

# ***WHATCOM HILLS WALDORF SCHOOL***



## ***PARENT HANDBOOK***

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# Whatcom Hills Waldorf School

## PARENT HANDBOOK



### **A Special Welcome to New Families**

Our school continues to grow as more and more families find out about Waldorf education. Many children have been at the school for years, and many are brand new. All families are valued members of our community. If you are new to the school, welcome! Please let us know how we can support your experience here..

The purpose of this **Parent Handbook** is to provide you with a guide to finding your way into the life of the school. A Waldorf school differs from other educational institutions in a multitude of ways, and parent involvement is basic to the school's success. This **Parent Handbook** will clarify school policy and structures and provide information about Waldorf education, but it is our hope that this handbook will also act as an invitation for you to explore your own personal connection with the school, thereby deepening and enriching your life and the lives of your family members.

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## **Mission Statement of the Whatcom Hills Waldorf School**

The Whatcom Hills Waldorf School is dedicated to the Waldorf approach to education. Based on the ideas of educator and philosopher Rudolf Steiner, this tradition addresses the **thinking, willing, and feeling** nature of the child. Through the integration of these three realms, Waldorf education endeavors to create harmony within the individual which allows for the development of free human beings who are able to meet the challenges of their lives and times.

The Whatcom Hills Waldorf School provides early childhood, elementary, and middle school programs in a setting that fosters the development of an involved parent body. The school seeks to educate families and the greater community about Waldorf education through sponsoring lectures, workshops, seasonal celebrations, and artistic performances.

### **Rudolf Steiner**

Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian-born philosopher and scientist (1864-1924), founded the first Waldorf school in Germany in 1919. His intention was to found a school movement based on spiritual wisdom to renew the art of education so that modern children could develop the full range of their capacities and become free, self-reliant individuals capable of contributing fresh insights and initiatives to the world. The curriculum of the first Waldorf School is still relevant today in achieving these goals. As, many new schools using this curriculum are being formed around the world.

### **Anthroposophy**

Through the course of his life, Rudolf Steiner developed a body of knowledge and a paradigm of human development called Anthroposophy, meaning "the wisdom of mankind." This world-view is based on a centuries-old wisdom concerning the evolution of humankind and of the world, which Steiner reformulated in a manner accessible to our modern scientific consciousness. While Anthroposophy represents the philosophical foundation of the Waldorf approach to education, it is not taught in the classroom..

## INTRODUCTION TO WALDORF EDUCATION

### An Overview of Waldorf Education

Over two thousand Waldorf schools in forty six countries form one of the two largest independent educational movements in the world today. There are now over one hundred and fifty seven Waldorf schools in the United States and Canada.

Through this education, Steiner hoped to cultivate in young people capacities of heart and mind and the strength of will that would enable them to meet the challenges of their own time and in the future. He laid the foundation for an art of education in which the teacher, ever aware of the inherent dignity and individuality of each child, would strive to awaken and draw out the child's individual gifts. This is in keeping with the true meaning of "to educate" -- from "*educere*," to "draw out" rather than to put in. Instead of becoming a passive receptor for information, the child is led to participate actively in all that is presented, in hope that he or she will become a seeker of truth and knowledge and a doer who may one day find the strength and capacity to change what is harmful in the world.

Many elements are involved in Waldorf education through the grades, among which are the following:

- \* Physical exercises which develop spatial orientation, balance, coordination, and the sense of rhythm.
- \* Exercise of the will through the completion of age-appropriate physical, artistic, and academic tasks.
- \* Deepening of the feelings through story, drama, and practice of the arts.
- \* Step-by-step development of thinking from simple, concrete sequencing to abstract reasoning.
- \* Gradual exposure to the wonders of the natural world and to the cultural history of humankind.

- \* Affirmation of the child's innate goodness and creativity.

- \* Affirmation of basic human values including mutual respect, courtesy, cooperation with and service to others, and the proper use of our language.

- \* Acquisition of a fund of knowledge requisite for participation in one's time and context.

Waldorf curriculum is meant to unfold according to the stages of development of the growing child.

Education proceeds in three major steps as the child develops. During this process, the child's consciousness develops. Up to age 12, it is largely a pictorial and imaginative consciousness; from then on it adds the element of reason. Until age 12, the Waldorf curriculum works with the child's imagination, proceeding from fairy tales, legends, and fables through the Bible stories and ancient mythology. In the fifth and sixth grades, the transition is made to actual history and science. From then on, without losing its imaginative and artistic elements, the curriculum is presented in a more scientific manner, increasingly relying on direct observation, objective description, and reflection in all subjects.

It is worthy of note that Steiner's detailed psychology of child development, described over seventy-five years ago, has been confirmed by leading researchers such as Piaget and Gesell and more recently by right brain-left brain research.

## Unique Aspects of Waldorf Education

THE ARTS -- drama, painting, music, drawing, modeling, etc. -- are integrated into the entire academic curriculum, including mathematics and the sciences. The Waldorf method of education through the arts awakens imagination and creative powers, bringing vitality and wholeness to learning. There is no other educational movement that gives such a central role to the arts as does Waldorf education.

THE CLASS TEACHER takes the same class of children through eight years of elementary school (grades 1-8), teaching all the main subjects. For the teacher, this means time to deeply know the children and help them unfold their gifts in addition to the enormous challenge of working with a new curriculum each year. For the children, this means stability and continuing guidance.

INDIVIDUAL BOOKS are made by each child for each subject taught. The teacher creates the presentation and the children record and illustrate the substance of their lessons. These books are an important way in which art is integrated into every subject; they have been the focus of Waldorf exhibitions at American and European museums. Under the title "Education as an Art," the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibited student work from the Rudolf Steiner School in New York in 1979, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art showed work from Highland Hall Waldorf School in 1981. In 1979, within a period of six weeks, over 50,000 visitors attended a similar exhibit at Stockholm's Lilljevachs Exhibition Hall.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES are taught beginning in grade One, giving the children insights into and facility with other cultures. The languages vary according to the location of the schools and availability of trained teachers. This year we are offering both German and Spanish..

THE SCIENCES are taught phenomenologically -- that is, the teacher prepares an experiment, calls upon the children to observe carefully, ponder, and discuss, and then allows them to discover the conclusion -- the law, formula, etc. Through this process, rigorous,

independent thinking and sound judgment are trained.

MATHEMATICS begins when the young children first encounter numbers through stories, musical rhythms, and other artistic activities that engage their whole bodies and moves to the arithmetical processes and later to algebra. Form drawing, begun in the first grade, sets the stage for geometry in the later grades.

AN EXTRAORDINARY HUMANITIES CURRICULUM, which begins in first grade with folk tales and fairy tales and continues in second and third grade with mythology and legends, takes the children through the full sweep of their cultural heritage. The Old Testament in grade Three, Norse mythology in grade Four, and the ancient cultures of India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece in Grade Five provide the background for the study of history and arts presented through excerpts from original texts. By living into these cultures through their legends and literature, the children gain an understanding of and an appreciation for the diversity of mankind. By the close of eighth grade, the students have journeyed from Greece and Rome to medieval history, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Age of Exploration, and up to the present day.

LETTERS are learned in the same way they originated in the course of human history: people perceived, then drew pictures, and out of the pictures arose abstract signs and symbols. First graders hear stories, draw pictures, and discover the letter in the gesture of the picture. This process is accompanied by much phonetic work in songs, poems, and games that help establish a joyful and living experience of language. Through the grades, texts taken from the rich humanities curriculum -- Genesis, the Bhagavad Gita, the Kalevala, etc. -- provide material for reading practice.

A MORNING "MAIN LESSON" -- a two-hour period in which the main substance of the day is presented -- begins each school day. The subject -

- it can be algebra, Greek history, botany, or acoustics -- is taught for a three or four week block and then put aside, often to be continued later in the term. This approach allows for freshness, enthusiasm, and concentrated, in-depth experience and gives the children time to "digest" what has been learned.

MUSIC PERMEATES and harmonizes life in a Waldorf School through a curriculum designed to develop the innate musicality with which every child is born. Music is taught in a Waldorf school not only for its own sake and for the joy it engenders, but also because it brings a strong, harmonizing, and humanizing force into the child's life, strengthening the will and capacities for the future.

PRACTICAL WORK -- crafts and handwork -- is an integral part of the required curriculum at a Waldorf school. Decades before brain research could confirm it, Rudolf Steiner recognized that brain function was founded on body function. Learning to knit and crochet in the early grades leads to motor skills that metamorphose into lively thinking and enhanced intellectual development later on. Coordination, patience, perseverance, and imagination are also schooled through practical work. Activities such as woodworking, house building, gardening, -, included in the elementary school curriculum, give the children an understanding of how things come into being and a respect for the creations of others.

### **The Curriculum in More Detail**

The Waldorf curriculum is designed to work in rhythm with the natural stages of children's development. Since these stages are reflective of the stages in the development of human civilization itself, the great stories of varied human cultures -- from fairy tales and fables to Old Testament stories, from Nordic and Native American stories to Greek myths -- are the cornerstone of the curriculum. The subject matter, the way it is approached, and the assignments and activities asked of the children are specifically suited to the development of certain faculties and capacities at particular ages.

## **Kindergarten**

In the early years, the emphasis is placed on nurturing the young child's imagination .. Through various activities such as creative play, storytelling, puppet plays and circle we are creating a foundation for the young child's power of of wonder and fantasy to build.

Another important aspect in the development of a strong imaginative life is the use of fairy tales. The art of storytelling is alive in the Kindergarten as the fairy tales are told, rather than read, by the teacher. Hearing the stories allows the children to create their own images as the story unfolds. Young children experience the world more pictorially than do adults, and fairy tales provide an inner nourishment containing archetypal truths about the world in picture form.

Through imitation young children identify themselves with every gesture, intonation,mood,and thought in their environment making these their own in creative imaginative play. It is the Kindergarten teacher's task in creating an environment worthy of the small child's unquestioning imitation and to educate the child's unconscious through warmth, clarity rhythm, and harmony of the world which the child so actively identifies.

Given the right environment and encouragement, young children exhibit a fountain of creativity never again to be equaled in the course of their lives. Nurturing this capacity prepares the ground for a truly alive and mobile thinking to emerge.

## Outline of Waldorf Curriculum, Grades 1 thru 8

	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>Natural Sciences</b>	<b>Social Science &amp; Literature</b>	<b>Geography</b>
<b>1</b>	geometric forms • count to 100 • rhythmic patterns • qualities of number • beginnings of 4 processes (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) • mental arithmetic • word problems • number sequences and relationships • Roman numerals • odds and evens	letter forms and sounds • letter blends • oral recitation • writing words and simple sentences • beginning reading with one's own writing as text • word families • poetry	the kingdoms of nature through storytelling	fairytales from around the world	wonders through observations of nature
<b>2</b>	form drawings • number sequences and relationships • continue with 4 processes • borrowing and carryings • system of place value • multiplication tables through movement and recitation	more letter blends and word families • writing • reading • punctuation • grammar • poetry • speech	the kingdoms of nature through storytelling  Animal stories through fables	fables from around the world • saint legends	environment through observation
<b>3</b>	form drawings • multiplication tables • larger numbers with the 4 processes • beginning long division • time • money • weights • measures • use of ruler • scale models for house building	cursive writing • reading • writing • composition • spelling • grammar • poetry • drama • speech	human activity in nature: farming, gardening, house building, grains, clothing around the world • cooking	Old Testament stories • comparative cultures in studies of houses, food, and clothing • Native American legends	practical studies
<b>4</b>	weights and measure • long division • fractions • number sequences and relationships • factoring • prime numbers • continued drill work	reading • writing • grammar • spelling • letters: business/friendly • poetry • speech • drama • creative writing	human beings and animal studies	Norse mythology • local natural resources, native peoples, early settlers	geography of own surroundings and Washington State • mapmaking
<b>5</b>	fractions • decimals • geometric forms • averages • metric system • continued drill work	composition • spelling • reading • grammar • poetry • speech • drama	botany	ancient mythologies and histories: India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece • North American culture	North America • mapmaking
<b>6</b>	ratio • proportion • profit / loss • discount • interest • percentage • graphs • estimation • geometry • continued drill work	composition • spelling • reading • grammar • poetry • speech • drama	geology • physics: heat, light, acoustics, magnetism, electricity	Roman history • medieval history	lands & oceans  physical geography of the world
<b>7</b>	algebra • geometry • graphs continued	composition • spelling • reading • grammar • poetry • speech • drama	human physiology and nutrition • physics (continued) • mechanics • astronomy • chemistry: inorganic	Renaissance • age of exploration	economic interdependence
<b>8</b>	algebra • geometry • practical applications • continued drill work	composition • spelling • reading • grammar • poetry • speech • drama	physics (continued), plus hydraulics, aerodynamics • meteorology • human anatomy • chemistry: organic	modern history • 18 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> centuries: revolutions in politics and industry	cultural geography (religions, traditional lifestyles, etc.)
<p><b>The Arts:</b> drama, drawing, painting, modeling, poetry, song, eurythmy, and musical instruments are woven throughout the main lesson subjects in all of the grades. As the students reach the higher grades, more advanced artistic skills are introduced in separate lessons of woodwork, perspective drawing, stringed instruments, choir, music and handwork. In addition to the main lesson subjects, our school offers special subject lessons in foreign languages (German and Spanish), and games/physical education.</p>					

## Grades 1-8

The grade school curriculum in Waldorf school is intricately coordinated with a deep understanding of the developing child. What follows is a look at some of the main topics that are covered in each year as well as some detail about the insights underlying the curriculum. There are, of course, more philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum than can be set forth in this Parent Handbook; this list is only meant as an overview of the curriculum, not as a comprehensive outline. Attending class meetings is an opportunity to find out more about the specific curriculum that is being presented to your child. There are many books your class teacher can recommend which provide more in-depth coverage of the curriculum.

THE FIRST GRADE year begins with the discovery that behind all forms lie two basic principles: the straight and the curved line. The children find these shapes in their own bodies, in the classroom, and in the world beyond. Straight and curved lines are then practiced through walking, drawing in the air and the sand, on the blackboard, and finally, on paper. These "form drawings" train motor skills, awaken the children's powers of observation, and provide a foundation for the introduction of the alphabet.

Through fairy tales and stories the children are introduced to each letter of the alphabet. Instead of abstract symbols, the letters become actual characters with whom the children have a real relationship. "S" may be a fairy tale snake sinuously slithering through the grasses whispering a secret; the "W" may be hiding in the blackboard drawing of waves.

In a similar way, the children first experience the qualities of numbers before learning addition or subtraction, e.g. what is "oneness"? What is there only one of in the world? ("Me!") The characteristics of one, two, three, etc., are explored in the children's inner experience and in nature. Counting is introduced through clapping, rhythmic movement, and the use of stones, acorns, or other natural objects. Only after considerable practical experience in adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing are written symbols for these operations introduced.

Foreign language, knitting, eurythmy, and the pentatonic flute are also introduced in the first grade.

THE SECOND GRADE brings many fables, animal stories from around the world, and legends of saints, heroes, and heroines. Through the stories, the children begin to see the dual aspect of human nature. They work on writing skills in many ways as they put these stories into their Main Lesson books.

Arithmetical work proceeds on to larger operations with the four processes, including borrowing and carrying, or what is now called "trading" numbers, and working on the times tables. Imaginative stories still form the backdrop of math lessons.

Grammar is introduced with liveliness and humor. The children may act out stories in which they can experience the contrast between "doing" words, "naming" words, and "describing" words. Nature study continues with nature walks, poetry, legends, and imaginative descriptions of natural processes.

In handwork the children continue with knitting, making many knitted animals and other small projects helping them attain creative skills in form and function.

The Second Grade helps the school to celebrate the small festival of light, Santa Lucia, on December 13, which gives a living image of the light and warmth of the spirit shining in the darkness. The children visit each class giving out sweet cookies or buns, and perhaps hot tea, and the girls take turns wearing a crown of candles, while the boys carry the star.

THE THIRD GRADE is often called a turning point of childhood. Nine-year-olds feel themselves growing apart from the world, becoming separate and independent, and beginning to question all that was previously taken for granted. This questioning is accompanied by a

serious stream of interest in everything practical such as "How is a house built?" and "Where does my food come from?"

In the third grade, children study Old Testament stories to learn about people's struggles to live on the earth, to make shelters, and to work the land. They study house building while learning weights and measures, and they learn about gardening, farming, and cooking. These acquired skills are translated into their handwork as they make a "house for their heads" in creating crocheted hats. There is much counting and measuring when adding patterns to their handwork.

At the end of third or the beginning of fourth grade, children are introduced to a diatonic flute, which will continue to be used throughout the grades.

THE FOURTH GRADE addresses the children's inner experience of becoming individuals through hearing and reading stories about heroes in Norse and other mythologies. The hero emerges as someone to look up to, emulate, laugh at, and respect. The characters' human qualities, emotions, struggles, and confrontations are emphasized.

The theme of separateness is further reflected in mathematics with the introduction of fractions. In handwork, cross stitch is introduced, allowing children to experience a beautiful wholeness that results from many different crossings.

Geography, local history, grammar, composition writing, and a comparative study of the human being and animals are introduced. Through activities such as map-making, children experience the separation from nature that marks the developing intellect. In composition, simple narration of the children's own real experiences begins.

In the fourth grade, children begin a stringed instrument and play with the school orchestra.

THE FIFTH GRADE leads children into a wider world, and they are encouraged to develop a broader perspective. They study American geography and botany, and in mathematics they continue with fractions and begin decimals. Building on the years of

form drawing, freehand geometry is introduced. Choral singing and four needle knitting are introduced as well.

History has until now been only pictorial or personal in nature, with no attempt made to introduce exact temporal concepts or to proceed in strict sequences. Now history becomes a special Main Lesson subject, as does geography. History, telling of human beings' deeds and strivings, stirs children to a more intense experience of their own humanness. Geography does exactly the opposite: it leads children away from themselves out into the ever wider spaces from the familiar to the unfamiliar. History brings the child to him or her self; geography brings the child into the world.

Ancient history starts with the childhood of civilized humanity in ancient India, where human beings experienced earthly life as an illusion or "maya". The ancient Persian culture that followed the Indian culture felt the impulse to transform the earth, till the soil, and domesticate animals while helping the sun-god conquer the spirit of darkness. The great cultures of Mesopotamia (the Chaldeans, the Hebrews, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians) reveal the origins of written language on clay tablets. The Egyptian civilization of pyramids and pharaohs precedes the civilization of the ancient Greeks.

Every means is used to give the children a vivid impression of these five ancient cultures. They read translations of poetry, study hieroglyphic symbols of the Egyptians, and try their hands at the arts and crafts of the various ancient peoples. History is here an education of the children's feelings rather than of their memory for facts and figures. Through studies in art, science, government, and Olympic games, children have an opportunity to experience the balanced harmony and beauty of the Greeks. In the spring a Greek pentathlon is reenacted. where Fifth grade students from Waldorf schools throughout the region come together to compete. Grace, beauty, form, and sportsmanship are lauded along with individual achievements of speed and accuracy.

THE SIXTH GRADE studies the Roman Empire: its greatness, its vanity, and its collapse. Children of this age can begin to empathize with this time of struggle and growth in human history and can begin to experience a kinship with people from other times. Thus, they can begin to feel that they are not alone in their inward struggles.

Physics is introduced to study the natural world. As with all subjects, the approach is first through art. Acoustics and optical studies are begun. World geography is studied, and astronomy may be introduced.

As children approach twelve, changes begin in their physical bodies. One of the most subtle is the hardening of the bones, and at this time children become more aware of gravity and weight. With the increasing awareness of their physical bodies, the time is right for the study of the physical body of the earth.

Geology turns to the structure of the earth and proceeds from the study of the flora and fauna of the geological ages to minerals, metals, and finally gems and crystals, leading to the functions of mineral and metallic substances in the human organism.

Mathematics continues to exercise the disciplines learned in previous classes and then moves on to the study of percentage and ratio. All the years of circle movement, eurythmy, and form drawing are brought into exact constructions using compass, rulers, and right angles in geometry. Whereas geometric shapes have in the prior grades been drawn freehand as artistic exercises, now families of geometric figures are constructed and studied for the numerical laws they embody. These designs are now done with the utmost accuracy.

THE SEVENTH GRADE children are entering puberty. To help them cross this threshold, the curriculum takes them to civilizations of people who share their mood of soul. Two subjects addressing these areas are English and history. The history block of the Renaissance and Reformation really begins modern times with a dauntless quest into the unknown that is also akin to the seventh graders' soul mood. Allegiance to traditional authority no longer holds sway. Individualism overcomes feudalism, as

personified by Joan of Arc and Galileo. Human capacities are limitless as epitomized by Leonardo Da Vinci. The emphasis of history and geography is on Europe, the lives of the early explorers, and the colonization of many parts of the world.

Mathematics introduces algebra, including negative numbers, venturing into mathematical thinking that has no relation to physical perceptions. This makes real demands on the children's imaginative powers. Square and cube root and geometry are introduced.

Mechanics begins in physics with the lever principle as found in the human arm. Children learn basic mechanical concepts and their application in the machinery of ancient and modern times. Inorganic chemistry is introduced as a study of the combustion process. From the beautiful legend of the bringing of fire to earth by Prometheus to a study of combustion in the human organism in the digestive processes, fire can be observed externally in the breaking down of substances by oxidation. Physiology is introduced as the study of life processes in man: blood circulation, respiration, reproduction, and nutrition in connection with digestion, health, and hygiene.

THE EIGHTH GRADE students are ready to study modern history and have the ability to see the wholeness of the globe. History becomes an intensive study of the period from the French and American Revolutions to the modern day, focusing on outstanding individuals such as Lincoln, Jefferson, Edison and great figures from the 20th century such as Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, and Martin Luther King. Geography takes up the same theme, showing the role played by every part of the earth in modern industrial civilization.

In science, lessons bring thermodynamics, mechanics, climate, electricity, magnetism, hydraulics, aerodynamics, meteorology, and ecology. Chemistry is also considered in relation to industry.

Mathematics emphasizes the practical applications of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. Human beings are again the subject of nature study through physiology of the human organism. Literature focuses on the theme of human freedom in the short story, letters, and Shakespearean drama.

The task of elementary education is to give children an understanding of humanity and the world they live in, to offer them knowledge so rich and warm that it engages their hearts and wills as well as their minds. Such an understanding is the basis of all real learning in later years. With the completion of the eighth grade, the children have a well-rounded general picture of human life and the universe. This last year of elementary school should not only bring all previous experiences to a new peak but should enable the children to enter fully and potently into the life of their own time.

## **Art and Special Subjects**

### **Handwork**

Knitting and other handwork projects play an important role in the development of fine motor skills, inner calm, and intellectual clarity. Author and handwork teacher Rachel Magrisso from the Green Mountain Waldorf School in Vermont says that handwork "is the time for the children to be still within themselves. It helps the children in their thinking, in their ability to make judgments: is every stitch even, clear, consistent, and of the right tension?... When they are doing handwork there is harmony. The room settles down to a hum..."

The specific handwork taught in Waldorf schools "grows with the growing child." In the first grade, the curriculum calls for learning the basic knit stitch and creating a practical and useful project in a warm textile such as wool. In second and third grades, this is continued with purling and crochet, which add new movements and require more focus on each row and stitch. Around age nine or ten the children undergo a change of consciousness: they are individuals within themselves, no longer as open. The hats that the third graders knit to cover their heads represent this developmental milestone. Third graders are also

experiencing the beginning of critical thinking, and in the knitting of hats they are introduced to small patterns, thus engaging their new thinking skills. The cross stitch taught in fourth grade reflects this more elaborate stage in their development.

The fifth grade advances to more complicated knitting such as socks. Knitting socks requires using four needles instead of just two, and it is a task that requires much perseverance, providing challenges and valuable lessons for the children.

Developmentally, the sixth graders are coming into form. The children sew animals, which requires planning, patterns, cutting, basting, and other skills for children who are now more intellectual in their planning and thinking. The sewing the children undertake in seventh and eighth grades requires extensive forethought and mathematical skills. In seventh grade they sew dolls by hand and in the eighth grade, sewing machines are used for various projects such as clothing and massed production gifts for the lower grades..

Handwork offers many opportunities for reinforcing math skills in practical, challenging, and enjoyable ways. Author and Waldorf teacher Eugene Schwartz says that "We cannot underestimate the self-esteem and joy that arises in the child as the result of having made something practical and beautiful -- something which has arisen as the result of a skill that has been learned. In an age when children are often passive consumers who, as Oscar Wilde once said, 'Know the price of everything and the value of nothing,' learning to knit can be a powerful way of bringing meaning into a child's life."

### **Movement Education and Games**

Child development is taken into account in Movement Education and Games classes. The activities that are chosen reflect this understanding. Each lesson contains a rhythm of joining together and moving apart. Highly active games balanced with quieter ones, and working

together as a group, are part of each class.

Games in first and second grades have the gesture of the circle, keeping the children protected and part of the whole. As we move up the grades, the children are slowly coming into their individuality and the Games curriculum reflects this. By the fifth grade there is a focus on beauty, form and preparation for the Olympic competition in the spring. In sixth, seventh, and eighth grades the more conventional sports are brought into the curriculum. At this time the children have a growing understanding of rules and teamwork. At the same time they are developing their own self-discipline and competitive nature. They are aspiring upwards in terms of exactness, technique, timing, and the spirit of the law while becoming more aware of the world around them.

In a culture where organized team sports hold such high status, children can sometimes think of movement only in these terms. The Movement curriculum tries to give the children basic coordination and movement skills that will help them when they decide to play organized sports. Depending on the grade, the children will play games or do relay races that serve to develop skills that are also required for conventional sports such as basketball. String games and jumping rope are also activities that develop skills which can be used in many different sports.

Not only does a Movement class provide the opportunity for the children to play games and have fun, it also works with their social interaction by teaching them to play with each other before they play against each other, to acknowledge each other, to play safely, and to gain an appreciation for all kinds of movement.

### **Foreign Language**

Foreign Languages are taught throughout the grades. German and Spanish are taught in grades one through eight. In the early grades languages are taught orally, giving the young children the opportunity to hear the different sounds and feel the mood of the language. Verses, songs, stories games, tongue-twisters, and counting are brought to foster group knowledge of the language and appreciation of the folk soul of the

peoples who speak the language. In the older grades, grammar and the study of the structure of the language are taken up, along with reading and writing. Students glean an understanding of various aspects of the culture and life circumstances of their fellow human beings by participating in festivals and celebrations and experiencing such cultural aspects as crafts, cooking, and drama.

### **Music**

There are many important inner skills to be learned in the study of music. The discipline of practicing with an instrument helps children find the inner discipline to face other challenges in life.

Group music lessons offer a opportunity for children to practice the ability to listen to others and to work cooperatively. It is quite a challenge for a group of children to work completely in unison in any realm, be it social, academic, or physical. In trying to play their instruments as a group, with the same timing and pitch, the resulting harmonious sound allows them to directly experience the value of working well together. Playing an instrument is a l means of self-exploration, self-expression, and creativity that allows the children to grow into more well-rounded human beings. Strings classes begin in fourth grade and continue through eighth grade.

In the first grade, children are taught to play the pentatonic flute. In the third or fourth grade, children begin to play the diatonic flute. Recorders are picked up in sixth grade, and by seventh and eighth grades,, students are playing Renaissance recorder ensemble music with soprano, alto and tenor recorders.

Singing is a regular part of the school week for all grades. In the lower grades, songs are based on seasonal themes. In first and second grades the children sing as a group, and in third grade children, begin singing rounds. In fourth grade two-part songs are added, and the children learn about holding their own voices against others to create harmony.

Sixth, seventh and eighth graders sing together as a choir once a week, as well as with their individual classes in main lesson and music classes. Songs are tied to the curriculum: songs and chants from the Middle Ages are introduced in sixth grade, Renaissance music, ballads, and madrigals are sung in seventh grade, and American music and songs and music from other countries adds to geographic studies and in eighth grade.

### **Class Plays**

Class plays are an essential part of each class' language arts program and reflect the curriculum. They begin with fairy tale puppet plays in Kindergarten. The fifth grade may perform a Greek play, for example, and the eighth grade generally performs a play by Shakespeare

The weekly newsletter will announce class play schedules. All families are welcome to attend each class' play.

### **Eurythmy**

Eurythmy means "beautiful or harmonious movement." It is a unique experience to the Waldorf curriculum. Developed early in the last century by Rudolf Steiner eurythmy is neither dance nor mime, but uses the body as an instrument in space. The air is the medium in which eurythmists make forms and gestures much as a sculptor uses wood or stone. Attempting to sing and speak through movement, eurythmists "sound" in space, bringing the life and color of music and poetry to vivid expression. They strive to make the invisible dance of creative sound a visual experience.

### **Reverence, Ritual, and Rhythm**

Reverence, ritual, and rhythm are the three R's of Waldorf education. When experienced in childhood they can lead to an experience of responsible freedom in adulthood.

Our present culture does not seem to place much value

on reverence. Sensationalism, sensory stimulation, advertising, and competitiveness are but a few of the trends that undermine this noble quality. Furthermore, rather than valuing ritual and rhythm, our culture often eschews "routine," finding it deadening, and may seek to avoid "falling into a rut" by cultivating unstructured, spontaneous living. The harm to children, who may need the security of limits and orderly rhythm, can be great. Many are not fully aware of these continuing rhythms of nature, but we experience their effects. We, the earth, all living things, are sustained by them. For what would happen if the sun one morning did not rise, or left its orbit, or if spring did not follow winter?

By creating rhythms in the classroom and marking them with simple rituals, we enhance all that supports health and life. Your children's teachers go to great lengths to create lessons and festivals that purposefully nurture feelings of reverence. Reducing distractions for your children gives them the space to experience reverence and will support the work of your children's teachers. They believe that reverent, wonder-filled occasions will help children to find meaning in their lives as adults and help them to love, respect, and care for other people, the earth, and themselves.

### **Festivals**

Throughout history in all civilizations there are rituals reflecting nature's rhythms, important transitions, and significant moments in the life of the culture. For people today, who can so insulate their lives as to be unaware of the seasons, of reaping and sowing, of dark and light, and of birth and death, festivals can help provide a real touchstone with the cycles of the earth and the soul nurturing they provide.

In Waldorf schools, the elements of festival -- light, food, song, and story -- permeate the weekly school rhythm, but the cadence of the year receives its form through festivals. Teachers, parents, and children work together in anticipation and celebration to express the unique

character and variety of major and minor festivals appropriate to the children's age and curriculum.

Some of these festivals observed by the school are celebrated as family events with the whole school community, and we welcome your participation. Other festivals are observed with events or assemblies during school hours. Look in the newsletter and your mailbox for information about upcoming events.

### **Michaelmas**

In the autumn, at harvest season, we celebrate Michaelmas. Michaelmas is September 29 and celebrates the forces of Archangel Michael (pronounced My-ki-el'), the time-spirit of this epoch.

As the seasons transition from the outer warmth of summer to the coolness of fall, we turn inward, toward ourselves and toward our community for inner warmth. The Michaelic forces imbue us with the confidence and courage to look to the spiritual world for strength and to renew the impulse to live our lives on the earth to the best of our abilities and to become a true community of human beings. In the Celtic tradition, St. Michael represents the unconquered hero, fighting against evil and the powers of darkness.

He is a model for valor and courage. Dragons, iron, and the color red predominate. At our school it is traditional to celebrate Michaelmas with a Harvest Festival.

*Thou Michael, the Victorious,  
I make my circuit under thy shield.  
Thou Michael, of the white steed  
And of the bright, brilliant blade!  
Conqueror of the dragon,  
Be thou at my back.  
Thou ranger of the heavens!  
Thou warrior of the King of All!  
Thou Michael, the Victorious,  
The glory of mine eye.*

### **Martinmas**

The Story of St. Martin has often inspired a lantern walk and the sharing of lantern songs, simple cookies

or cake, and warmth with friends. The younger children may make lanterns in their classrooms and join their families in an evening lantern walk where they sing with lanterns held high. For the children, the lanterns are symbols of their own individual light, and the walk into the cold, dark evening gives the children an experience of sharing "their own light" as the darkness of winter approaches.

*The sunlight fast is dwindling,  
My little lamp needs kindling.  
Its beam shines far in darkest night,  
Dear lantern, guard me with your light.*

### **Advent**

As a celebration of the beginning of the Christmas Season, Advent is offered to the community from the College of Teachers. The Advent Spiral is held in the evening of the fourth Sunday before Christmas. During the day, teachers and volunteers prepare a spiral with evergreen boughs in Alia Hall. The spiral is adorned with varied treasures representing the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms. Apples are cored and into each one is placed a candle. At the center of the spiral is a single candle.

In the evening, quiet music is played, creating an inward mood in the darkened room as each participant walks the in-turning spiral carrying their individual candle. Upon reaching the center, each one lights their candle, turns and places their candle along the spiral as they follow the spiral out. When all have completed this journey, the form of the spiral is illuminated by the candles and a moment is taken to silently observe what has been created. The candles are left burning while the participants leave.

Community members intending to participate in the Advent celebration need to register with their class teacher by the Friday before November conference week. "Reserving" a place for you and your family is necessary in order to schedule sessions and prepare candles. Participants are encouraged to arrive a few minutes before the beginning to find a seat and settle in. Those arriving late are asked, out of respect for the

experience of others, not to enter the room.

### **May Day**

May Day is an ancient festival honoring the changing of the seasons from darkness to light. The tree of life was part of this ritual and is now represented by the Maypole. Our school's May Faire is an annual event; the celebration at the school features flowers, food, music, and dancing around the May Pole.

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Our school is interested in festivals from other cultures. If you or your family can help us to celebrate a festival that has meaning in your life, please feel free to approach your class teacher.

Because Waldorf education nurtures the whole child, including his or her spiritual nature, people often wonder about the expression of religion in the classroom. In an effort to answer some of these questions, we have included the following article by Karen Rivers on the subject which was first published in Main Lesson: Journal of the Marin Waldorf School.

## **The Role of Religion in the Waldorf School**

By Karen Rivers

The word “religion” is derived from the Latin word “re-lig-io” which means to reunite. It is an expression of the universal human quest for meaning, for our source and our destiny. Throughout human history, people from all cultures have asked “Who am I?” “What am I doing here?” “What does it mean to be human?”

Throughout the world we share questions about creation, good and evil, and what exists beyond the starry cosmos and unknown dark matter. These soul questions live deeply within all humanity. Through different periods of history, great men and women have shed light on these universal questions. They have offered their wisdom to help each individual answer them, to re-unite with the cosmic origin and the oneness of all existence.

In our school, we seek to imbue all our lessons with question of universal implication. We seek to explore mythology, literature, history, science and art in a way that evokes discussions or pondering about these universal questions. We wish our students to live in an atmosphere that is permeated with (not devoid of) the quest for self-knowledge for the exploration of life’s deepest mysteries.

*Do we teach religion?*

The Waldorf curriculum is designed to create the appropriate relationship between a child and these immense questions. Through art, a child builds a relationship with beauty, and in studying science, one seeks an understanding of truth. Out of beauty and truth, one develops a sense of morality and reverence for life which leads to profound questions of existence.

Through the study of history our students journey through ancient civilizations, studying the Old Testament, Norse Mythology, Ancient India, Persia, Samaria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. They enter the Middle Ages and the Renaissance with burning questions of morality which grow out of their earlier exploration. By the time students reach eighth grade, they have lived with many noble images, many fallen heroes and many searching questions about the nature of humankind and our universe. These questions of great magnitude fill a child with the desire to explore the outer and inner realms of his/her life.

In Waldorf schools throughout the world, we aim to celebrate the cycles of life, to address the essence of these soul question as they speak to us through nature in the rhythm of the year and the festivals that have evolved through time. We all long to feel the joy and meaning of life through the recognition and celebration of cornerstone events. The seasons mark the turning points of the year and each season has festivals celebrated differently around the world which express the inner wisdom of its nature. Because we live in a primarily Judeo-Christian culture, we emphasize those festivals at our school. Waldorf schools in Israel feature Jewish festivals; Waldorf schools in Japan feature Buddhist festivals; in India, Hindu festivals.

We receive many questions as to whether we are a Christian school. We are a school seeking to re-unite children with the universal knowledge of self through the study of art and science. We celebrate Christian festivals as well as others. Underlying all of this, Waldorf schools are founded on the philosophy of anthroposophy, the wisdom of humanity. Anthroposophy, offered to us by Rudolf Steiner, explores the evolution of human consciousness. Each historic epoch offers a significant contribution to the journey of humanity from ancient times to the unknown future. Each prophet carried a message for his time and we seek to understand our age through the looking glass of the past. Neither Anthroposophy nor religion are taught in our school. They are the foundation under the building which supports and defines the structure.

We seek to educate our students in love and immerse them in the world of great literature, art, and science. We strive to awaken within them the longing to “Know Thyself.” We wish to send them forth into the world in freedom to explore and discover their own beliefs and destinies in the service of humankind. On this journey, each one finds meaning, joy and reverence for life, creating a new union with his or her spiritual essence.

## **Supporting Students in the Home**

Waldorf education is an impulse toward wholeness, it does not end in the classroom. The Waldorf teacher creates lessons that nurture learning as well as rhythm, knowing that children need the security of order. Rudolf Steiner said that rhythm is the healer of life -- that which unites and makes whole.

The rhythm of the daily lessons, of water color painting, of drawing, of festivals in harmony with nature are most meaningful if they are extended into the home.

We encourage you to support the work of your children's teachers and the Waldorf curriculum in fostering reverence, ritual, and rhythm in your family life. In addition to the observation of the school's festivals, a quiet time or blessing before meals and bedtime can become a significant ritual within the home. Much less overtly spiritual events can also assume ritual form and mark the daily rhythm of life in meaningful ways: the lighting of a candle at the evening meal, a special story or song to help the child pass from waking to sleeping, or creating a family tradition in the observance of birthdays. Another way a healthy rhythm is established in the home is by serving meals at the same time each day and maintaining a consistent bedtime.

Most Waldorf parents find, in fact, that the emphasis on reverence, ritual, and rhythm is one of the ways Waldorf education directly affects the quality of their own lives. In the speed and "busyness" of our contemporary world, it often helps to be reminded of more enduring values. Establishing an environment in which each day is rhythmically ordered and the year is marked at special moments with rituals and celebrations helps create, for our children, a secure foundation from which to grow.

Reverence is best taught by example. As adults we can nurture within ourselves reverence for:

things greater than ourselves

things equal to ourselves

things lesser than ourselves

and manifest this respect in our words and deeds.

The parent who by example shows reverence to the earth, respect to self and others, and follows healthy rhythms in his or her own life, gives a precious treasure to the child.

## **Television**

The passivity inherent in watching television is increasingly recognized by educators and parents as counterproductive to the process of learning and growth in the young child. Waldorf education has been in the forefront of the movement to create awareness of the harmful effects of television viewing, and we are pleased that other professionals now voice the same opinion.

The fast pace and fragmentation of television work against the cultivation of concentration and imagination. By restricting children's exposure to these images, they have time and space to develop their own imaginations more fully. Imaginative play such as listening to stories, watching and creating puppet shows, dressing up, baking, and other activities foster in young children an active participation in the world around them. The Waldorf school aims to develop creative, fully-engaged individuals. We urge parents of young children to resist the convenience of television and instead involve children in meaningful play as much as possible.

For older children, practicing regular study habits without the constant backdrop of music and flickering images is essential to the learning and growing process.

If you could use some helpful hints in weaning your children from the television and video games, feel free to talk to your class teacher.

## **Attendance and Punctuality at School**

We expect that parents will maintain their children's punctual and regular attendance at

school.

Parents should inform the class teacher of any circumstances in the home that might affect a child's attendance, and if specific circumstances make a long absence necessary, it is essential to consult with the class teacher as early as possible. When a child cannot attend class on any day because of illness or other reasons, it is important to inform the office at the school at the beginning of the day. Vacations should be taken during regularly scheduled school holidays and break.

### **Open Houses**

We offer monthly Open Houses (called "A Walk Through the Grades") for all interested community members throughout the year. Visits to the Kindergarten can be made by special arrangements. During an Open House, participants observe parts of several classes' Main Lessons, then meet to discuss questions that may arise. Please feel free to use these times to introduce your friends or relatives to the school as well. The Open House schedule will be posted. We ask that you pre-register so that we can better anticipate the size of the group and its needs.

### **Assemblies**

All-school assemblies are held each Friday of the school year. Traditionally, this time is used to highlight a particular class' current work. The class may recite poems, present a short play, or perform music as these activities relate to the theme currently being studied in class.

Upcoming assemblies are announced in the newsletter.

### **Lectures and other Presentations**

Throughout the year, WHWS teachers and visiting speakers offer opportunities for learning more about Waldorf education. Please check your newsletter and the Community Bulletin Board for information about

### **If You Would Like To Know More...**

We suggest the following ways you can learn more about Waldorf education and our school.

#### **Suggested Reading**

Many families have found the following books useful in understanding aspects of Waldorf education. It can be purchased at *Roots & Wings*, the school store, and is highly recommended.

Waldorf Education: A Family Guide edited by Pamela Johnson Fenner and Karen L. Rivers, 1995.

For further reading about festivals in particular, these books are recommended (and are usually in stock at *Roots & Wings*):

Festivals With Children by Brigitte Barz.

Festivals, Family and Food by Diana Carey and Judy Large, 1982.

Celebrating the Festivals With Children by Friedel Lane.

The Festivals and Their Meaning, Lectures by Rudolf Steiner.

The Developing Child by Will Aeppli, Anthroposophic Press; Spring Valley, N.Y.

You Are Your Child's First Teacher by Rahima Baldwin, 1989.

Education Towards Freedom by Franz Carlgren, 1972.

Waldorf Parenting Handbook by Lois Cusick, 1984.

Lifeways, Working With Family Questions edited by Gudrun Davy and Bons Voors, 1983.

Rudolf Steiner Education by L. Francis Edmunds.  
Rudolf Steiner Press; London.

Children at Play: Education for Life by Heidi Gritz-Creclius, Anthroposophic Press; Spring Valley, N.Y.

The Recovery of Man in Childhood by A. C. Harwood, Anthroposophic Press; Spring Valley, NY, 1958.

The Way of a Child by A. C. Harwood, Rudolf Steiner Press; London, 1940.

Phases of Childhood by Bernard Lievegoed, Anthroposophic Press; Spring Valley, NY

Creativity in Education: The Waldorf Approach by Rene Querido, H.S. Dakin Co.; San Francisco.

Towards Wholeness: Rudolf Steiner Education in America by M. C. Richard, Wesleyan University Press; Middletown, CT, 1980.

Teaching as a Lively Art by Marjorie Spock, Anthroposophic Press; Spring Valley, NY, 1985.

Between Form and Freedom: A Practical Guide to the Teenage Years by Betty Staley, 1988.

Study of Man, Fourteen Lectures by Rudolf Steiner, 1919.

Education as a Social Problem by Rudolf Steiner.

The Kingdom of Childhood, Seven Lectures by Rudolf Steiner.

Childhood: The Study of the Growing Soul by Caroline Von Hydebrand, 1942.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### **An Overview of Whatcom Hills Waldorf School**

The initiative for Waldorf education in Bellingham began in 1981. The first study groups contained a variety of people interested in Waldorf Education including parent and teachers. Noting the difficulty in obtaining trained Waldorf teachers, two individuals from the group, Kent Ratekin and Josiane Schantz, left Bellingham for training in 1984. Meanwhile, Christina Potter, an experienced Waldorf Kindergarten teacher, began a small Kindergarten in her home. The original parents who showed such strong interest were not able to have a school for their children because their children had become too old to participate at the grade school's formal opening in 1986. Acknowledgment is owed to those first parents and to Christina for planting the seeds of our school. The Whatcom Hills Waldorf School was founded by the returning teachers in 1986. The doors were opened to a Kindergarten and a first grade at 920 24th Street in Happy Valley. The school prospered from the first year and in 1988 purchased our present site, the "Old Geneva School," at 941 Austin Street. The school's growth has been due to the dedicated, combined efforts of the parents, Board of Trustees, and teachers.

### **School Organization**

The Whatcom Hills Waldorf School functions through the joint efforts of the College of Teachers, the Board of Trustees, and the Parent Council. The Business Manager, College of Teachers Chair, Board President and Parent Council Chair meet regularly to coordinate the functions and tasks of these three bodies.. The composition and responsibilities of these bodies are as follows:

#### **The College of Teachers**

The College of Teachers (hereafter called the "College") is responsible for all pedagogical concerns

such as program development, curriculum standards, teacher mentorship, peer evaluations, and child study. In addition, the College is responsible for school administration, teacher hiring, adult education, and maintaining our school's relationship with the larger Waldorf community.

College members are individuals who are deeply committed to the health and well-being of our school. Beyond tending to the above responsibilities, College members actively study and strive to further develop their understanding of the growing child.

The College meets each week on Thursday afternoons.

In the above areas of responsibility, decisions affecting the financial course of the school are made in collaboration with the financial arm of the school, the Board of Trustees.

#### **The Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees (hereafter called the "Board") is responsible for overseeing the management of the business of the school, including all financial, legal and property matters.

The Board works in collaboration with the College of Teachers to ensure that the mission of the school is carried out in accordance with our school's bylaws and agreed-upon goals and objectives.

The Board is composed of a balance of teachers, parents, and community members of the school. A full Board numbers nine members: three teachers, three parents, and three members-at-large.

The Board meets on a monthly basis; a schedule is published each year. Agendas and minutes are

available. Board meetings are open for parents to observe, although some parts of the meetings may require confidentiality and will be conducted in executive session. Call the Board President if you wish to have an item included in the meeting agenda.

### **The Parent Council**

The Parent Council is composed of two parent representatives per class, and up to two members each from the Board and College. Its purpose is to inspire, inform, and organize the parent community and to enhance the school's social life through communication and involvement.

Parent Council's mandate includes the following work: assisting the class teacher in organizing class field trips, class meetings, social events, and class projects, becoming familiar with families of the class and knowing details about parent availability, skills, and interests, coordinating parent participation in festivals, fundraising events, workshops, and work parties, and sharing information through newsletters, phone trees, and meetings.

Supporting new families at the school is also a priority of the Parent Council. At the beginning of the school year, Parent Council representatives match "experienced" parents with new families. These "mentors" introduce the new families to other school families as well as to the "culture" of the school, and they continue to communicate with the new families throughout the year.

The Parent Council meets on a regular basis throughout the school year. Meetings are open for all parents to observe. Contact the Parent Council Chairperson or your class Parent Council representative if you wish to have an item included in the meeting agenda.

### **The Staff**

The Staff is composed of all teachers and administrative personnel. Staff members meet on Tuesday afternoons to carry out the Child Study, and on Friday afternoons to share in an artistic activity, study the works of Rudolf Steiner, and coordinate day-to-day administrative needs.

### **The Business Manager**

The Business Manager is responsible for the every day operations of the school, managing resource, financial, office and facility business. The Business Manager supervises all non-teaching staff, provides technical support to the teaching staff, is an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees and serves on the finance, site, fundraising, tuition reduction and emergency preparedness committees.

### **Committees**

Several committees are open to interested parents. Following is a brief description of each committee. If you are interested in sitting in on a committee meeting or would like to talk with someone about a specific committee, consult the School Directory for the name of the contact person.

#### **The Outreach & Public Relations**

**Committee** plans and implements outreach efforts to the larger community designed to familiarize the community with Waldorf education as well as to increase enrollment in the school. Open houses, school tours, and staffing information tables at school and community events are some of the activities of members of this committee.

The **Site & Safety Committee** reviews the school's site needs and coordinates site repairs and improvements.

The **Finance Committee** reviews the financial structure and health of the school and makes budget and operating recommendations to the Board.

The Community Recognition Committee highlights individuals who have volunteered their time, effort and / or skills for the school.

The Development & fundraising Committee develops plans for the Annual Giving campaign within the school community and coordinates capital campaign programs to finance improvements as directed by the Board of Trustees.

## Organizing Fundraising Events

The **Graduation Committee** helps to organize each year's graduation. This committee is made up of both parents and teachers.

### Parent Participation in School Life

. The successful operation of the school relies largely on the time and energy given by parent volunteers. There is a need for parent volunteers on both an individual class level and a school-wide level. A sense of community, new friendships, and a genuine sense of pride can be gained by involving oneself in working together toward a common goal.

An understanding of what is expected of parents throughout the school year is essential in allowing parents to participate in a way that works for them.

In supporting your class teacher, both in-school and out-of-school time is needed. Assisting with specialty classes or special classroom needs, sewing costumes or gathering props for plays, and organizing field trips are some of the kinds of help that are needed. Playground, garden, and site beautification are also important parent-supported tasks affecting the quality of classroom life. Announcement of classroom projects needing parent participation takes place at class meetings and by class phone trees. Please note that we require background checks on all classroom and field trip volunteers. The office is available to help you with this. Contact your class teacher or Parent Council representatives for more information on volunteering.

### Planning Festivals

. The Parent Council representatives and parents of the classes plan and produce each festival with guidance from the College. The children participate in many ways during the school day in preparing for the festival and at the festival itself. Parents are encouraged to be a part of the class effort in producing a festival celebration.

Our school, like most Waldorf Schools, requires an ongoing fundraising effort by the parent body to achieve a balanced budget; tuition fees alone are not enough to allow the school to operate. We depend on the ongoing financial support and work of the community. The money that is spent on operating the school comes from annual tuition, donations, and fundraising. Parents' sharing of skills and services contributes to the strength of the school and keeps tuition costs down.

Fundraising events such as our annual Wreath Sale, Holiday Faire, and Gala Auction thrive with participation by all families. They require careful preparation and result in spectacular events that delight not only us, but the community at large. They serve as a reminder of what a truly creative and committed group of people our Waldorf parents are.

## CHAPTER 3

# COMMUNICATIONS

Effective communication is another important element in the successful functioning of the school. We continually seek the organizational forms and processes that are effective for our school.

The means of communication are described here. We recommend you to keep in touch with your class teacher on a regular basis. If you have questions or concerns about other matters, see the section entitled "Questions and Concerns -- Whom To Ask?" for more specifics.

### **Parent Mail Folders**

Each family has its own file sorted alphabetically in one of three boxes in the hall outside of the office. Most school mail is put into these files. Thursday is when the weekly newsletter is distributed.

Monthly billing statements are put in your parent mail folder the last week of each month unless a special request is made to mail them. *Please check your school mail folder weekly to stay current on what is happening at school.*

### **Newsletter**

Our weekly newsletter contains information about upcoming events, Class, College or committee reports, and classified advertisements. It is distributed to each family's school mail box on Thursday afternoon.

The deadline for inclusion in the newsletter of an advertisement or notice is Wednesday at 9 a.m. To submit items to be published, please have the item in the Administrative Assistant mailbox by that time. If you would like to receive the newsletter "via" email, contact the office.

### **School Directory**

A School Directory is published each September.

Corrections and additional information should be submitted to the school office. School Directory updates are often listed in the weekly newsletter. The School Directory also contains the yearly school calendar, a listing of Board, Parent Council, and Committee contact people, and the Parent Council members to contact if you can help with particular festivals, events, and benefits. Policies such as discipline and dress code are also found here.

### **Telephone Trees**

Each class has a phone tree which is made at the beginning of the year by the Parent Council representatives. It is used to disseminate both class and school-wide information. A phone tree message is usually started by the class teacher, the Parent Council representative, or the Board.

### **Class Meetings**

Teachers hold at least four class meetings each year. These meetings are 3-fold; incorporating artistic activities, curriculum studies and child development relevant to the particular grade level. A look at the social dynamics of the class, and plans and information about field trips and activities that will take place throughout the year. They provide a significant way to understand your child's education and a chance to connect with the parents of other children in the class.

### **Parent / Teacher Conferences**

Private conferences are held during the school year to provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to share their impressions and concerns about the child's progress in the class. Conferences are scheduled Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Thanksgiving week. Look for your teacher's sign-up sheets, posted prior to the conferences,

outside of the office.

### **Community Meetings**

The Parent Council, College, or Board may occasionally organize meetings during the year dealing with special projects of interest. All parents are encouraged to attend Community Meetings.

### **Community Bulletin Board**

In the hall next to the office, you will find a bulletin board with information about upcoming events, community announcements.

### **Communicating with Your Class Teacher**

Occasionally parents may have a question or concern they want to discuss with their class teacher. Because the teacher is "on-duty" during the time parents drop off and pick up their children, it is best to call or write a note to arrange a specific time that is mutually convenient.

### **Questions and Concerns - Whom To Ask?**

In an effort to make the process more effective, we ask you to follow these guidelines:

Questions regarding your child or his or her class or teachers should be taken directly to the class teacher. If you are unsuccessful in your conversation with your class teacher, please take your concerns to the College Chairperson.

Questions regarding the school in general, the building and grounds, policies or procedures, finances, withdrawals and long-range planning can be brought to the Business Manager.

Questions regarding tuition payments should be brought to the Business Manager.

Questions touching on the specific area of work of a committee may be taken to the contact person of that committee. Our current standing committees are Finance, Site & Safety, Development & Fundraising, and Graduation.

Questions regarding parent involvement in field trips, festivals, fundraising events or work parties may be directed to one of the Parent Council representatives from your child's class.

The Class Teacher is a good place to start if it is unclear just where a question should be addressed.

### **Problem Solving Procedure**

The Problem Solving Procedure and Appeal Process is intended to resolve issues or disputes at the school..

#### Step 1. Direct Face-to-Face Discussion:

Whenever a problem or disagreement exists between individuals within the school community, the individual identifying the problem (the Presenter) is encouraged to take the matter up directly and personally with the other party. The matter should be addressed by all concerned with respect, kindness, and consideration.

Step 2. Discussion with College Chair: If the problem or disagreement is between a parent (or child) and a teacher, and attempts to resolve the matter at Step 1 have been unsuccessful, the Presenter shall take the matter to the College Chair. If the College Chair is somehow involved with the situation, an alternate College member will be asked to facilitate. The College Chair, will solicit assistance from the College. If the College representative and the Presenter are not able to resolve the problem or disagreement, then the Presenter may proceed to Step 3.

Step 3. Convening a Facilitation Group: If the disagreement cannot be resolved between the parties then the Presenter may make a written Request for Assistance. This Request for Assistance should include the specific issues to be resolved and be delivered to the College Chair. The College Chair will, within 5 working days, schedule and attempt to convene at least 3 members of a Facilitation Group (preferably one person from each of the three bodies of the school) for the purpose of facilitating a resolution

of the problem.

This group will meet and confer with the parties involved, and any other person offering relevant information, as soon as practicable, and attempt to facilitate an amicable resolution of the problem. When an agreement is successful, it should be put in writing, and signed by the parties. If facilitation is not successful, either party may contact the College Chair for information on further remedies.

## CHAPTER 4

# ENROLLMENT AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

### **Application Process**

The application procedure includes the following steps:

1. Inquiry is received by phone, mail, or in person, and information and application forms are sent out.
2. A completed application form and \$50 non-refundable application fee are sent to the Enrollment Coordinator.
3. An orientation interview and tour, if needed, are arranged with the Enrollment Coordinator.
4. The class teacher arranges an interview with the child and parents within three days. A 3-day visit to the grade school is scheduled if possible.
5. A decision regarding acceptance and parents are notified.

### **Provisional Period**

The provisional period is a period of evaluation that applies to every child entering Whatcom Hills Waldorf School. The period lasts four weeks. During this time the teacher will evaluate the compatibility of the program with the child. At the end of this period, the teacher will decide whether to admit the child.

### **Dismissals**

The school reserves the right to dismiss a child if the teacher, with the consent of the College and Board, deems it necessary for the welfare of the child or the school.

### **Contracts**

Financial contracts outlining the monetary agreements between a family and the school are issued for each family each year. A signed contract and payment of supply fees ensure a space in a class from year to year.

### **Tuition Reduction**

It is our intent to make Waldorf education available to any family that desires it, regardless of the family's financial situation.

### **Sibling Discounts**

Families with more than one child enrolled are entitled to a discount of 25% for the second child and 40% for additional children. The discount is applied to the youngest child(ren)'s tuition. Sibling discounts do not apply to the 3-day Kindergarten program.

### **Absences**

Total tuition and installments remain the same each month regardless of non-attendance for any reason, school closure, or holidays.

### **Supply Fee**

This fee covers classroom materials, school supplies, a subscription to Renewal (a magazine about Waldorf education), and dues for the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). Supply fees are due upon enrollment and are non-refundable.

An additional expense of approximately \$50.00 is needed for a wooden flute for all first graders, fourth graders, and other new students to the grade school. Instrument rental in fourth grade is the responsibility of each family, and rates vary depending on the instrument chosen.

There are occasionally fees for special classroom field trips, etc. at various times in the grades. You will be notified in advance of any additional fees.

### **Returned Check Charge**

A fee of \$15.00 will be charged for checks returned for insufficient funds.

### **Tuition Payments / Late Fees**

Tuition is due on the 1st of every month. A \$5.00 late fee will be assessed to those accounts that are not paid by the 10th of the month. If payment is not made by the end of the month in which it is due, the student may not attend class until the discrepancy is resolved

### **Early Withdrawal**

If a child needs to be withdrawn during the school year, at least one month's paid notice is required. No withdrawals are credited after April 1st. We will gladly help develop individual payment plans to meet anyone's specific budget requirements.

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### School Schedule

Please have your children arrive by 8:25 a.m. so that they are ready to begin each day. Do not bring children before 8:05 a.m. unless you are supervising them.

Pick-up time for the Kindergarten is 12:30 p.m. each day.

Pick-up time for the Grades is 3:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 1:15 p.m. on Friday end at 2:45 p.m. ). Please see the section titled "After School Child Care" for more information about pick-up.

### Absences

If your child will be absent, please call the office so that the class teacher can be informed. You may leave a message on the answering machine.

Please inform the class teacher of any circumstances in the home that might affect a child's attendance. If specific circumstances make a long absence necessary, it is essential to consult with the class teacher as early as possible.

### How to Start the Day off Well

Your child's educational experience begins upon waking. The morning spent readying for school is a vital component in a child's educational success, much as a stable home – life is to their emotional well-being. It is suggested that parents make their child's waking, readying, and travel to school as pleasant, consistent, and rhythmical as possible. A child who is awakened gently from the realm of sleep, who has a consistent and timely morning ritual of washing, dressing, etc, and who receives warm, nourishing protein filled breakfast, is a child who is ready to begin a day of learning. It is suggested that parents establish a consistent morning routine, which fosters warmth and rhythm in their child's life. With contemporary travel needs, it is often difficult to sustain the

peacefulness of a morning ritual. Parents are encouraged to make their child's travel to school as hassle - free as possible. It is asked that young children especially, not be exposed to audio book tapes, electronic hand- held games, news, music or inappropriate conversation while traveling to school. Parents are encouraged to discuss their expectations with their carpool drivers in order to reach a common understanding. Also, it is hoped that parents will establish a consistent short, leave taking ritual at the child's classroom door. In general, to fully participate in their day, your child should arrive at school with a warm body, a full belly, and a sense of well- being.

### Pick-up and Dismissal Policy

- 3:00 to 3:15 (1:15 to 1:30 on Fridays) – Students are with teachers until released to a parent or other adult. *There is no playing on the playground during this time.*
- -- Teachers sign remaining students into childcare and neighborhood children are asked to walk home.
- Once parents have collected their children, we ask that children's activities are closely monitored, and that no ball playing, i.e. kickball, basketball, tetherball, etc. happen at this time. If you are volunteering and/or not able to monitor your children, please sign them into the aftercare program.
- Any children that are unattended on the school grounds will be signed into childcare during the program's regular hours if we cannot easily locate the parents or adults in charge.

### Inclement Weather Policy

School cancellation due to weather or power outages will be announced on our local radio stations. Please listen to Bellingham's KGMI (AM

790) or KPUG (AM 1170) for school closures.

### **Immunization and Emergency Information**

State law requires that, in order to attend school, children must have an up-to-date Certificate of Immunization Status Form and complete Emergency Information. Please see the Administrative Assistant if you need help completing these forms.

### **Medical Policy**

In general, children with infectious diseases and/or parasitic infestation are not to be in school. There are many reasons for this:

1. **Safety:** We do not have the staff to adequately care for and be with children who have special needs of this nature and who often need to be cared for in quiet separate spaces of the school. This violates our legal need for adult supervision at all times.
2. **Protection of other children:** At school, we would like to keep the exposure of flu, colds, head lice, pin worms, etc., to a minimum.
3. **Protection of the sick child:** An active day at school is not the optimal environment for a child who needs rest and nurturing to recover from illness.

Please observe the following guidelines where applicable:

1. Do not drop off sick children at school. If your child has a sore throat, heavy cough, headache, stomach ache, nausea, or fever, arrange to have the child stay home or to be cared for elsewhere. The child may return to school 24 hours after the last major symptoms subside.
2. Children with parasitic infestation (head lice, pin worms, scabies, etc.) are not to be allowed in school. Re-admittance of a child who had parasites will be possible upon proof of treatment, including any prescribed waiting period, should one be designated by a physician or the health department. Re-examination upon return, especially in the case of head lice, may be necessary, in which case the parent

must accompany the child until he or she is readmitted.

3. In the event medicine needs to be administered during the school day, there are clear procedures in order to protect the school, the Staff, other children, and naturally, the individual child.

Staff members not allowed to give medicine to children except under the following conditions:

The medication must be provided in the original container (prescription bottle if appropriate). The parent is to bring the medicine to the office along with the written authorization and very specific instructions. Under no condition should medication, **prescription or non-prescription**, be sent to school in lunch baskets, with snacks, or in backpacks. We discourage bringing vitamins or other pills of any kind. If there is a specific, individual need, please discuss it with your child's teacher or the Administrator.

When a child becomes ill at school or is found to be ill when arriving at school, a parent will be called to pick up or arrange pick up of the child. State Law says that the sick child may not be kept in class and that the parent must pick up the child. It is the responsibility of the parent, not the school, to assess your child's health and readiness to be in school.

## **- DRESS CODE -**

*The staff of Whatcom Hills Waldorf School takes great care to ensure that our school's environment is aesthetically pleasing and conducive to learning. We encourage and appreciate ongoing parental support. Please be conscious of what your child is wearing each day at school.*

*Above all we want students to wear clothing that is comfortable, neatly mended, clean and suitable for both classroom and outdoor play. Our dress code ensures the comfort and good health of all our students, excludes things that are extreme and distracting, and helps to provide an optimal learning environment.*

*We are fully aware that our policy is quite specific and may represent a challenge for children, especially in the middle school years. This policy however, has been developed with great care and in dialogue with both parents and students. We are confident that its continued use will play a significant part in creating of a safe, pleasant, and appropriately stimulating learning environment for all the students on our campus.*

*The consequence of dress code violation will be that students may not be allowed to enter the classroom. Please keep in mind that enforcement of the dress code by teachers is not necessary when parents send their children to school appropriately dressed.*

**Our school's dress code is as follows:**

### **For All Ages:**

- Please ensure that school clothing is without rips and tears, is not excessively baggy or excessively tight, that pant legs do not drag on the ground, and that sleeves do not cover hands. Midriffs should be thoroughly covered so that no skin shows at the waist (even when arms are raised above heads).
- Clothing should be warm enough, e.g., tights, long pants, and long-sleeve shirts. Socks and appropriate shoes or boots are necessary in the cooler months. Students go outside for two recesses every day, and the school's policy is:

Long pants and sleeves from October through March; specific dates will be announced (short sleeves are acceptable inside year round).

- Jackets, hats, hoods and the like are required when the weather dictates them.
- Outdoor clothing, including hats and hoods may not be worn in the classroom.
- Shoes must be sturdy, comfortable, and suitable for running. Shoes must fit snugly on the feet and be fastened with shoelaces, if they are of the lace-up variety. No light up shoes please.
- No unrelieved black attire, neon, glittery, sequined, or camouflage fabrics.
- No media characters, advertisements, caricatures, violence, or media figures on clothing or other school materials, i.e., lunch bags or backpacks.
- Clothing without writing is requested (*see note under Grades Four through Eight*).
- Short mini skirts, short shorts, see-through clothes are not allowed. Tank tops must be 3 finger widths at the shoulder seam.
- Underwear must not be visible.
- Students may not wear chains, spiked or jewelry.
- Makeup may not be worn (*see note under Grades Seven and Eight*).
- Head shaving, dying, highlighting or bleaching of hair, tattoos and body piercing (other than ears) are not acceptable at our school (*see note under Grades Seven and Eight*).
- We ask that no one wear beeping watches or have other mechanical devices that make noise.

### **For Kindergarteners through Grade Two:**

- Children must keep an extra set of clothes at school, both for added warmth needs and for dry changes. Kindergarten children need to have a set of raingear at school that includes a coat, pants, and boots.

### **For Grades One through Three:**

- Small post earrings (no larger than earlobe) are okay at this age as is clear nail polish beginning in Third Grade.
- Indoor shoes/slippers are required for these grades; please ensure they fit snugly on the feet. Please avoid open back clog type shoes that are easily 'stepped out of' during circle activities.

**For Grades Four through Eight:**

- At this age, small earrings become acceptable as does light colored nail polish. Clear lip-gloss may be worn.
- Shirts that commemorate a Waldorf school event, such as the Olympiad, may be worn

**For Grades Seven and Eight:**

- Subtle, natural looking makeup may be worn at the teacher's discretion.
- Subtle, natural looking highlights may be added to hair, with consent of class teacher.
- Medium color nail polish may be worn.

**Eurythmy Performance Attire:**

- Students should feel comfortable in their clothing, and be unrestricted in their movements. Solid colors are preferred.
- No skin should show at waist even when arms are raised above heads.
- Girls should wear skirts or dresses (knee length or longer). Long, 'skirt-type' pants may be approved after consultation with the teacher. Long sleeves are preferred, shorts sleeves are acceptable, but no sleeveless tops please.
- Boys should wear clean, smart pants (no jeans). Pant legs must not touch the floor. Shirts should be long-sleeved, and tucked in., button-up, and polo-type shirts are acceptable, no tee shirts or sweatshirts please.

**Strings/Choir Performance Attire:**

- Girls should wear black skirts (knee length or longer) or pants, white shirts, blouses or tops, and dark shoes.
- Boys should wear black pants, white button-up shirts, and dark shoes.

**LUNCH AND SNACKS**

Children are given a mid- morning snack time in their classrooms. In the Kindergarten, snacks are prepared communally and ingredients are provided by the teacher. In the Grades, parents are encouraged to send their children with an ample and wholesome snack each day. children should not bring chewing gum or candy. Trading of snack or lunch items is discouraged. Baskets have traditionally proven a most satisfactory alternative to the media-oriented lunch boxes and have become an attractive part of the culture of our school.

**Videotaping**

As our children's plays become more staged and formal, they would seem to become good subjects for videotaping. Especially for absent loved ones, videotapes could become records for the future. However, we ask that you not videotape what these younger children do.

On two levels, for children in the elementary grades, this taping is directly harmful. At this age they are still relatively un-self-conscious; they enter into the story and action of the play more or less wholly. This is exactly what we want to have happen. Taping it will, in the moment of doing the play, interfere with this active engagement, especially with more "awake" children.

Videotaping is also harmful regarding how the children remember the play in the future. When they do become more self-conscious and critical and they view what they did at an earlier age, their generally fond memories of the experience of the play can be destroyed by their later critical capacities. The play needs to live in the memory of their living it, not in frozen pictures that they can "objectively" criticize later.

When they have reached that more self-conscious, critical age, videotaping may be a different matter. Once children are in seventh and eighth grades, parents may take up this subject for discussion with their class teacher.

## **Dog Policy**

Due to our growing popularity with local dogs, we must comply with the Whatcom County ordinance concerning dogs on school playgrounds. This policy states that dogs are allowed on school grounds only when under the control of a human and must be on a leash at all times.

## **Telephone Use**

The office telephones are for conducting school business and are in constant use. Children are permitted to use the telephone at any time during the day with written permission from their teacher. Should a parent wish to leave a message for a child, we'll be happy to convey it. In an emergency, we'll be glad to bring your child to the telephone to speak with you.

## OTHER PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

### **After School Child Care**

Child care is available to children ages 4 \_ to 11 years after school until 5:30PM for grades and 3:00 PM for kindergarten on a regular or drop-in basis. Children who are not picked up at dismissal become the responsibility of the Child Care staff for which there is a fee. The program policies and procedures are outlined in a separate booklet. Questions regarding the After School Child Care program may be directed to the Business Manager or the Program Director.

### **School Store**

Our school store, *Roots & Wings*, was opened in April of 1990. *Roots & Wings* is located next to the office. Hours will be posted.

The purpose of the store is to make available books, cards, prints, seasonal items, arts and craft supplies, and toys that are compatible with our school's philosophy and that are not generally available in the Bellingham community. It is also its mission to expand community awareness of the school and to provide the school with some income.

Volunteering at *Roots & Wings* is another way parents help at school.

*There are only two lasting bequests we can give our children. One is roots and the other is wings.*

-- Hodding-Carter

### **Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA)**

Whatcom Hills Waldorf School is a full member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). The primary purpose of AWSNA is to aid each affiliated school in improving the quality of the education which it offers. This is accomplished through a number of programs, including the following: conferences and workshops for teachers,

parents, and trustees; consultation services by experienced teachers on a wide range of issues; standing committees working with such issues as teacher preparation, ongoing deepening school review and evaluation, school economics, and finances.

AWSNA also publishes a broad spectrum of material addressing curriculum and school organization and the Renewal magazine which addresses pedagogical issues as well as updates from schools around North America. For more information about AWSNA, contact them by telephone at (916) 961-0927, by FAX at (916) 961-0715, or by mail at AWSNA Chairman, 3911 Bannister Road, Fair Oaks, CA 95268.

### **The Rudolf Steiner Foundation**

The Rudolf Steiner Foundation is a financial services organization offering a range of financial and advisory services to individuals and organizations active within the Anthroposophical movement. The Foundation also works with individuals to assist them in putting their money to work in socially constructive projects (loans) and assist them in directing their philanthropic support to organizations having development projects (gifts). If you would like to find out more about how the Rudolf Steiner Foundation can serve your giving and socially responsible lending interests, you can contact them by telephone at (518) 672-4414, by FAX at (518) 672-4214, or by mail at 89 Fern Hill Road, Ghent, NY 12075.

## APPENDIX

### School Songs

- Joseph Brockett, Shaker elder

#### The Sun

The sun is in my heart  
He warms me with his power  
And wakens life and love  
In bird and beast and flower.

The stars above my head  
Are shining in my mind  
As spirits of the world  
That in my thoughts I find.

The earth whereon I tread  
Lets not my feet go through  
But strongly does uphold  
The weight of deeds I do.

Then must I thankful be  
That here on earth I dwell  
To know and love the world  
And treat all creatures well.

-A.C. Harwood

#### Simple Gifts

'Tis a gift to be simple  
'Tis a gift to be free  
'Tis a gift to come down  
Where we ought to be

And when we find ourselves  
In the place just right  
We will be in the valley  
Of love and delight

When true simplicity is gained  
To bow and to bend  
We will not be ashamed  
To turn, to turn,  
Will be a delight  
'Til by turning, turning  
We come 'round right.