



# **Davis Waldorf School**

## **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

**UPDATED APRIL 2021**

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## **DWS Vision, Mission and Values Statement**

“We cultivate meaningful relationships between our teachers, parents and students, creating a supportive and engaging environment of Waldorf community members. We strive to work collaboratively and cooperatively with one another in a supportive school community. Additionally, we strive, through our multicultural education, to teach respect and an understanding of diversity within our community and our world. In doing so, we endeavor to extend trust, compassion, respect and understanding to one another without judgment. We encourage and foster all to communicate in a direct, yet thoughtful manner, which promotes confidence, connection, and trust.”

## **Davis Waldorf School Code of Conduct**

Communication guidelines facilitate the smooth functioning of the school and assist parents/guardians, students, faculty and staff members to work successfully together. The guidelines complement the regular, informal communication that already takes place between members of the school community.

Whether on campus or participating in a school event off campus, community members may not engage in criminal acts, hostility, use of profanity, conduct which is offensive or unwelcome, physical violence, taunts, threats, intimidation, verbal harassment or any other forms of malicious or hurtful behavior, racial or sexual harassment, the use of insults relating to race, religion, sex or gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes according to state and federal law. Students may participate in sex-segregated school programs, activities and facilities including athletic teams consistent with their gender identity regardless of the gender listed on school records. “Facilities” for the purpose of this code of conduct include bathrooms and

sleeping accommodations on field trips. We are committed to maintaining an environment in which all students and adults are treated with dignity and respect.

## **Section I: Directing Communication**

Contact the **Class Teacher** directly regarding any concerns about a child's experience in the classroom. If the matter is not resolved, please communicate this to your child's teacher. The next step is to confer with the DWS Director.

Contact the DWS **Director** at [director@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:director@daviswaldorf.org) regarding questions or feedback related to curriculum standards and:

- Hiring of new teachers, teacher evaluations, mentoring and professional development
- Pedagogical policies, student assessment and support, parent education
- Facilitating communication around unresolved concerns including helping to frame concerns, bringing concerns directly to the other party and activation of the Student Support Group or the Trust Group

Contact the **Business Manager** at [finance@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:finance@daviswaldorf.org) regarding questions or feedback related to business operations, including:

- All fiscal, grounds, landscaping, site and maintenance operations
- Budget development and budget management
- Management of human resources and policies
- Safety and health concerns
- DWS Tuition Assistance Program
- Student information and statistics

Contact the **DWS Director** at [director@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:director@daviswaldorf.org) regarding questions or feedback about any of the following:

- Fundraising, festivals, events and community development
- Recruiting, volunteering or assigning volunteer groups for events and activities
- Parent Council
- School Bulletins and Updates
- Maintaining relationships with Friends of DWS, Alumni, Grandparents and their families

Contact the **Board Chair** [boardchair@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:boardchair@daviswaldorf.org) regarding questions or feedback about any of the following:

- Board Committees (see Governance and School Committees section of the DWS website)
- The DWS Director or Business Manager
- Financial or legal policies and procedures

Contact the **Enrollment Coordinator** at [enrollment@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:enrollment@daviswaldorf.org) regarding:

- Enrollment queries and enrollment deadlines
- School tours and Open Houses
- Outreach activities
- Marketing and Publications for the school
- Website and Social Media

Contact the **Bookkeeper** at [bookkeeper@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:bookkeeper@daviswaldorf.org) regarding:

- Tuition, Aftercare billing/payments, accounts receivable and payables

Contact the **Office Coordinator** at [office@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:office@daviswaldorf.org) who:

- Is the main point of contact for parents/guardians to inform the school when a student will be absent, to sign up for drop-in aftercare, or to report a health or safety concern
- Acts as primary receptionist for the front office, which includes serving as the main point of contact for visitors, parents/guardians, students, telephone calls, mail, and email
- Cares for sick and/or injured students as necessary
- Manages the school calendar with the schedule of all events and meetings
- Tracks which teachers, substitute teachers and volunteers are on campus on a daily basis

The Office Coordinator can also direct you to the appropriate staff member if you are unsure who to go to with a question.

## **Section 2: General Communication Pathways and Guidelines**

We value meaningful relationships to create a supportive and engaging environment for our students, families, teachers, staff and Board. Trust, compassion, cooperation, and respect for everyone in our community is vitally important.

### **A. Class Parents**

Each class has one or more Class Parents who support the class teacher and provide a communication link between the parents/guardians and the teacher. In collaboration with the class teacher, Class Parent(s) disseminate information through phone calls, emails, Shutterfly, text, and written notes; delegate jobs to other parents/guardians; coordinate class events; and share, receive and distribute information from and with the larger school community. **If a parent in the class has an email message to send to the parent body of the class, they should do this through the Class Parent and/or Teacher.**

## **B. Parent Council**

Any parent/guardian who has a student at the school is invited to participate in the Parent Council. Parent Council serves to enhance parent/guardians' communication within each of the classes in the school community and with the Faculty and Administration. Parent Council considers parent initiatives, holds the community life of the school, and supports volunteerism and fundraising efforts. Parent Council also supports education and enrichment opportunities.

## **C. School Website**

The school's website is <http://www.daviswaldorf.org>. The DWS Parent Handbook, this DWS Communication Policy and other policy documents will be available online, as well as information about the curriculum, admissions, community life, school newsletters and the school calendar.

## **D. Online Class Communication**

Each teacher is responsible for online communication with their class, using internet share sites, listing basic information about the class as well as the communication preferences of the teacher (for example, whether and how the teacher uses text messaging).

## **E. School Directory and Solicitation for Business**

All enrolled families, board members and employees access the school directory through the BigSis portal. It is intended for use for school and community events and communication only. The directory or school email lists may not be used for business solicitation or shared with any outside groups or people. Solicitation for business is not allowed in any form on campus.

## **F. Email Etiquette**

Email communication should be respectful at all times. Email is not considered the appropriate medium for conveying concerns and, in these cases, is appropriate only for arranging meetings and for informational communication. Please see Section 3D for more information about email etiquette.

## **G. Cell Phone Etiquette**

Please limit cell phone use on the school grounds to the breezeway between the main office and the MPR, inside vehicles in the parking lot and the front parking circle (adjacent to Sycamore Road). Please be aware that parking at pick up and drop off times is in high demand, so be mindful of cell phone use in your vehicle at these times if you are using a parking space.

## **H. School-wide communication: Monthly Newsletter & Bulletin**

Community members have a responsibility to read in a timely manner all communications from the school: e.g. class notes and emails, school newsletter, school policies, etc.

On the second Wednesday of each month (excluding holidays and vacations), the Office Coordinator emails to all parents/guardians, faculty, and staff a "Monthly Update" with articles written about classroom life and school events.

Parent/guardians and others are welcome to submit articles to be considered for inclusion. The deadline for submission is Monday by 12 noon, the week of publication. Please email submissions to [office@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:office@daviswaldorf.org). The Monthly Newsletter is also available in the parent portal section on our website, [www.daviswaldorf.org](http://www.daviswaldorf.org). The fourth Wednesday of the month (depending on holidays), the school publishes a brief summary “Bulletin” with dates and reminders.

It is vital that everyone read the Update and the Bulletin thoroughly. They include important and timely information that may not be delivered through any other method. The school is committed to keeping emails to a minimum, therefore the Update was created. Please ensure that the office has your most current email address.

### **I. Communication with the Media**

The DWS Director is the only School representative authorized to discuss matters related to the School with the media. Parent/guardians, faculty, and staff members may never divulge any information regarding the School, its faculty or staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, students, programs, policies, or procedures to the media without prior formal authorization from the DWS Director. Only those who have received specific authorization from the DWS Director are permitted to respond to media inquiries. If a faculty, staff member, or parent/guardian is contacted by a reporter, they must not release any information, no matter how insignificant it may seem. Media personnel must be immediately directed to contact the DWS Director, who will determine the appropriate action.

### **J. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is essential for students, families and all employees in all areas of school communications. All employees are responsible for upholding the confidentiality statement as described in the Employee Handbook.

The confidential business affairs of the School should not be discussed with persons outside the organization, unless authorized and required during the normal course of business. This includes revealing confidential information to any other parent/guardian, faculty or staff member who does not have a legitimate need to know the information.

Confidential records concerning students, parents/guardians and staff members is private, and disclosure to unauthorized persons could be harmful or against the law. Information concerning the activities or operations of the School's students, especially academic, medical and financial records, is confidential and must be treated as such.

When students and families provide personal information to the school it shall be used solely for school purposes. The information is protected and will not be used to target advertising to students or families.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information is a violation of the School's policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for an employee. A parent/guardian may be required to have limited access to the school campus or to withdraw their family from the school.

### **K. Communication with the Board of Directors**

Parents/guardians, faculty and staff members are welcome to attend any Board meeting. Meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month starting at 7:30 pm virtually via Zoom. Attendees are invited to share any questions, ideas or issues in the section of the meeting allocated to "community share". This portion is usually held at the beginning of the Board meeting.

Parents/guardians or faculty and staff members may also communicate in writing directly to the Board of Directors through the Chairperson. These letters can be addressed care of the school and may be submitted via email to [boardchair@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:boardchair@daviswaldorf.org) or in hard copy to the office, Attention: Board Chair. Receipt of correspondence will be acknowledged within 24 hours. If the matter is urgent please state this in your correspondence and the information will be shared with the Board within three days of receipt. Non-urgent matters will be addressed during the community share portion of the next meeting of the Board. The Chairperson will follow up with the parent/guardian, faculty or staff member in a timely manner regarding the matter brought.

Strictly informational inquiries related to board policies and procedures, publicly available financial information, or legal policies and procedures can be directed to the Board Secretary via email to [boardsecretary@daviswaldorf.org](mailto:boardsecretary@daviswaldorf.org) or in hard copy to the office, Attention: Board Secretary. The Board Secretary will respond to the informational inquiry within 3 days.

## **Section 3: Situation-Specific Guidelines**

### **A. Communication between Teachers & Students**

In the classroom and throughout all school activities, we expect that the communication from the teacher to the student is clear and loving with definite and well-understood boundaries. Teachers exercise authority in the classroom in different ways as students journey through the school. The three approaches to authority – imitation, guidance, and respect for expertise – provide a context for communication in the classroom or school. Teachers, as role models for the students, should always strive to show respect, care and responsibility in their communications and interactions with students and with each other. If a teacher does not follow these guidelines, or adhere to the DWS Code of Conduct, it will result in disciplinary action.

Teachers expect students to respect others, the school and themselves, and to reflect this respect in their actions, manner, and speech. Should disrespectful communication occur, or a breach of the DWS Code of Conduct, the parents/guardians will be notified. If concerns persist,



the teacher will consult the Student Support Group (see Appendix A). If the issue persists, it may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion of the student.

### **Social Media Communication**

Teachers and employees are prohibited from “friending” or interacting with current students via social media and posting or sharing any pictures of students without parental consent. Teachers may post pictures of students on a class share site or on the DWS Facebook page. If you do not wish for pictures of your child to be posted, please let your teacher and administration know.

### **B. Communication between DWS Parents/Guardians & Students**

Students and teachers are expected to respect themselves and others, and to reflect this respect in their actions, manner, and speech. So too, should all members of our community model this behavior.

If disrespectful communication occurs from a student toward an adult, then the adult should clearly and kindly clarify that they expect the student to communicate respectfully. If appropriate, the adult could also consult the student’s teacher and/or parent/guardian. If the issue persists, the teacher will refer the matter to the Student Support Group (see Appendix A). If the issue continues to persist, it may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion of the student.

Should disrespectful communication occur from an adult toward a student, this should be reported to the DWS Director who will bring the issue to the appropriate individual(s) or group (for example the Trust Group or the Student Support Group. See Section 4 for more information about the Trust Group and Appendix A for more information about the Student Support Group). If the matter is not resolved, it may result in disciplinary action, up to and including requiring the adult to have limited access to the school campus or to withdraw their family from the school.

### **Social Media Communication**

Parents/guardians should not post or share pictures and videos of other students on social media without consent from the other student's parents/guardians.

### **C. Communication between DWS Students**

Davis Waldorf School is committed to promoting a social environment in which working, playing, and learning take place in ways that foster inclusiveness. Each student is expected to respect their peers and to reflect this respect in their actions, manner, and speech. We recognize that social conflict is an integral part of human growth and development that must be guided rather than avoided. As a school, we strive to help students learn how to resolve conflicts. With this goal in mind, DWS has adopted the ‘Social Inclusion Approach’.

## **Social Inclusion**

The Social Inclusion Approach is based upon the training faculty and staff have received from Kim John Payne, wherein we strive to strengthen the student's capacity for empathy, compassion, and perspective-taking. Much of the work is preventative in nature. When conflict does occur, there is a toolbox of exercises and ideas that provide structure to guide students through conflict. This approach is held by the Student Support Group, a faculty group charged with supporting students and their families with social, academic/remedial, and discipline/guidance issues. More information about the Student Support Group is available in Appendix A.

## **Normal Peer Disagreements, Aggression, and Bullying**

Bullying is a term that is used in many different ways. Conflict happens in the course of human interactions. We use the following guidelines to identify and address each situation and address it appropriately.

1. **Peer to Peer Conflict:** in the course of normal child development there will be disagreements and even arguments over different topics. The conflict does not include the intent to harm and arises out of the situation at hand. It is not pre-planned.
2. **Social Aggression:** aggressive behavior without pre-planning, i.e. telling the other children to put down or tease a child because of how the child looks or is dressed, or pulling a chair out from under a child when the child is sitting down.
3. **Bullying:** always includes premeditation with the intent to cause harm, emotionally or physically. Bullying is persistent, prolonged and deliberate, targeted, has a power component, and happens over time.

Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility that are based on sex, gender identity, or gender expression, regardless of whether they are sexual in nature are prohibited by state and federal law.

Faculty and staff will promptly respond to any observed or reported incidents of aggression, bullying, or other breach of the DWS Code of Conduct, involving DWS students during school hours or during school sanctioned activities such as field trips or Aftercare. School staff who witness aggression or bullying shall immediately intervene to stop the incident. For severe or repeated incidents, the staff member will complete an incident report and notify both the teacher and parents/guardians.

Students who continue to engage in social aggression or bullying despite the efforts of the class teacher and parents/guardians will be brought under the care of the Student Support Group, who will work specifically with the teacher, parents/guardians and students to effect positive change. Parent and teacher attendance at Support Circle meetings is mandatory (see Appendix A).

As a part of this process, students may be given a probationary period to effect positive change. If improvements are not realized during the time set, it may be determined that the student is not being best served in this educational setting and the suspension and/or dismissal policy implemented.

The teacher and/or the Student Support Group may also recommend involving mental health counselors. CPS and/or law enforcement may also be involved at any point in this process as needed.

If a parent/guardian feels their child is being bullied, they can engage the Student Support Group via the class teacher or the DWS Director. For more information about the Student Support Group, please see Appendix A

### **Social Media and Cyberbullying**

At the Davis Waldorf School we strongly discourage the use of social media by students. If, however, a student does use social media they should communicate respectfully. We recommend students do not post their address or phone number, or post or share pictures of their peers without their consent. For more information about Cyberbullying, see Appendix B.

### **D. Communication between Teachers & Parents/Guardians**

Teachers and parents/guardians are asked to be role models for healthy, respectful communication and to follow the DWS Code of Conduct.

Regular parent meetings, annual parent-teacher conferences, and visits with the teacher establish trust and confidence as well as maintain the communication so vital to the social fabric of DWS. Each year and prior to the first day of school, teachers will notify parents of their communication guidelines regarding email, phone, texting, face-to-face conversations and hours of availability.

In general teachers are focused on their class, student supervision and lesson preparation first thing in the morning. As much as possible conversations or parent/guardian questions that require more than a brief “yes” or “no” should be saved until after school or handled by appointment.

In the case of joint custody agreements all written communication from teachers to parents/guardians regarding their child will be directed to both parents/guardians.

### **Parent Meetings**

Parent meetings are vital links to the student’s classroom experience. Each class teacher schedules parent meetings throughout the year; the frequency and format of the meetings will vary depending on the grade, averaging four meetings per year. At parent meetings, teachers may cover the grade’s curriculum and schedule of main lesson blocks, discuss class expectations

and student development, plan for class activities, offer a discussion on Waldorf principles, suggest activities for home that relate to the student's activities in class, etc.

Parent meetings provide parents/guardians an opportunity to learn what is happening in the class, discuss developmental stages, share parenting experiences, prepare for field trips and special events, and plan for their child's mutual learning. The parents/guardians get to know one another through participating in the class' social events, the planning of class and school activities, and the social relationships among the students. For these many important reasons, at least one parent/guardian is strongly encouraged to attend every parent meeting.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

These conferences are held in November to discuss the academic and social progress of each student. The class teacher will discuss the student's progress and provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and ask questions. Each teacher is required to offer a parent teacher conference. Ideally this conference would be held in person; however it may be conducted over the phone or by video conference, or issued in writing, if an in-person meeting is not possible. To facilitate the meetings, school is closed M-W of Thanksgiving week. The teacher is required to provide a range of daytime, evening and weekend options for conferences.

### **End-of-Year Reports**

The student's class teacher prepares a detailed narrative describing the student's academic and social progress over the course of the year. Reports are generally available by the end of July and are mailed to the parents/guardians. This report is the official transcript of the student's Waldorf education. If a parent/guardian would like to add to, or disagree with, anything in the report, they have 30 days to submit their written comments to the office for inclusion in the student's cumulative student records.

### **Parent/Teacher Meetings and Support Circle Meetings**

In addition to the above-listed formal communications, there may be additional times when parents/guardians and teachers need to meet. Requests for meetings from either party should include a range of available times and a short statement of the topic of concern.

Sometimes Support Circle Meetings are called by the teacher and/or the parents/guardians to aid a student in the academic/remedial, social or discipline realms. Support Circle Meetings are facilitated by the Student Support Group. For more information, see Appendix A, section B.

### **Text Messaging**

Teachers have varying preferences regarding the use of text messages which will be communicated to their parent body.

Text communication should be respectful at all times. Texting is not the appropriate medium for conveying sensitive issues and, in these cases; email should be used to arrange a meeting to discuss the issue/s.

### **Email Etiquette**

DWS policy for teachers is that they check their email daily and respond within 24 hours (except on weekends). Email is used regularly by teachers to convey important information to parents/guardians. To facilitate consistent communication, ideally parents/guardians should regularly check their email and be responsive. If the preference is not to use email at all please make alternative communication arrangements with the teacher/class parent.

Email communication should be respectful at all times. Email is not the appropriate medium for conveying sensitive issues and, in these cases; email should be used to arrange a meeting to discuss the issue/s.

### **DON'T**

1. Don't use email to bring criticisms as it is often more damaging than helpful.
2. Don't send out a group email to air dissatisfaction with something under any circumstances.
3. Don't put something in a message that you do not want everybody to read; emails are easily forwarded to other readers.
4. Don't respond quickly when angry. An email can be composed and saved as a draft. Think the email over and re-read it before pushing the "send" button.
5. Don't forward email that has offensive remarks or sensitive information.

### **DO**

1. Do use email to set up meetings.
2. Be mindful of the tone of the email. Without the presence of voice intonation or body language, emails can be easily misunderstood.
3. Parents should run emails intended for the parent body of the class past the teacher or Class Parent before sending. As each class progresses through the grades and a cohesive relationship forms, the class may collectively agree that they are comfortable with direct communication to the entire parent body.

### **E. Communication between DWS Parents/Guardians**

While on campus or at any school event off campus, community members must adhere to the DWS Code of Conduct (see beginning of this document). We request that all adults in the community employ the communication guidelines outlined below in Part 4 when speaking to each other: such as respectful inquiry, face-to-face conversations with the appropriate person, and proper email etiquette.

Should an infringement of the DWS Code of Conduct occur, parents/guardians will be referred to the Trust Group to understand the full consequences of their actions and given the opportunity to redress any harm done. If the issue persists the parent/guardian may be required to have limited access to the school campus and/or employees, be required to step off committees, or to withdraw their family from the school.

## **Section 4: Communication Guidelines and Conflict Resolution**

At DWS, it is our desire to foster an effective communication process between all members of the DWS community. Should an issue arise, it is required that both parties meet in person, potentially with a communication facilitator, if needed, to achieve a resolution. The following steps outline the process we ask all adult community members to follow when working through a conflict.

### **1. First bring the question/issue directly to the other person in a timely manner.**

Many problems can be averted by speaking directly to the other person before concerns grow out of proportion. For the overall health of our school and success of our programs, please bring issues immediately to the person involved rather than process it with others. The other person should be given the opportunity to share the reasons behind their actions.

If help is needed approaching the person directly or framing the question/issue, please speak with a trusted friend or school employee with the intention that they help articulate the concern in a fruitful manner.

*Example 1. A parent/guardian may have a question for a teacher about how the curriculum is being delivered or how their teacher is working with her/his students.*

*Example 2. A staff member may have a question about something a colleague is doing.*

### **2. Bring sensitive questions or concerns in a face-to-face conversation.**

Body language and voice intonation are important for accurate understanding of the other's intentions. If a face-to-face meeting is not easily achievable, video chatting or a phone call would be the next best thing. If, at any time during the phone conversation, either party feels the call has taken a negative tone, the conversation will be postponed until both parties can meet face-to-face.

### **3. Please use the method of "respectful inquiry" and principles of nonviolent communication.**

Bring a concern as a question rather than an accusation or judgment. This approach is important because no one likes to be accused of unfair actions before all the facts are brought forth. In addition, when students report an incident they may only be reporting

those facts that were important to them or what they perceived as the truth without knowing the whole story.

*Note to parents/guardians: if a student reports anything that is of concern, please contact their teacher as soon possible.*

*Example 1. Instead of saying, "I never know what is going on with the curriculum. We heard the Bible is being taught in 3rd grade, I thought this wasn't a religious school!" Rephrase to: "I am curious as to why the Bible is being taught at school? Is this a standard part of the curriculum? I have some personal issues with this and so anything you can do to help me understand the reasoning behind this would be appreciated."*

*Example 2. Rather than saying, "Why is she doing that?" Rephrase to: "When I see her doing that, I am concerned that she is not following school policies. I need clarity about what is going on. Could you come with me to meet with her to clarify the situation? Maybe she is unaware of our policy."*

*Example 3: Rather than saying, "My daughter is miserable because your child is bullying her." Rephrase to: "When I see my daughter is unhappy and she tells me about some hurtful things that are happening on the playground, I feel worried. I need clarity about what is going on. Would you share with me what is happening?"*

**4. Next Steps.** Usually, going directly to the other person is all that is needed, but if the above process has been utilized and the conflict remains unresolved, please communicate to the other person that the issue still needs resolution for you. The next step is to contact the DWS Director to request that they or another member of the Trust Group serve as a Communication Facilitator. This facilitator will help bring the continued concern to the other person in a face-to-face meeting that aims to resolve the outstanding issue/s. When a meeting is requested, both parties must supply at least three alternative times to meet, including weekend and evening times, and the meeting must be attended within 2 weeks from the requested meeting date. Attendance at the meeting is mandatory.

**5. Unresolved concerns: The Trust Group** if step #4 has still not addressed the concerns, DWS is committed to seeking resolution. The next step is to request that the DWS Director set up a Trust Group meeting.

The DWS Trust Group is comprised of six support people, all of whom have been trained in conflict resolution.

A Trust Group meeting uses a modified "Common Concern" format, is led by a facilitator and lasts approximately one hour. Each individual chooses a support person from the Trust Group and works with that person to present and resolve their concerns during the facilitated meeting. When a meeting is requested, both parties must supply at least three alternative times to meet, including weekday, weekend and evening times, and the meeting must be attended within 2 weeks from the requested time.

Refusal to attend the Trust Group meeting may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for an employee.

Refusal to engage in this conflict resolution process or a Trust Group meeting may result in the parent/guardian having limited access to the school campus/employees, being required to step off committees and/or to withdraw their family from the school.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **DWS Student Support Group**

#### Roles, Tools and Processes

The Student Support Group (SSG) at the Davis Waldorf School is a faculty-led group which focuses on supporting individual students in the academic, social and discipline realms. If a parent/guardian would like to request the help of the Student Support Group, they should contact their child's teacher.

#### **Support Circle Meeting**

One of the most important tools of the Student Support Group is a Support Circle Meeting. This is a meeting between parents/guardians and teachers. The student is not present. The purpose of the meeting is for the adults who care for the student to communicate and find better ways to support a student who is experiencing difficulties by building on what is already working for the student. Often Support Circle Meetings are called after the teacher has worked for some time with the student and/or parents to improve a situation. When a Support Circle Meeting is called, attendance by both teachers and parents/guardians at this facilitated and minuted meeting is mandatory, as it is considered crucial for the success of the student.

#### **A. Academic/Remedial Realm:**

If, due to classroom behavior, parental concerns or results from the teacher screenings and reviews, a student is identified as needing extra help in the therapeutic, remedial or academic realms, the

Student Support Group can help in the following ways:

- Initiate an informal Child Observation or request a formal Child Observation (with parent permission, the full faculty observes the child with warmth and provides feedback)
- Hold Support Circle Meetings (detailed below in Section B)
- Maintain a list of providers in a wide variety of areas in both the therapeutic and academic realms, and help link the identified student with an appropriate support service provider
- With parent/guardian agreement and financial support, connect the student with in-house tutoring, Therapeutic Eurythmy and/or Extra Lesson sessions, when available
- Review IEP or ISP services provided by the school district for students and prospective students at DWS and offer recommendations and support to the student's teacher or prospective teacher
- Discuss with the parents/guardians, in the context of a Support Circle meeting, the possibility that a student would be better served in a different setting where trained personnel can help with therapeutic/remedial needs

#### **B. Social Realm:**

Conflicts are a normal part of life and offer opportunities to learn about each other and ourselves. How we handle conflicts affects our relationships with each other and ourselves and the feelings of

trust and safety within our school. The SSG aims to stop harmful behaviors and support those involved in coming to a healthy resolution.

The SSG aims to support the social health of the school ideally, even before a crisis has occurred, by working with the culture of a class and using the Social Inclusion Approach. This approach helps support and maintain a healthy and safe environment for students and adults at DWS.

- The Social Inclusion Approach includes a process of intervention and mediation for issues of teasing and bullying, based on a “justice without blame” premise.
- By eliminating blame from the process, an environment of openness is created.
- This approach encourages students to trust that problems can be genuinely resolved, but also require accountability.
- Naturally, interventions and mediations will differ according to grade level.

### **C. Discipline/Guidance Realm:**

The Discipline/Guidance Group is the third realm in which Student Support Group operates. As with the other two realms, the main goal is to support students and their families when there is difficulty. Here are some of the key themes of this realm, based on the training faculty and staff received from Kim John Payne:

- There is no such thing as a disobedient student... only a disoriented one. When students “act out” they are looking to us to set calm, warm and firm boundaries to help them orient themselves.
- Restorative discipline seeks to hold a student accountable without blame or shame. Students can take part in “making good” if they are not stigmatized and feel they need to defend themselves against blame or shame.
- Students can change their behavior according to the environment if there is a clear and consistent expectation from all adults. Street and screen behavior can be left behind at the school gates when a faculty and administration is very clear and steadfast about what behavior they all expect to displace it.
- Each time discipline and guidance is warmly and firmly applied, the values of the community are clarified and strengthened. A faculty member or administrator helps to strengthen the identity of the whole community when applying discipline. An adult is not “being mean” but “being clear” about what the school stands for.

### **D. Dismissal Process:**

In all three realms (academic, social and discipline) the following path is followed:

- I. When there is sufficient time (i.e. the situation does not require immediate attention), the teacher will talk with the parents/guardians either by themselves or with the help of their mentor/advisor, to outline the challenges and explore possible interventions/modifications the teacher and parents/guardians can implement.

2. If the teacher determines that the student needs more support than the teacher and parents/guardians can provide, the teacher solicits help from the Student Support Group, often in the form of a Support Circle Meeting (see Section B).
3. Situation-specific action plans, goals, and time lines are set and agreed upon between parents, teachers and members of the Student Support Group in the academic, social and/or discipline realms. Follow-up meetings are held with the Student Support Group, and, as needed, clear statements of expected outcomes if positive changes are not made, including possible dismissal, will be documented for all parties. Subject and Aftercare teachers, as needed, will be consulted and informed of the plan.
4. If the teacher, in conjunction with the Student Support Group, finds there is insufficient progress despite these adjustments, the dismissal process will be implemented. This process can occur over the course of many months or, for a serious behavioral incident, can result in immediate suspension or expulsion.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying includes the transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images on the internet, social media, or other technology using a telephone, computer, or any wireless or other communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and/or assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's or another person's reputation.

Cyberbullying is not condoned at DWS. Harassing, dissing, flaming, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, and cyberstalking are all examples of cyberbullying. Don't be mean. Don't send emails or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else.

Engaging in these behaviors, or any online activities intended to harm (physically or emotionally) another person, will result in severe disciplinary action and loss of privileges. In some cases, cyberbullying can be a crime. Remember that online activities are monitored and retained by others.

Should cyberbullying occur, individuals with information about the activity shall be encouraged to save and print any electronic or digital messages sent to them that they feel constitute cyberbullying and to notify a teacher, the DWS Director, and law enforcement if indicated so that the matter may be investigated.

If the student is using a social networking site or service that has terms of use that prohibit posting of harmful material, the teacher and/or the DWS Director also may file a complaint with the Internet site or service to have the material removed.

**Personal Safety**

If one sees a message, comment, image, or anything else online that raises concerns for one's personal safety, bring it to the attention of the DWS Director immediately.