

Waldorf School Of Orange County

Tuition Adjustment Program

Mission & Purpose

Tuition Adjustment is a critical social and economic component to the overall well-being of WSOC. The mission and purpose of WSOC's Tuition Adjustment Program is to assist in the overall growth of the school while ensuring financial security. The Tuition Adjustment Program at WSOC fulfills three goals:

- Tuition Adjustment supports our goal to make a Waldorf education possible for families who value it highly regardless of their ability to pay the full tuition.
- Tuition Adjustment supports cultural and economic diversity.
- Tuition Adjustment is a stabilizing economic force for WSOC.

Guiding Principles

The Tuition Adjustment program will be administered under the following guiding principles:

1. The purpose of the school is to educate as many children as possible who seek Waldorf education.
2. We seek to balance the economic needs of the family with the economic needs of the school.
3. The maintenance of WSOC's financial health and security is a priority and is reflected in the priorities of the families that apply for Tuition Adjustment.
4. WSOC's Tuition Adjustment program involves a commitment with all members of our community, working together, in a fiscally responsible way, toward the educational and financial goals of our school.
5. The final agreement is entered into honestly and with an understanding to build community and commitment. It is a way of honoring the school, the families and the spirit of truth as it manifests in each of us.

Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group is mandated by the Board Of Trustees and the College Of Teachers to administer the Tuition Adjustment Program. The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group will comprise of:

- Board Treasurer
- Business Manager
- Administration staff member assigned to Tuition Adjustment Program
- Tuition Adjustment Conversationalist

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group will ensure that the Tuition Adjustment Program adheres to the Mission, Guiding Principles, Policies and Guidelines. They will regularly review the program and make any necessary submissions for changes to the Board Of Trustees and College Of Teachers for consideration and final approval.

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group is responsible for identifying and training Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists.

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group is the body to whom any special consideration requests are to be made and will be responsible for reviewing, and either approving or denying, any exceptions to the program guidelines.

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group is responsible for reviewing and providing final approval on all Tuition Adjustment contracts.

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group will communicate with, and provide direction to, the Admissions Director as to the availability of Tuition Adjustment that might be available for new families in order to build up enrollment in small classes.

Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists

A significant amount of the work in meeting a school's needs is accomplished through Tuition Adjustment conversations. Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists dedicated to this work must therefore have a healthy relationship with the school and understand the social and spiritual ideals of Waldorf education.

The Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists represent the interest of the school community as a whole, especially the teachers and children, while holding and appreciating the needs of each individual family. They should have an understanding of the school's long range plan and vision and are able to articulate the school's needs; by doing this, they encourage each family to contribute the most it possibly can to support the school.

Training for the Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists shall be carried out by a Tuition Adjustment Conversationalist that has had a minimum of 2 years experience in conducting Tuition Adjustment Conversations. The training shall include an understanding of the school's:

- Mission, vision, and values
- Biography or history, including strengths and challenges
- Budget, including a detailed knowledge of income and expenses
- Strategic plan – short and long-term needs

The Tuition Adjustment Conversationalist shall also have the commitment and ability to:

- Actively listen and have a genuine interest in and appreciation for the family and school
- Represent the school and articulate the school's needs, goals, and vision
- Read and understand the school's budget and the family's financial documentation
- Balance the school's and family's needs

Follow-up training in subsequent years is not only highly recommended but also essential for the health of the program.

Tuition Adjustment Conversations

*The healthy social life is found
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection,
And when in the community
The virtue of each one is living.
~Rudolf Steiner, Motto of the Social Ethic*

The "Motto of the Social Ethic" serves as a mission statement of the school's Tuition Adjustment Program.

Tuition Adjustment conversations shall be conducted by at least two trained Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists, unless decided otherwise by the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group.

During the conversation with a family, the Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists shall portray a full picture of the school, including the school's economic life, values, and ideals. The school's biography, current strengths and weaknesses, and future plans shall contribute to this picture. The family shall have an opportunity to contribute ideas to the school's current operations and its long-term planning.

Through these conversations, the school learns more about the members of the community and meets individuals with skills, capacities, and interest in serving the school.

"But the problem of the present day is how to introduce people into the conditions under which each will, of his own inner, private impulse, do the work of the community ... Some possibility must be found of inducing each person, of his own free will, to do that which he

is called upon to do according to the measure of his particular powers and abilities.”
~Rudolf Steiner

The Tuition Adjustment conversations shall begin with establishing a sense of warmth with the family through the acknowledgment of each person's commitment to Waldorf education. For a new family to the school, the decision to enroll involves a serious commitment. For returning families, the Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists shall express appreciation for the family's contributions and support of the school in the past year. All parties will briefly share their individual connection and commitment to Waldorf education and the school.

The family will receive an outline of the conversation: the school's budget and strategic plan, the family's budget and future plans, and, through consensus, a recommended tuition amount or contribution. Confidentiality is also to be established.

The school's budget is to be presented first. Each conversation, including the presentation of the budget, is unique. Some presentations, particularly for new families, will include a detailed review of major budget categories. Within this budget presentation there is to be a living picture of the school's past, present, and future. Conversations with returning families shall involve a budget overview with an emphasis on the school's present and future needs. Every budget presentation shall involve a picture of the school as a whole, including its mission, vision, and values. It shall also include the strengths and weaknesses of the school within the context of its continuing development and commitment to Waldorf education.

The family will present its budget. This often includes circumstances, present needs, and future hopes of the family, as well as its values. After this sharing of school budget and family budget, the group recommends the tuition amount through consensus. Both the school's needs and the family's needs are brought into balance in this process. The Tuition Adjustment conversationalists will then complete a Tuition Adjustment Contract including the suggested Tuition Adjustment amount.

The conversation will end with appreciation and acknowledgement of the family's commitment to Waldorf education and its contributions and support of the school and the community. The family will be advised that suggested Tuition Adjustment amount will be reviewed by the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group and that they will be advised by mail of the approved amount.

Tuition Adjustment Policies, Guidelines and Considerations

Tuition Adjustment is not intended to support lifestyle choices or discretionary items such as after school activities, luxury items, a second home, investment portfolios, debt-free status or large amounts of home equity. Having any of these situations does not preclude Tuition Adjustment but shall be taken into consideration in relation to the school's needs.

Our Tuition Adjustment program embodies the school's commitment to enter into relationship with members of our community and become aware of the needs and gifts of each member. We view these adjusted tuitions as a contribution to our income rather than a reduction. The program does not lessen our strong sense of fiscal responsibility. On the contrary, it requires

thorough budget preparation and ongoing review to maintain the Tuition Adjustment Program's integrity as well as the values and ideals of Waldorf education.

The following policies, guidelines and considerations will apply to all families requesting tuition adjustment:

- Families will not be eligible for TA during their first 12 months of enrollment.
 - Families showing exceptional commitment to Waldorf education with very little ability to meet financial obligation may be considered subject to TA Mandate Group approval.
 - 1st year families – might be considered if serves to build enrollment in a small class subject to TA Mandate Group approval.

- Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten families will not be eligible for TA unless an older sibling is enrolled and the first 12 month requirement has been met.
 - Families showing exceptional commitment to Waldorf education with very little ability to meet financial obligation may be considered subject to TA Mandate Group approval.
 - Families might be considered if serves to build enrollment in a small class subject to TA Mandate Group approval.

- All assets shall be made available for tuition including retirement savings accounts (such as 401(k), Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA), etc), savings, multiple residences, non primary properties, RV, boats, motorcycles, etc.
 - 401(k) contributions are to be made available
 - The TA Mandate Group will evaluate what, if any sum, in a 401(k) plan is to be considered for liquidation towards tuition.

- When all children are in Grade 1 and higher, both parents should be employed.
 - The TA Mandate Group will evaluate circumstances where this may not be possible.

- All Tuition Adjustment families will participate in our Annual Giving campaign.

- A 50/50 split of tuition is not assumed for 2 household families.

- For returning Tuition Adjustment families, an increase at least consistent with school-wide tuition increases is expected.

- If a family experiences a significant long term change, such as a job loss, that has a negative impact on the family's ability to meet their tuition commitment, the family may re-apply for Tuition Adjustment by following the same steps as outlined in the Tuition Adjustment Process. ***Adjustments will not be made on arrears, but rather only on future payments.***

- If a Tuition Adjustment family's financial situation improves subsequent to their Tuition Adjustment conversation, their contribution towards tuition will increase accordingly.
 - It is the responsibility of the family to bring any financial improvement to the immediate attention of the Business Manager for adjustment.
- All tuition payments will be made via ACH withdrawal
- The TA Application and all documentation must be submitted by the Tuition Adjustment deadline set by the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group. Documentation shall include:
 - A copy of your most current and previous year tax returns, any 1099 or W-2's (if applicable)
 - 12 months of your most recent complete bank statements from all accounts.
 - 12 months of your most recent complete credit card statements from all accounts.
 - 6 months of pay check stubs
 - The Tuition Mandate Group as the right to request further financial documents/statements if they feel this is necessary to fully evaluate tuition adjustment needs
- A family applying for Tuition Adjustment will be given two conversation meeting date options. The family shall make one of these appointments work.
- Mid-Year Status Form (affirming family situation or documenting changes) will be completed by each participating family and returned by the deadline given

It is recognized that every family's' situation is unique and a participating family may request special consideration of their situation by the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group. The decision of the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group will be final.

Tuition Adjustment Process

Application

Returning families applying for Tuition Adjustment should submit their Registration Application, indicating on the form that they wish to apply for Tuition Adjustment, by the Registration deadline. The family will be sent a Tuition Adjustment Application which is to be completed and submitted together with the required supporting financial documents by the Tuition Adjustment Application Deadline set by the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group.

New families must be accepted by the Faculty Of the WSOC before contracting and financial arrangements are began, including applying for Tuition Adjustment. As a rule Tuition Adjustment is not available to first year families, any exceptions to this will require the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group review and approval. If approved, the Tuition Adjustment Application, and the supporting financial documents, will be due on the same deadline as the Enrollment Agreement is due at the school, as indicated in the family's Letter Of Acceptance. Applications for Tuition Adjustment during the school year may take one month to fully process.

Pre-Screening

All Tuition Adjustment Applications, and their supporting financial documents, will be pre-screened by the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group to ensure that each applicant family's financial situation indicates that it will be difficult for the family to pay the full suggested tuition amount. The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group will use the policy and guidelines set forth in this document to also pre-qualify a family and any inconsistencies to the policy will be fully reviewed to see if a family qualifies for any exception.

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group may request further documents/statements if they feel these are necessary to fully evaluate tuition adjustment needs.

Should the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group decline a family's Tuition Assistance Application, a letter advising the reasons will be sent to the family. They family will be given the opportunity to appeal this decision, and advise as to the special circumstances not previously advised in their original application.

Scheduling

For approved Tuition Adjustment Applications the family will be advised in writing and provided with a choice of two conversation appointments. The family is to advise back as to which appointment they would like to take.

Conversation

Tuition Adjustment Conversation is to be conducted as scheduled per the guidelines in this document. The Tuition Adjustment Conversationalists will complete both the Tuition Adjustment Agreement, indicating the suggested Tuition Adjustment amount agreed upon, and the Conversation Report.

The Tuition Adjustment Agreement, the Conversation Report and all supporting documentation is to be submitted to the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group.

Review

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group will review the Tuition Adjustment Agreement and the Conversation Report. The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group will follow up directly on any inconsistencies, or if they feel additional input/information is required to help them with their approval of the Tuition Adjustment amount.

The Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group will have final determination and approval of the Tuition Adjustment amount and will amend the Tuition Adjustment Agreement, if necessary, noting reasons for any amendment.

Approval

The Tuition Adjustment Agreement, together with the family's financial documents, will be mailed to the family and the family instructed to set up ACH payment for the agreed monthly tuition.

Mid-Term Status Review

All families receiving Tuition Adjustment will be subject to mid-term review and required to complete and submit the Mid-Term Status Review Form. All Mid-Term Status Review Forms will be reviewed by the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group and mid-term interviews may be scheduled if deemed necessary by the Tuition Adjustment Mandate Group if changes in a family's situation require discussion.