of crafts and activities both within each day and throughout the week. Older children have the opportunity to take part in study hall to catch-up with their homework. During this time the younger children in "Big" after care are invited to join in crafts and creative play activities. Snack is provided for all children who stay past 4:00 p.m.

**Hours:** After care is provided to Waldorf students each afternoon between 1:10 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. **All children left unattended on campus 15 minutes after the end of the school day will be signed into after care.**

**Cost:** The cost of after care is determined annually. Please consult the tuition fees schedule. The hourly fee will accrue to the account of any student signed into after care, even if the student is only in after care for a few minutes. If a student is in a carpool and the carpool driver is late, resulting in a child being signed into after care, the responsibility for the after care cost rests with that student's parents. Any disputes must be worked out between the carpool participants. Accounts not current may prohibit a student from the privilege of attending After care.

**If you would like to use the After care Program, here are a few things you will need to know:**

- After care is only for children who are at least 4 years, 9 months old.
- Please allow time for your child to clean up when you arrive; all children are expected to clean up after themselves. This fosters a sense of responsibility.
- Children will be released from the program only to persons listed on the emergency form filled out by the parents at the beginning of the term.

- After care ends at 5:00 p.m. If you are late, please call (949) 574-7775 and enter extension 214. There will be an additional fee for late pick up.
- Parents who fail to adhere to the fee payments, policies or procedures may be requested to leave the program.

### ***Discipline in After care***

The philosophy on discipline emphasizes a positive approach, in which the student is gradually led towards an experience of self-discipline. We expect students to behave in a respectful way towards their after care providers, adults, their classmates and towards the property of others. Students will be approached in a dignified manner and asked to comply with the standards of behavior. Unacceptable behaviors in our after care programs are constant disruption to the program, inflicting harm on others, not following school guidelines, running away from after care and/or leaving after care without permission. If unacceptable behavior continues, parents will be informed and a plan of action will be created. In cases of continuous problem behavior, a student might be put on detention, probation, suspension, and in severe cases, expulsion. In cases that call for suspension or expulsion, the College of Teachers will be consulted. Kindergarten parents should also refer to the Kindergarten Parent Handbook.

## **LINES OF COMMUNICATION**

Communication is the key element in any relationship, personal or professional. How we speak to each other, listen to each other and understand each other determines how well we live and work together. Our school consists of an intricate network of relationships. (For example, parent and child, teacher and child, parent and teacher and parent and parent, to name just a few.)

To meet one on one or in a group to share, learn, support and face challenges are central to developing a healthy community. Through regular meetings such as class evenings, parent/teacher conferences, information evenings, workshops and the weekly newsletter, the Waldorf School of Orange County has, over the years, established different channels of communication. These channels of communication are a means to ensure that all the members of the community are informed about and can participate in the life of the school. An important consideration, for all of us, is to imbue our communications with an attitude of interest and respect.

As a school, the focus of our work is within the classroom and what happens between the child and the teacher. Mutual respect and ease of communication between parent and teacher is the greatest support for developing healthy teacher/student relationships.

### **Classroom Questions**

Any questions or concerns regarding the classroom need to be taken up with the teachers involved at the earliest possible opportunity. If you feel that your question or concerns have not been resolved, you need to bring them to the attention of the College chairperson (in the event the class teacher *is* the college chairperson the concern can be brought to any other college member).



### **College of Teachers and Board of Trustees**

If you still do not feel that your questions or concerns have been addressed you are encouraged to write a letter to the College of Teachers and/or the Board of Trustees. We request that communications be made in writing and only use email for informational purposes. If one wants a response, email does not lend itself to dialog. Please submit your concern in writing.

### **General Questions**

Questions concerning events, committee work, enrollment and billing procedures, after-school care and items for the weekly newsletter should go to the front office and/or administrator.

### **E-Mail Policy**

The school roster and class e-mails are for school-related business only. E-mails sent to College members should *only be for informational purposes*. If you have concerns it is requested that you speak directly with the teacher or college chair.

### **Ombudsperson**

S(he) stands ready to help you should you reach an impasse in conflict resolution or become frustrated with an aspect of your school life. Please note that the ombudsperson serves best as a later recourse, after normal channels and options have been explored.

### **Publications**

The weekly newsletter is our primary means of communication within the school community. This publication is intended to help keep parents informed about school activities and upcoming events. It is also used as a vehicle to further educate our families about Waldorf education. Please contact the office for guidelines and schedules for submissions. All communications must be pre-approved by the College of Teachers to assure that the content is appropriate to our school's goals and philosophy. Newsletters are sent via e-mail to the entire school community once a week.

### **Room Representatives**

Room representatives serve as the helpmates of the class teacher. They help the teacher with communications to the parents of children in the class, preparations for class meetings and organizational tasks for class trips.

Room representatives have the following responsibilities:

1. Attending all class meetings of the class for which you are the rep (varies from one meeting per term to one meeting per month, depending on the class).
2. Transferring information back and forth between the class and the Parent Association.
3. Conveying information about school events to parents in the class and delegating the responsibility for organizing your class' portion of the event to one of the parents in the class.

4. Educating themselves as to the organizational forms that exist within the school, the functioning of the bodies, and the procedures and policies of the school.
5. Supporting parents in the class who have questions or concerns about the school by directing them to the proper channels by which to get these matters resolved (see Lines of Communication).

## **CURRICULUM**

### **Academic Standards**

The Waldorf School of Orange County maintains high academic standards by:

- providing an example to the student which is worthy of imitation, by contributing to the moral and spiritual development of the students, as well as providing an inspiring education for the world and humankind
- encouraging the development of the emotional, intuitive, imaginative and physical areas of the student's being
- developing a love and respect for his or her teacher, the environment and the community as a whole, and good rapport between parent and teacher. This is to be achieved through activities such as seasonal festivals, plays, performances, parents and friends assisting in the school, and parents involved in fundraising
- striving for a high quality of work
- awakening in the student a sense of privilege and earnestness in their work
- encouraging a high level of confidence and level of personal development as a priority. The teacher must have clear perception of what each particular student requires
- awakening in the students the true meaning of education and inspiring them to view every moment of their lives as a furtherance of their education
- harmoniously weaving the arts and sciences into every aspect of the student's education
- establishing a facility able to demonstrate to the community a fully functional school for Waldorf education
- demonstrating a school administration organized through the cooperation of teachers, parents, Board of Trustees, local and state government entities

### **Eighth Grade Promotion Requirements**

- The policy of WSOC is that eighth graders must complete all work in all courses in order to be promoted.
- It is the responsibility of the student to know what the assignments are and do them. Teachers are not expected to re-issue 'lost' copies of assignments. Ignorance about assignments is not an excuse. "I never got it" is likewise not an excuse. Students should not leave school without making sure they have everything they need to complete their assignments.
- Teachers will tell the class when the assignments are due. Students must write the due date on all assignments. Likewise, assignments without names will not be counted.
- When students are absent, they must make up the missed work by the next class period, or it will be counted late. It is the responsibility of the student to find out what s/he missed while absent. In the event of long illnesses, the

student must go to the teacher and make a plan with new due dates for all missed work. These new agreed-upon dates count the same as the original ones did. (Parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders should be aware that WSOC does not expect its teachers to provide advance work for students who are taken on vacations outside of our own school's vacation time and would count work missed as late. Exceptions to this would be high school visitations, interviews, and bereavement leave.) Students may request extensions of due dates from teachers. These will be granted rarely, only for good reason, and well in advance of the due date, with a new date determined at the time the extension is given. No extensions will be granted on the date an assignment is due.

- Students must keep returned work in their binders or in some orderly way so that they can produce evidence that they had completed their work in the event that a dispute would arise.
- All late work must still be submitted to meet our promotion requirement.
- At the end of each month, all eighth grade teachers (including specialty teachers) will issue via email a notice, simply indicating the month, the student, the course and whether the student is at risk, at the time, of not being promoted. The class teacher will be 'cc-ed' on all such notices.
- Parents should first ask their sons and daughters whether work is up to date. If parents wish confirmation beyond their children's statements, they may email the teachers, who will indicate whether the student's work is current or not, but they may not be able to tell you the student's average at a moment's notice.

### **The Class Teacher**

Unique to Waldorf schools is the class teacher, who often remains with the class for up to eight years, and who looks after the health of the whole group as well as each individual child. This begins in the first grade and offers children continuity and a sense of security not routinely offered in other elementary school settings. The main lesson, a two-hour period at the beginning of the day, is taught in a block format, offering students an immersion into a subject for typically three to four weeks at a time. Teachers teach out of their own resources, enriched by research, on-going study and skills development.

In this way, the material is fresh and lives within the teacher, who is able to convey a passion about the subject that mere text learning cannot convey. We have been very fortunate to have such an experienced core of Waldorf teachers. Some have guided classes through prior eight-year terms. While the ideal is there for one teacher to take the class from first through eighth grade, sometimes in the best of all worlds this is not always possible.

### ***The Early Childhood Department: Playgroup, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten***

Young children are gifted with ability to explore and identify with world around them. We seek to enhance and nurture these qualities by creating a natural and warm environment worthy of imitation.

A comfortable structure is provided through the rhythmical ordering of daily activities. Plenty of time is given to play, both inside and outside. Playthings are natural and simple, allowing for the freedom of the child's imagination. Circle games and stories nourish the child's language and creative play and are a preparation for later learning. In addition, teachers and students engage in artistic experiences such as painting, cooking, baking, gardening, handwork, eurythmy and building.

The children discover and watch changes in nature. Seasonal and traditional festivals are prepared and celebrated. The Waldorf school strives to recognize the spirit in each child, the child's imitative openness to the world, and his/her natural sense of gratitude, wonder and reverence.

### **First Grade Readiness**

The First Grade Readiness procedure is to determine the child's developmental readiness for our first grade curriculum and is used in conjunction with teacher observation and classroom performance and behavior. It is a set of movements and exercises administered to each age-eligible\* kindergarden student projected to matriculate to first grade. Each child is observed by a team of teachers as he or she completes these tasks in a small group of four to five.

\*Child must turn 6 by June 1st of the year he/she is assessed.

### **The Grade School**

When the children leave the kindergarten and move into the grade school, they carry with them a reverent and loving experience of nature and humanity. In the grade school the content of the curriculum builds on what has gone before and unfolds in a way that is interesting and meaningful to the children of a particular grade because it addresses the inner changes they are experiencing. The children form a class community and travel the journey from childhood into adolescence together, guided by adults who strive for an understanding and oversight of their development from year to year.

### **First Grade – First Day**

The first day of school is a rite of passage and this will be honored with a simple ceremony in which each student will pass through an arbor into their classroom. Their class teacher will receive them with a small gift and will give the parent a flower. All subject teachers will be present to welcome the students to their classroom.

Later in the day the children will take part in the Rose Ceremony in which the senior class will present each child with a rose to welcome them into the learning community. This ceremony is for students and faculty only.

### **Care Group**

The Care Group consists of faculty members who are dedicated to helping those children whose individual academic, social or emotional challenges need support beyond what can be given by the class and specialty teachers. The members may include class teachers, specialty teachers, kindergarten teachers and the educational support teacher. The Care Group generally meets weekly. Results and decisions from the Care Group are shared with the wider faculty.

The support from the Care Group may include: child observation and study, meetings with families, reference lists of local therapies and referrals from our community, research of different therapeutic modalities and recommendations for parents and teachers to assist in fostering a positive learning environment for each child.

### **Festivals**

The Waldorf School of Orange County, like other Waldorf schools, does not seek to teach a particular religious view. Students from a wide range of religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are welcomed at the Waldorf School of Orange County, and differences are respected. Seasonal festivals are observed in the classroom and at school assemblies. The curriculum itself, through Old Testament studies, Norse, Indian, Egyptian, Roman and Greek mythologies, provides many opportunities to share a variety of religious traditions in the classroom.

We would like to acknowledge and share religious customs and celebrations enjoyed by our families. If you are interested in celebrating special holidays within your child's classroom, we encourage you to give suggestions to your child's teacher. Parent participation helps to make these festivals meaningful and special. Parents are welcome to keep their children home in observance of their own religious holidays.

In Waldorf schools we strive to bring a universal nature to our celebrations of festivals through their connection with the rhythms of the earth and cosmos. We feel that the ceremonies and rituals associated with them help reveal the deeper significance in many everyday occurrences. The living rhythms of the year, though taken up in each class in different ways, help provide a common foundation for the children.

The nature of festivals is universal. The teachers do not seek to explain all this to the children, but allow them to take these things quietly into their hearts. Children love preparing for the festivals by decorating the room, baking special treats, learning special songs, etc. Nature stories and special tales help bring deeper significance of the season to the children in a pictorial way.

### **How Can Parents Best Support Teachers and the Classroom Experience?**

As parents and teachers, we are joining together in special partnership for the growth and development of your child. As partners, we need to be in close touch. You are the "eyes and ears" at home as we, the teachers, are the "eyes and ears" at school. We are not asking that you turn your home into a Waldorf school. The individual home lives are as essential to the children's growth as the quality of education they receive at school. Here are a few ways of working together to support your child so s(he) may reap the most benefit from his/her school experience.

Learn about and embrace the principles of Waldorf education. Attend all class held meetings regularly to find out what is going on in the classroom. Attend parent study groups and parent information meetings. Communicate with teachers regularly if you have concerns and when you like what is going on. Create a home environment that supports what is taking place at school, by encouraging children to play imaginatively, and limiting media exposure to non-school nights, if at all.

Children, through the third grade, are developing their inner images. It is important that these images be of a beautiful and inspiring nature. Television, computer, video games and movies are a strong influence on inner imagery. No parent can control the images set forth by media exposure, even under the best of circumstances. Please moderate media viewing. It is highly advised that it not be used at all. Parents should limit screen time for older children and evaluate the appropriateness of movies with great care.

Make sure the children arrive at school on time and are **properly dressed for the weather**. Volunteer to assist with special activities such as class trips, plays and fund-raisers. Help with classroom projects: painting, decorating, cleaning and moving. Inform the teacher if anything special is going on with your child or if s(he) is going to be absent from school. Ensure that your child completes homework assignments. Provide a regular time and space for homework and musical instrument practice. Take an interest in all subjects, not just main lessons. Your interest in these subjects will communicate their importance to your child.

### **Rhythm in the Home Life**

*This article appeared in Leading Forth, a quarterly published by the Waldorf School of Baltimore. It is reprinted here with the author's permission. The author is a kindergarten teacher at the Baltimore school. She has since become a homemaker.*

Parents are entrusted with the years of childhood. One important part of the role is attending to the child's need for a regular rhythmic life. Just as in the passing of night and day, the rising and falling of the ocean tides, the body has a rhythm. Examples, which come first to mind, are the working of the heart and circulation, the breath and the lungs, a morning's waking and a night's sleep. In addition, each organ has its own rhythm vital to its healthy functioning. These steady contractions and expansions are a large part of what keeps the body in good order. This in turn helps a person remain contented and able to do his/her best, free from distractions.

Before birth the child changes rapidly and is given the protective outer structure of the womb and the rhythmic working of the mother's body. With the young child and the elementary school student this requirement for an outer structure continues to be vital to growth and emotional well-being. Learning that there is "a time for things" is a life lesson. Now is a time for you to play, now for a meal, now for homework and now to prepare for bed.

The rhythm then becomes a habit, is accepted and will eliminate many difficulties, struggles and arguments about eating and going to bed. Regularity should prevail in as many of the child's daily activities as possible. It is the key to establishing good habits for life.

In addition, children are always growing and their body rhythms are changing. Having a regular lifestyle helps the body through these changes, and like the womb, offers a stable environment. Children given this regular life feel confident about their world and are not worried by uncertainty.

With the elementary school student, parents and children can make a list together of general categories of what must happen in a single day. This list might include household chores, meals, free time, homework, family time, and bedtime. If you establish a bedtime first, from there you will have the number of hours in weekdays available to try to

accommodate everyone's needs. Each family is different, and it is important to take into consideration that uniqueness. It is not until that student is much older that he/she can fend off distractions and decide when and how long homework is to be done. Parents need to bring encouragement, enthusiasm and assistance to this important link in a child's school day. When the student has this example or "a time for all things" he/she will more readily be able to establish his/her own sense of time and timing.

This rhythmic structure imposed on a young child and imbued with the parents' love is a discipline, in the most positive sense of the word. The older child and student will transform this outer structure to an inner self-discipline in the years to come. Freedom is not without form, and one is truly free when one is not hampered by a disorganized life.

We must support all of this, by giving our children a strong feeling of rhythm at home as they grow up. If we examine our own lives we see the important role that rhythm plays. We sleep and wake, we breathe in and out, and we pass through the seasons again and again. We soon feel the detrimental effect of any disturbance to these rhythms: if breathing is interfered with, we panic and we lose our security. If we are deprived of sleep, we feel disoriented in the world. And so it is for our children. If their daily life is chaotic, for example when mealtimes are irregular, or they are looking after by lots of different people, they are more likely to become jumpy and unsettled as a result of having to adjust continuously to new situations.

For both children and adults modern life is lacking in rhythm. We are no longer affected, for example, by natural rhythms. And gone are many of the jobs that involve repeated rhythmical activity, so that children rarely watch cows being milked, butter churned or wool being spun. For us as parents, it is therefore really vital to try to build rhythm into our children's lives wherever we can. This can start with regular meal times and story times. We can help them develop a strong feeling for the days of the week and the weekend. We can do seasonal things with them, such as attending festival celebrations, taking note of the migrations of the birds and through the planting of bulbs in autumn. Lighting a candle before a meal or at bedtime, saying a simple grace or a bedtime prayer, helps children to find their place in the day. With older children it is helpful to do their music practice at the same time each day, to have a regular homework or reading time, a set bedtime and a particular job or task to carry out daily at a certain time.

Through such experiences, a real feeling of security is built up in the children so that they can move through the complex world in which they live feeling more confident and at ease, while they have greater forces available to them for the development of all their capacities. In bringing a flexible and creative rhythm into daily living, our children have a gift for their entire lives.

### **Evening and the Child**

In order that the children may fully partake in the school activities, parents are encouraged to protect their child's evening routine. To maintain a rhythm, let there be a full night's sleep for the child, a calm and quiet rhythm for going to bed in the evening and rising in the morning, involving very little or preferably no television.



**The following is from *Sleep* by Audrey E. McAllen**

*The intimacy at bedtime of telling a story by candlelight, or looking at a beautiful picture together and discovering its story can smooth away the rush of the day's work. A prayer, said by both parents, the child joining in as he becomes familiar with its words, is something that can be looked forward to. Then with the candle blown out by the child and the light from the hallway glimmering, a flute or song can lead the child over to sleep. Similarly, waking in the morning can be helped if music or chimes are heard in the home, instead of the radio or news. The right sounds produced by Father and Mother lead the child into a happy relationship with his day-waking consciousness. This is a stern self-discipline for the adults, but one that helps both child and parents to form a community of life together.*

Requests have occasionally been made for childcare at our evening meetings. Since teachers work best with children who have received adequate rest, your daughters and sons should not attend such functions at all. Parents are to make arrangements for at-home care, if they wish to attend such functions personally.

**Recommended Reading**

Our school bookstore and gift shop, the Company of Angels, has a wide selection of books on Waldorf education, child development, parenting and the works of Rudolf Steiner. We encourage parents to read as a way to help bridge the gap between home and school.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

In addition to serving individual classes as room representatives, parents participate in the life of our community through serving on the committees that best meet their interests and talents:

### **Committees**

Committees accomplish much of the school's organizational work. Most committees are true partnerships of parents, teachers, board members and staff working in the school.

Please review the following list of committees and select areas to donate your time. Parents are needed to serve as chairpersons, co-chairs and general members. Whether available during the day or evening, or for limited blocks of time, our committees need your participation. To volunteer your services, contact the Parent Association chair. Some committees require a nomination to serve on them.

### **List of Committees**

#### **Campus Beautification**

Description: Maintaining and improving the aesthetics of our campus by working on special projects and participating in "all hands" Campus Beautification Days; coordinating with Grounds Committee on beautification tasks.

Jobs Include: Planting, watering, general landscape maintenance.

#### **Crafting for Service (separate and distinct from our social Craft Group)**

Description: Creating Waldorf-inspired craft items to be used for outreach events, benefits and festivals.

Jobs Include: Sewing, knitting, felting, embroidery, doll-making, woodworking, jewelry making, and more.

#### **Faculty & Staff Appreciation**

Description: Supporting annual faculty/staff appreciation, periodically providing meals for College of Teachers meetings.

Jobs Include: Cooking, baking, decorating, planning, hosting.

#### **Festival of Children**

Description: Weekend staffing of the WSOC Information Booth at South Coast Plaza during the following weekends: Sept.....

Jobs Include: Interaction with the public, general knowledge of Waldorf education, enthusiasm about WSOC.

### **Admissions Hospitality**

Description: Assisting our Admissions Director with welcoming potential and newly enrolled families to our school. Events include New Family Orientation, Welcome Tea, Open Houses, Walks Through the Grades, Information Evenings, Mornings in the Kindergarten.

Jobs Include: Cooking, baking, decorating, greeting, and providing a feeling of general warmth and helpfulness.

### **Company of Angels Bakers**

Description: Providing baked goods for our pastry shop in the Company of Angels on a rotating basis. Pastries are provided daily for sale.

Jobs Include: Baking.

### **Special Event Support**

Description: Working with our Development Director on special events. Please indicate your interest in the following events:

Annual Benefit,

Golf Tournament,

Grandparents Day

Move-a-Thon

Jobs Include: Decorating, cooking, organizing, administrative support, set-up, clean-up.

### **Yearbook**

Description: Helping to create a wonderful keepsake for students and families!

Jobs Include: Photography, editing, desktop publishing, coordinating.

### **Library**

Description: Organizing and staffing the school library for use by parents and students

Jobs Include: Cataloguing, shelving, assisting library customers, increasing awareness of library through book fairs and special events.

**The following volunteer opportunities require an interview process. If you are interested in any of the following, please indicate below:**

Board of Trustees

Community Building Chair for Parent Association

Parent Education Chair for Parent Association

Fundraising Chair for Parent Association  
Outreach Chair for Parent Association  
Scrip Store Assistant  
Company of Angels Salesperson

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES**

### **Registration:**

- All rising students are required to re-register during Registration Week
- A late fee will be charged for those who do not complete their registration within this period.
- Without their registration completed, a student's place in the class will be held for eight weeks before being released for consideration of those in a wait pool
- The student would then be required to re-apply for consideration

### **Registration Fee:**

Registration fee and supply fee are non-refundable and payable to The Waldorf School of Orange County for fall enrollment as stated in the re-enrollment package.

### **Tuition:**

Tuition will be paid in full by August 1 for the following school year, or can be paid in ten (10) equal monthly installments through the WSOC payment website beginning August 1, with the final payment due May 1. The Parents understand and agree that the Student is subject to dismissal by WSOC if any tuition payment is delinquent more than thirty (30) days. All installments must be secured by ACH.

**Tuition Refunds:** You may withdraw your student (cancel their tuition contract) and receive a full refund of all tuition and fees (except for the nonrefundable registration and supply fee) if written notice is received by the School on or before May preceding the school year in question. The Parents may also withdraw their student by providing written notice to the School between June 1 and August 31 preceding the school year. The Parents shall then be responsible for fifty percent (50%) of annual tuition and fees. Beginning September of the school year in question, parents may not cancel their tuition agreement under any circumstance and are not entitled to a refund of any tuition and fees for any reason whatsoever. Overhead, salaries, and other costs to the School do not diminish in the event of a Student's absence, withdrawal, suspension, or dismissal from WSOC. Therefore, the obligation to pay all tuition and fees is unconditional and no portion of such fees paid or outstanding will be refunded or canceled.

**Late Payments:** Any tuition payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month will be assessed a \$15.00 late fee. As stated in the enrollment agreement, families are required to be current with tuition payments or make appropriate arrangements with the Finance Mandate Group to assure continued enrollment.

**Returned Check Policy:** A family will be on a cash or cash-equivalent basis for payment of school expenses if the bank returns three personal checks unpaid in a

twelve-month period. This includes checks written for tuition, fees, and scrip and to the Company of Angels.

Cash and cash equivalents include currency and coin, credit cards processed at time of payment, money orders, cashier's checks and payment by online banking.

Any person or family may reapply for the ability to write personal checks after being on a cash-only basis for twelve months. Application will be made to the Finance Mandate Group, which will make the final decision. Criteria for acceptance will be based on an acceptable payment history during and before the time when the person or family was placed on cash-only status.

**Sibling Discounts:** The second child receives a 10% discount on their tuition. The third child receives a 15% discount on their tuition.

### **Tuition Adjustment**

Tuition adjustment is based on the ideal that Waldorf education should be accessible to all families who wish it for its own values, no matter what their economic status may be. Through our tuition adjustment program, we insure that the acceptance of a child into our school is not dependent on the financial resources of the child's family.

If a family is unable to pay the suggested tuition, the family completes a Tuition Adjustment application. A meeting will be set up with two members of our tuition adjustment committee. During this meeting both the school's budget and the family's budget are reviewed closely. The tuition is based on an understanding of the school as a whole. Neither the family nor the school determines the tuition amount, and neither maintains a comfortable position in this process; each stretches to meet the needs of the other. The final step in this meeting is to arrive, by consensus, at a tuition amount that is kept confidential.

With the tuition adjustment program, we are attempting to move our thinking away from the abstract economics of dollar amounts by trying to gain a real understanding of the value of Waldorf education. Our tuition adjustment program involves a commitment to enter a relationship with members of our community and become aware of the needs and gifts of each member. It is working together in a fiscally responsible way toward the goals of our school, based on the values and ideals of Waldorf education, a value that is unique for every family, child and individual.

### **Scrip**

The Waldorf School of Orange County is a non-profit school. To help supplement the programs we offer, our parents have an obligation to participate in our scrip program. In brief, a parent will give us a check and the school exchanges it for a gift certificate we refer to as scrip. This scrip may be used in frequented establishments such as supermarkets, department stores, restaurants and the like. Although the parent has not lost a penny in the transaction, in-turn, our school earns a percentage of the sale. As a school, we receive anywhere from 5- 25% of the transaction. **This is pain-free fundraising.** Participation is mandatory and the \$275 obligation of scrip will be billed in June for the following school year. Once you have reached your \$275 you can either be refunded your 'deposit' or you can roll it over for the following year.

### **Annual Giving Campaign**

Every year our school conducts an Annual Giving Campaign where we ask each family in our school to consider giving a financial gift, above and beyond tuition, to supplement operating expenses. Our tuition income covers approximately 85% of the costs to operate the school, with the other 15% coming from the Annual Giving campaign, the Scrip Program and the Company of Angels school store. Your support of these fundraising initiatives allows the school to keep our tuition costs down while still maintaining the quality of our program. Our goal in the Annual Giving campaign is to achieve participation from 100% of our families each year, as we strive together to support our beautiful school.