



# Family Handbook

**Walden School is a member of:**

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)  
California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS)  
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)  
Pasadena Area Independent Schools (PAIS)  
Progressive Education Network (PEN)  
Educators Consortium for Service Learning (ECSL)  
Educational Records Bureau (ERB)  
California Teacher Development Collaborative (CATDC)  
Independent School Alliance for Minority Affairs (ISA)  
National Business Offices Association (NBOA)  
The Enrollment Management Association (EMA)  
Southern California People of Color in Independent Schools (SoCalPOCIS)  
Private School Village

*In 2022, Walden School was granted another consecutive seven-year term of accreditation by the California Association of Independent School (CAIS) and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).*

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## **PREFACE**

This handbook addresses questions about Walden’s school culture, safety, and other policies and procedures. We also recognize that no set of guidelines can cover all situations that might arise. The policies and procedures in this handbook are intended to apply under ordinary circumstances.

However, there may be situations that require immediate or nonstandard responses. This handbook does not limit Walden’s authority to deviate from the normal policies and procedures set in this handbook and to deal with individual circumstances as they arise in the manner deemed most appropriate by taking into consideration the best interests of our students, staff, and school community. Policies may also be revised or periodically updated during the school year. Members of the community will be advised of any changes as they are made.

## **I MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

At Walden, we nurture a child’s natural wonder and personal dignity. We provide a personalized, developmentally appropriate program that encourages responsibility, initiative, child-led inquiry, ethical behavior, and excellence. We promote positive conflict-resolution skills, understanding, and creativity in problem solving. Children learn academic skills and concepts through experience and Socratic discussion, as well as through direct instruction and practice. We teach children to value and respect diversity. We strive, therefore, to lay the foundation for wisdom, to encourage the spirit of Renaissance learning, and to teach that we all have stewardship for the world in which we live.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Walden is dedicated to fostering intellectual, social, and personal growth for each child, using both traditional and innovative methods within a developmentally appropriate curriculum. We believe in whole-child education and recognize grade-level developmental milestones in establishing curricular goals and expectations. When children are appropriately challenged, the excitement and joy of learning are more likely to be retained. In addition to laying a firm academic foundation, Walden encourages disciplined and imaginative thinking and strives to help students see the interrelatedness of all that they learn. Also stressed is the importance of self-esteem, of graciousness and generosity, and the appreciation of differences among people, as well as the responsibility each of us has as members of a school community. Walden hopes to instill a love of learning in its students, as well as an understanding of the importance and skill of making choices and decisions.

### **DIVERSITY, BELONGING, AND JUSTICE STATEMENT**

Walden School seeks to foster a community of inclusion that respects, celebrates, and compassionately embraces the cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, socioeconomic, and personal diversity of each member of the Walden family. Walden strives to promote cultural competency and understanding through its curriculum, instruction, program, and community outreach. All members of the Walden community are responsible for working to create a school culture that values honest and open dialogue, mutual respect, and acceptance of different values and beliefs.

### **CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION AND BELONGING**

#### **WALDEN SCHOOL BIAS POLICY**

A bias incident is any conduct or expression that demeans, degrades, or could lead to harassment or discrimination against an individual or group based on the actual or perceived identity (including but not limited to gender, gender identity and/or expression, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, or ability) of another individual or group of individuals. A bias incident differs from a hate crime in that no criminal activity is involved.

Examples may include, but are not limited to: epithets, images, slurs, jokes, electronic communication or other verbal, graphic or physical conduct.

Racist language is not tolerated at Walden, regardless of intent. Students who hear racist remarks, jokes, or name-calling from others should feel empowered to interrupt the inappropriate behavior or remark and report the incident to faculty or administrators immediately. Any student who feels that they have been the victim of harassment or has witnessed harassment is strongly encouraged to notify a faculty member or school administrator as soon as possible. The complaint will be investigated immediately, and appropriate action will be taken.

## **HARASSMENT DEFINITION AND PHILOSOPHY**

Any form of physical, verbal, written, or electronic harassment—including ostracizing, bullying, threats of violence, sexual harassment, or racist behavior or language—is unacceptable and prohibited. Sexual harassment may include any unwelcome comment or action, which is sexual in content or implication. This includes unwelcome sexual advances, unwelcome teasing or sexual jokes, physical contact, or other verbal, physical or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Walden School and its Board of Trustees are committed to maintaining an environment that is free from unlawful harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. It is our expectation that all members of the Walden community—faculty, staff, students, and their families—have the right to pursue their work and education in such an environment. Walden School will not tolerate such behaviors in its community. We pledge to exercise timely diligence in the investigation of such incidents that are known or alleged to have occurred. We pledge to exercise vigilance in creating a community that is aware of these issues, educated about these issues, and dedicated to creating a culture of zero tolerance for, and proactive prohibition of, such behaviors.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

Walden School policy prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, gender identity, religion, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition including genetic characteristics, sexual orientation, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local law or ordinance or regulation. Walden School also prohibits unlawful discrimination based on the perception that anyone has any of those characteristics or is associated with a person who has or is perceived as having any of those characteristics. All such discrimination is unlawful.

## **THE WALDEN AGREEMENTS**

1. I cooperate with all the adults at school.
2. If I get mad, I solve it without hurting anyone or anything.
3. I stay with my group unless my teacher gives me permission to be somewhere else.
4. I try to keep myself and others safe.
5. I give my best attention and effort to my schoolwork.
6. I respect other people's rights.
7. I respect my environment and all of the living things in it.
8. I am responsible for my own feelings, my own actions, my own learning, and for using my wise mind to help me do my best.
9. I try to help others keep these agreements by setting a good example.

## **GUIDELINES FOR PARENTAL SUPPORT**

Parents who have chosen to send their child to Walden have made an informed decision; therefore, we welcome parental support of Walden's philosophy of education and its expression in the day-to-day school and classroom programs. To make your child's experience at Walden as productive as possible, we look forward to a strong, positive relationship between parents and the school.

To that end, the school maintains the following guidelines for Walden families that all parents/guardians are expected to read and to which they are expected to adhere. The agreement states the reasonable expectations we have of one another so that a relationship between the school and its families is established.



## WHAT PARENTS/GUARDIANS CAN EXPECT FROM WALDEN

### TIMELY AND RELEVANT COMMUNICATION

- You can expect us to return calls and respond to email within two business days (for example: an email sent on Thursday morning may be responded to by the end of day on Friday. An email received on Friday morning may be responded to by the end of the day on Monday).
- You can expect that regularly scheduled as well as informal conferences will provide you with pertinent and helpful information about your child's progress.
- In addition to family conferences, you can expect us to contact you with concerns or we will contact you about areas in which your child needs additional support.
- You can expect us to provide opportunities for you to learn about our program and to respond to your questions clearly.
- You can expect us to provide you with written feedback in the form of narrative reports twice a year.
- You can expect us to be clear and timely in our communication about health and safety guidelines.

### SUPPORTIVE Demeanor

- You can expect us to maintain a productive working relationship with your child and with you to support their growth and development.
- You can expect us to provide programs that support the social and emotional growth of your child as well as their intellectual growth.

### COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

- You can expect us to provide appropriate safety guidelines and behavior rules that help ensure that your child is safe while at school.
- You can expect us to enforce the established guidelines and community norms and to provide appropriate follow-up or consequences for your child.

## WHAT WALDEN EXPECTS FROM PARENT/GUARDIANS

### TIMELY AND RELEVANT COMMUNICATION

- We expect you to maintain open lines of communication with teachers, staff, and administrators.
- We expect you to share pertinent information that may impact the learning process of your child in a timely and complete manner.
- We expect you to respect the time constraints of your child's teachers by requesting informal conferences only when necessary, and by attending conferences on the designated days.
- We expect you to attend events designed to inform you about Walden's program so that you can be an informed partner in your child's education.
- We expect you to support our work with your child by following through on requests made to foster your child's growth.

### SUPPORTIVE Demeanor

- We expect you to support your child's teachers and foster a productive relationship between your family and the school community.
- We expect you to always speak respectfully and calmly to your child's teachers and Walden staff.
- We expect you to model inclusive behavior for your children.

### COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

- We expect you to support and follow the rules and regulations of the school and to support your child's efforts to do the same.
- We expect you to support the school in disciplinary actions the school implements to help your child grow into a productive citizen.
- We expect you to exhibit safe and respectful behavior at school performances and at community events.

- We expect that you adhere to all county and safety guidelines to keep our school safe during health and safety crises.

#### **ADDITIONALLY, WALDEN ENCOURAGES PARENTS/GUARDIANS/FAMILIES TO:**

- Be informed and involved in the Walden Parent Guild its many volunteer opportunities.
- Demonstrate to children the value of volunteerism by finding an outlet for engagement within the school.
- Read and respond to information from the school.
- Support Walden's fundraising efforts to the extent possible and appropriate for your family.
- Attend Back-to-School nights, school presentations, and a minimum of two school-sponsored education and community building activities.

## **II GOVERNANCE**

Walden School is incorporated under the laws of the state of California and is a non-profit, membership corporation. As such, it is governed by a Board of Trustees that is elected by the community of parents and staff and administered through the Head of School.

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Board of Trustees of Walden School is responsible for the overall welfare of the school. Board members serve as stewards for the school's mission and philosophy. Within that responsibility, the Board's primary function is to set broad policies consistent with the school's mission and to assure the fiscal stability necessary to maintain an educational environment which facilitates excellence in the realization of the school's philosophical and curricular goals. Additionally, the Board is concerned with the hiring and evaluation of the Head of School, legal issues, and fundraising. The Board consists of elected voting members. These members include parent representatives, two or three Walden faculty, the Head of School, and various community members whose expertise supports the mission of the school. The Board meets monthly.

The Board seeks to attract new members who possess the following qualifications:

- a commitment to the mission, philosophy, and goals of Walden School;
- intellectual integrity – an ability to consider all issues with an open mind and to hold an institution-centered, rather than a personal stake, perspective on issues;
- cooperative spirit – an ability to reinforce and support agreed upon Board policies and long-range plans;
- complementary expertise to those of the present Board members; and
- willingness to give and be actively involved in fundraising.

The overall responsibility of the Board is informed by the Principles of Good Practice for Member Schools as established by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

## **III COMMUNICATION**

Effective communication is the key to Walden's goal of involving parents in the education of their children. We look forward to working with you to ensure your child's successful school experience. Informing Walden families about their student's classroom life and school activities occurs in a variety of ways.

One of the biggest challenges a school can face during the year is to maintain an easily accessible two-way stream of communication with its community. Whether it is a reminder about an upcoming Bagels & Chatter event, or a new volunteer opportunity, or an e-mail address update, there is a lot of information to disseminate.

Employment changes are shared with the community when it is appropriate for both the individual teacher or staff member and for the school at large. This practice follows legal and professional norms, and we ask that you respect the personal and professional boundaries of our employees. Please keep in mind that staff changes are a normal part of any healthy school community.

## WEBSITE

Walden's website provides a wealth of information regarding Walden's program, the school year, upcoming community events, and more! To access the website, please visit [www.waldenschool.net](http://www.waldenschool.net)

Members of the Walden community also have access to "The Pond," which is a password-protected section of the website containing information regarding school activities, as well as other helpful links, forms, and updates. Your child's biannual progress report can also be accessed through the Pond.

### STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR LOGGING INTO "THE POND"

1. Visit [www.waldenschool.net](http://www.waldenschool.net)
2. Click on "The Pond" link at the top, right-hand corner of the Walden website
3. You will be prompted to log in with the username and password provided to you by the school
4. If you need assistance with your username or password, please contact the front desk at (626) 792-6166 or [support@waldenschool.net](mailto:support@waldenschool.net)

### HOW TO UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

As Walden strives to maintain effective communication with its community members, it is important for you to ensure that the school has your most current contact information on file. You can update your information online by logging into *The Pond*. After updating the information, be sure to click "Save" at the bottom of the page before logging off. Your information will not be saved unless you click "Save."

### STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR UPDATING THE ONLINE STUDENT DATABASE

1. Visit [www.waldenschool.net](http://www.waldenschool.net)
2. Click on "The Pond" link at the top, right-hand corner of the Walden website
3. Log into "The Pond" with the username and password provided to you by the school
4. Once in "The Pond," click the button that says "Family Profile Update"
5. Update your information and click "Save" then "Done" before logging off
6. If you need assistance with your password, please contact the front office at (626) 792-6166 or [support@waldenschool.net](mailto:support@waldenschool.net)

## COURT ORDERS

Any specific court-mandated exclusions or conditions for emergency attention regarding custody and/or safety of children must be on file with Walden School.

## PUBLICATIONS TO KNOW AND READ

### WALDEN WEEKLY

The Walden Weekly is emailed to all families each Thursday and contains articles of interest from the Head of School and Parent Guild, as well as highlights of upcoming events. To have your announcement or reminder included in the Walden Weekly, please email the Communications department at [communications@waldenschool.net](mailto:communications@waldenschool.net) by noon on Tuesdays.

### EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

In addition to the Walden Weekly, the School will send email announcements and invitations for school events and activities.

### CLASSROOM AND SPECIALTIES NEWSLETTERS

Classroom teachers send monthly newsletters to the parents of the students in their class, highlighting student learning across subject areas and classroom events, as well as sharing resources, articles, and ideas to ponder. Specialist teachers also send newsletters highlighting student learning in Art, Dance, Music, Physical Education, Science, Spanish, and Technology Wonderlab.

## **WALDEN ANNUAL REPORT**

As a non-profit organization, Walden annually publishes the audited financial figures from the previous fiscal year. The report also recognizes community members who have generously invested in and supported the Strategic Plan and future vision of the school with donations to The Walden Fund, Endowment, Capital Campaign, and Alumni Brick Walkway.

## **WALDEN YEARBOOK**

In partnership with the students and faculty, Parent Guild yearbook volunteers and the communications office team up throughout the academic year to publish the Walden yearbook, which is given to all students and staff free of charge at the end of the school year.

## **PARENT GUILD NEWSLETTER**

The Parent Guild (PG) Newsletter is emailed to all families once a month containing information on upcoming events and activities, committee announcements, and links to access all things PG.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Under the social media handle @lifeatwalden, the school shares stories and updates about Walden's school and community life on Facebook and Instagram.

# **IV COMMUNITY**

## **COMMUNITY GUIDELINES**

When there is any kind of conflict or concern, we encourage you to resolve it face to face as other forms of communication can take on a life of their own, going viral and losing their meaning and context. We teach the students to do the same, in part by modeling this behavior for them.

If you have a question or concern about curriculum or anything else classroom related:

Please do...

Reach out to your classroom teachers.

If further discussion is needed, contact the Director of Curriculum or the Head of School to make an appointment. Approach and address all parties in a respectful manner.

Please avoid...

Sending mass email to your class or to the school or posting about classroom or school issues on social media.

Parents are encouraged to "try on" curricular changes when they occur, to allow for ongoing exploration and growth in the classrooms.

## **COMMUNITY: ALL-SCHOOL EVENTS**

Every school needs active participation to thrive. Throughout the school year, many important opportunities exist for your support and involvement. Please visit the online calendar in [The Pond](#) to view a listing of the notable events for the year. Included below is a partial list of our all-school events.

### **BACK-TO-SCHOOL PLAYDATE AND PICNIC**

September

All new and returning families are invited to attend this event. This playdate and BYO picnic offers an opportunity to spend time with fellow families, reconnect after the summer, and meet new friends at the start of the school year.

### **NEW FAMILY WELCOME & ORIENTATION**

September

All new families and new students attend this information afternoon. Meet the Head of School and faculty and receive vital information about life as a Walden parent. Don't miss this special welcome!

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT – (For adults only)**

September

At Back-to-School Night, the Head of School first welcomes parents. Teachers are introduced, and parents are then invited to visit their child's classroom to learn about the curriculum, field trips, birthday parties, and cultural festivities. Teachers will outline parent volunteer opportunities in the classroom and answer questions. These are adult-only events. Please check [The Pond](#) calendar for details.

**WALDEN HOMECOMING**

October

This free community event brings together the whole community, from current families to alumni families, for an afternoon of games, crafts, refreshments, and fun activities.

**PARENT EDUCATION SPEAKER SERIES**

November – March

This annual speaker series is an opportunity for parents to explore and discuss issues that are of interest to the Walden community. Expert speakers lecture and facilitate discussion, and the larger community is also invited to attend. Events are free and childcare for school-aged children is provided with reservations for a fee. Check the [Online Calendar](#) for exact dates and details.

**GRANDPARENTS & GRAND FRIENDS' DAY**

November

Grandparents and grand friends are welcome to attend a morning of show and tell. A popular day with our Walden students, as they get to share their classrooms, introduce their teachers, and tell of the wonderful projects and learning in their classrooms. Please plan and think about an adult who might wish to be with your child on this special day. Invitations are mailed to all the grandparents on our mailing list, so be sure to complete the information in Veracross. Invitations are mailed in midfall

**WINTER SING**

December

This is a wonderful way for the whole family to get together and enjoy our Ponderers' (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students) winter performance! The Music teacher will publish performance details.

**BIG HELP**

Year-Round

This initiative highlights the school's efforts to enable Walden students to practice community service with their extended neighborhood. Organized by the Parent Guild, Big Help offers a variety of service projects in the greater San Gabriel Valley area that might include weeding and planting at a local park, performing for seniors, preparing care packages for children and animals, making lunch for a homeless shelter, collecting books for under-served schools, and many other project opportunities. There is a Big Help Community Action Day in January and an environmental clean-up day in the spring. Food donations for Friends In Deed, a local organization providing services for homeless and at-risk neighbors, are collected year-round in the food pantry in Walden's South building hallway. All families are encouraged to participate. For more information, please contact the Parent Guild Big Help Committee.

**SPRING SING**

March

Enjoy an evening of musical and dance performances by all Pre-K to 6<sup>th</sup> grade Walden students. The Music teacher will publish performance details.

## **OPEN HOUSE**

May

This is your child's opportunity to take you, the parent/guardian, around their classroom and tell you all about what goes on at school. All classrooms are open for you and your child to visit, giving opportunity to meet teachers in other core divisions and preview the curriculum in other grade levels.

## **ANNUAL ALL-SCHOOL MEETING**

May

As a membership non-profit corporation, Walden School holds an annual meeting where the business of the school is reported. Typically, it is at this meeting that new Board Trustees are confirmed for the coming year.

## **PARENT SUPERVISION DURING COMMUNITY & ALL-SCHOOL EVENTS**

Please keep a watchful eye on your child/ren during the various meetings and school events that your family will attend outside of regular school hours, both on campus and at other venues. During many community events, faculty and staff are busy and not available to supervise your children. Examples of these events include, but are not limited to Walden Homecoming, Winter Sing, and Open House.

# **V SCHOOL FINANCES**

## **TUITION & FEES**

Walden School is a non-profit organization with all fees being applied to the support and improvement of the school and program. As the School is maintained through tuition, prompt payment is important.

## **PAYMENT PLANS**

Walden offers three tuition payment plans as a convenience to families:

1. One payment: due June 1
2. Three payments: due June 1, October 1, and February 1
3. Ten payments: due the 1st day of the month, June – March.

## **LATE PAYMENTS**

The school sends monthly statements. Invoices that are paid via auto-debit will be specially marked and do not require a check. All other invoice payments are due on the first of the designated month. Write the student's name on the payment check to ensure proper student account credit.

Walden School must maintain a strong financial position to ensure its ability to provide a strong program for its students. With that in mind, a late fee of 5% of the outstanding balance will be added to all accounts unpaid by the fifth of the month. If any portion of the student's account remains delinquent at forty-five (45) days beyond its due date, that student will be dismissed from Walden School and not be allowed to return at any time in the future. Questions about student accounts should be addressed to the Director of Finance.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT TUITION & FEES**

1. Is tuition pro-rated for shorter months?  
Although the number of school days varies from month to month, tuition payments remain the same, since each payment represents a portion of the cost for the entire year and not a separate fee for each month or each day.
2. Are The Village fees pro-rated for shorter months?  
Although the number of school days varies from month to month, The Village fees remain the same for all months, including those months when the school does not meet for a full month.
3. What happens if my check bounces?  
Any check returned for insufficient funds will be subject to immediate collection and a handling fee of \$25. If a second check is returned for insufficient funds, the school will require that all

future payments be made by cashier's check or money order.

## WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION

Per the (Re)Enrollment Contract:

1. If the student leaves during the current school year, it is the family's obligation to pay the tuition listed in this contract for the full academic year. No portion of the tuition paid will be refunded and/or balance due will be cancelled if the student voluntarily or involuntarily leaves or withdraws from the school.
2. If the student will not attend Walden School the next school year, the Re-Enrollment Contract may be cancelled by notifying the school in writing before June 1. If the Re-Enrollment Contract is cancelled, the Deposit already paid will not be refunded.
3. On June 1, the obligation to pay full tuition becomes fixed and irrevocable. Cancellation on or after June 1 carries the obligation to pay the entire year's tuition. The fact that the tuition may be paid in multiple installments does not constitute a divisible contract. To review the complete Reservation Agreement/(Re) Enrollment Contract and Tuition Insurance Plan, please contact the Business Office.

## VI FLEXIBLE TUITION

### PHILOSOPHY & PURPOSE

Since its founding in 1970, Walden School has been grounded in equity, access, and social justice. Diversity in all its forms, including socioeconomic diversity, is a cornerstone of all that we do, which is why every family who attends Walden has the opportunity to enroll with a tuition level that fits their financial circumstances, and we maintain a commitment to equitable tuition rates based on family income. On average, approximately 30% of Walden families attend at a reduced tuition rate.

### QUALIFYING FOR FLEXIBLE TUITION

Walden believes the primary responsibility for financing education rests with the immediate and extended family. A family must establish that a need exists to receive a reduced tuition rate. Such a need is defined as the difference between the school's full cost of tuition and what the family can contribute. Tabulating financial need is determined by considering many factors including total family income, assets (especially housing) and liabilities, standard living expenses, unusual expenses, discretionary funds, family size, and the number of children attending tuition-charging schools.

### CRITERIA TO RECEIVE FLEXIBLE TUITION

- The flexible tuition program is available to students at any grade level.
- Flexible tuition is based on demonstrated need.
- Through the comprehensive application process, each applying family's unique financial circumstances are carefully considered.
- Subject to the constraints of the Board-approved annual budget and the decisions of the flexible tuition committee, qualifying families will pay reduced rates for tuition and certain other fees.
- Families are expected, to the best of their ability, to use their resources toward the timely payment of their reduced tuition and fee obligations.
- Discounts for most auxiliary programs are available for families that qualify for flexible tuition.
- Information about Walden's flexible tuition program is available through the Walden flexible tuition website or the admissions office. Please note that families must reapply each year for the program.

Although the school strives to meet the financial needs of families if a documented need exists, a flexible tuition reduction granted in one year does not guarantee eligibility in subsequent years. To facilitate a smooth experience for families, Walden uses a secure online service for its flexible tuition analysis.

## HOW TO APPLY

Walden School uses the [Clarity Application](#) to determine a family's flexible tuition level and ability to pay. If you are wondering whether you might qualify to pay below the full cost of tuition, reference the simplified outline of the application process below, visit the flexible tuition section of the Walden website for more details, and reach out to Director of Admissions Billy Christian at [bchristian@waldenschool.net](mailto:bchristian@waldenschool.net) with any questions.

1. To get started, please go to the [Clarity](#) website to create an account.
2. Begin the application process. This is estimated to take 40 minutes to complete, and you have the ability to save your progress and return to the application at any time.
3. At the end of the application, there will be a \$55 fee to submit.
4. Please pay close attention to emails from Walden and Clarity after you complete and submit your Clarity Application, as you may be required to upload additional tax documentation, including but not limited to S-Corporations or Schedule E partnerships along with corresponding K-1s, 1120s, and/or Form 1065.

If you need support during the application process, there is in-app support available and email support at [support@claritytuition.com](mailto:support@claritytuition.com) (available in both English and Spanish). Know that our admissions office is here to help as well.

Application deadline for all continuing families and their siblings: Sunday, December 10, 2023

Application deadline for all applicant families: Wednesday, January 31, 2024

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Information entered online is shared confidentially with an outside consulting firm and is reviewed by Walden's Flexible Tuition Committee. Walden School understands the personal and sensitive nature of financial documents and keeps all such information, as well as all decisions and information who receives Flexible Tuition, strictly private. Teachers, members of the Board of Trustees, and students are not informed of Flexible Tuition applications or decisions. It is also expected that families do not discuss confidential tuition finance matters with each other.

## VII PHILANTHROPY AT WALDEN SCHOOL

### INVESTING IN VALUES

The strength of Walden School's educational program is due to the gifts of time, talent, and financial generosity of previous parents for five decades. We count on current parents to continue the promising future of Walden School.

### VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is an essential element of Walden. Volunteering at Walden can take on many forms where each parent's skills and interests are utilized. You can start by volunteering for an existing task through your student's classroom or the Parent Guild (details below), and, as you learn more about the community and its needs, you can better determine how your skills and time can best serve the Walden community. Many volunteer activities happen outside of school hours and can be done at home or involve short-term projects. Opportunities span from writing and graphic design to coordinating community service projects to planning events. Walden School relies on parents' diverse skills and expertise. Volunteer opportunities are routinely included in the monthly Parent Guild newsletter. Review this resource and talk to Parent Guild chairs, teachers, administrators, and other families to learn what is needed and how your talents can best support the school.

### VOLUNTEER CAMPUS ACCESS AND SCREENING

Walden encourages parents/guardians and other members of the community to share their time, knowledge, and abilities with students. Walden School requires school volunteers to be screened and



authorized to volunteer.

Volunteers will use SchoolPass every time they come to Walden's campus. SchoolPass is a platform to simplify and secure visitor management. You will need a driver's license to complete the SchoolPass registration process. Please set aside a few minutes upon your first arrival to set up and activate your account. At that point, the system will provide you with a pin number which will be your unique ID for logging in and out of SchoolPass moving forward.

\*Note: The above information is a guide and is not necessarily an exhaustive list.

## PARENT HOURS

As part of the contractual agreement, all Walden families agree to volunteer at least 20 hours per family throughout the school year. Any unsatisfied parent hours as of May 31 will be billed to each family's account at the rate of \$50 per hour, with payment due on or before the final day of school. Alternatively, a family can buy out all or half of their required parent hours at the beginning of the school year at the rate of \$50 per hour. Buy outs are encouraged by October 1 but will be accepted at any time prior to May 31. Please contact the Business Office to complete a partial or full parent volunteer hour buy out.

### STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS FOR REPORTING PARENT HOURS

1. Participate in Walden events and volunteer your time and talents.
2. Every parent / family is responsible for tracking and reporting their own hours.
3. Report the date, activity/event, and the total number of parent hours by going to: <https://www.waldenschool.net/support-walden/parent-hours> and follow the online instructions to log volunteer hours.

The Business Office maintains and tracks the reported hours and will send updates and reminders twice a year. Please contact the Business Office with any questions regarding your volunteer hours.

## BOARD COMMITTEES

The Board of Trustees seeks new parent volunteers to work on various committees, such as Development, Environmental & Facilities, and Committee on Trustees. You do not have to be a Trustee to work on many of the Board committees. Interested parents who possess the qualifications listed below should contact the President of the Board of Trustees:

- a commitment to the mission, philosophy, and goals of Walden School;
- intellectual integrity – an ability to consider all issues with an open mind and to hold an institution-centered, rather than a personal stake, perspective on issues;
- cooperative spirit – an ability to reinforce and support agreed upon Board policies and long-range plans; and
- complementary expertise to those of the present Committee members.

The overall responsibility of the Board is informed by the Principles of Good Practice for Member Schools as established by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

## CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

Walden School's program is enriched by the talents and caring of parents and other volunteers. When working with the students, here are some guidelines to make your time at school as valuable as possible to you and the children:

- Remember that our emphasis is on helping children to develop self-reliance. Please do not do anything for a child that they can do alone.
- Keep in mind the specific ground rules and schedule of the class in which you are working. Schedule your time at school according to the needs of the class and be sure to keep your schedule. Teachers and children are counting on you!
- When you are in the classroom, you are part of the teaching team, and the students will need your full attention. Please do not bring other children or projects with you.
- When working in your own child's class, please make clear to your child that you are at school to help all the children in the class. Your child should go about their regular classroom routine and follow the usual classroom rules. It is difficult at first for some children to share a parent's attention, if that proves to be the case, it may be better if you help in another class until your child

is ready to share you with others.

## **PARENT GUILD**

All Walden parents are members of the Parent Guild. The purpose of the Parent Guild (PG) is to foster fellowship within the Walden community and to support Walden School by achieving the fundraising goals established by the Board of Trustees.

### **WHAT DOES THE PARENT GUILD DO?**

The Parent Guild maintains a cooperative and collaborative environment to:

- enrich the students' educational experience at Walden;
- promote communication and mutual respect among parents, faculty, and administration;
- provide direct financial support to the school through organized fundraising events; and
- organize community-building events.

The Parent Guild Coordinators work closely with the Head of School and other senior administrative staff to oversee the PG Committees. Regular communication and planning.

### **WHEN DOES THE PARENT GUILD MEET?**

Parent Guild Committee chairs communicate with Parent Guild coordinators and members of the administration on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The entire Parent Guild meets at least once a year. Check the Pond and the Parent Guild newsletter for details. All parents, as members of Parent Guild (PG), are encouraged to attend. Meetings will be either in person or on Zoom, and childcare may be available with reservations. Details of these meetings will be determined closer to the meeting date.

The entire Parent Guild meets at least once a year and PG Committees will organize additional meetings, as needed. All parents, as members of the PG, are encouraged to attend. Childcare is available for PG meetings with reservations.

## **ROOM PARENTS**

Room Parents volunteer to support their child's classroom teacher with a few responsibilities, including coordinating the Class Coffee, field trips class auction projects, and special occasions. Room Parents have limited permission, with guidance and approval from the school, to solicit cash for classroom activities.

Room Parents attend PG meetings and communicate information about PG activities, solicit, and organize volunteers for PG events, and direct parents to the correct party for questions and concerns. Interested volunteers should contact the PG Coordinators in the spring to find out about positions available in the next academic year.

## **FUNDRAISING**

While philanthropy at Walden is mission-based and volunteer-centered, it necessarily also involves fundraising. Parents' investment of time, such as making annual fund campaign outreach or serving on the Development Committee, significantly contributes to fundraising efforts of the community.

Walden, like most independent schools, relies on income in addition to tuition to fund each student's education. Gifts and voluntary contributions underwrite enhancements to Walden's educational program because tuition does not cover all the special offerings and opportunities for enrichment. Since Walden School's founding, charitable donations have funded its land and buildings, academic and co-curricular programs, faculty professional development, and more. Voluntary giving enables Walden to offer a high-quality education and ensures that the school will continue to thrive long into the future.

As an independent elementary school, Walden draws from fewer supporters than a university or a large charity. Because the pool of the community is small, but the need is large, every gift counts. Choosing how much to give is a personal decision, but all gifts help move the school closer to its annual goals. No matter the size, all gifts are valued and appreciated, because we know that giving is a sacrifice and an

investment in our students for all families. Making Walden School a philanthropic priority is an investment that truly pays off.

## **THE WALDEN FUND**

The Walden Fund—our annual giving campaign—is the highest fundraising priority because of the critical role it plays in supporting the school’s operations. Charitable contributions to the School through The Walden Fund enable the school to sustain and enhance our educational program and facilities beyond tuition revenue.

### **ARE ALL PARENTS ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WALDEN FUND?**

Yes, all families, including families receiving financial assistance for student tuition, are asked to participate in The Walden Fund. Our goal is to achieve 100 percent participation of Trustees, faculty, staff, and parents. Choosing to give and how to give are clearly personal decisions, but ALL gifts are appreciated by Walden and all gifts move us closer to our overall goals.

### **HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE TO THE WALDEN FUND?**

Families are asked to support The Walden Fund to the best of their ability. In the past, gifts have ranged from \$25 to more than \$25,000. While large leadership gifts are crucial to Walden’s financial stability, gifts of any size make a difference. Walden’s goal is 100 percent participation by Walden families; the only gift that is too small is no gift at all.

### **CAN I DEDUCT MY GIFT TO THE WALDEN FUND ON MY INCOME TAX RETURN?**

Yes, Walden School is a 501(c) 3 organization, and The Walden Fund gifts are deductible to the extent provided by IRS guidelines. You may be able to increase your gift by contributing marketable securities. Donors should consult their financial advisor or accountant for tax advice. Donors of outright contributions receive a receipt and acknowledgement for their gift.

## **PARENT GUILD FUNDRAISERS**

Fundraising events are important to the Walden community because they balance fundraising needs with opportunities to get together and celebrate our community. Beyond The Walden Fund, all other fundraising projects are subject to each family’s interests. One of the Parent Guild’s important responsibilities is to support Walden by achieving the fundraising goals established by the Board of Trustees. The funds raised support the operating budget of the school.

To meet the varied interests of Walden families, the Parent Guild sponsors several activities designed to foster community spirit and generate unrestricted and restricted funds for a variety of purposes. For these efforts to be successful, we need all parents to get involved and support the Parent Guild fundraisers.

## **THIRD PARTY REQUESTS**

With permission only, Walden School allows, but does not promote, requests by independent organizations such as Girl Scouts. Requests for money or in-kind support for projects, events, or programs that are not expressly authorized or sponsored by the school are not permitted. Walden School does not permit unauthorized collections of money or in-kind support by parents for parties, trips, gifts, or classroom projects. Room parents, faculty, and staff are not permitted to solicit gifts of cash for classroom activities.

## **REQUESTS THAT ARE NOT CONTRIBUTIONS**

Over the course of the school year, Walden parents receive several requests for in-kind support that are not contributions. Most of these are related to classroom projects and other programs that have been previously approved. Parents, faculty, and staff are not permitted to solicit gifts of cash for activities or teacher gifts. Each class is provided a budget to provide for cash needs for classroom activities. Parent Guild and classroom activities that solicit for in-kind contributions include, but are not limited to, classroom holiday projects, food, decorations, community service, in-kind item collections for at-risk children, canned good collections, teacher appreciation luncheon, and bake sales and other goods

sponsored by the students for charitable causes.

## VIII THE VILLAGE

The after-school childcare program at Walden School is called The Village. The program is named to reflect the community spirit of our school and is available to all students Monday through Friday from 7:00– 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 – 6:00 p.m., as well as some non-school holidays. The Village program is committed to furthering the children’s experience with the philosophy of Walden School while meeting parents’ needs for quality childcare. We recognize the distinction between school hours and the after-school sessions; however, we strive for continuity. As an extension of our day program, the Walden philosophy, policies, and expectations for behavior and staff excellence are in effect during The Village. Excellence, positive communication, caring, and conflict resolution are not just classroom catchwords. We encourage and support the practice of these principles during our after-school program, as well as, at home and in the community. In recognition of The Village as a helpful, but not mandatory, service to our families, it will be unavailable to children and/or parents who do not abide by the expected behavior guidelines or the philosophy and procedures of the school. For more details, visit [www.waldenschool.net](http://www.waldenschool.net) and look for The Village under the Our Program tab.

### LATE PICK-UP CHARGES

The Village closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. We ask that you respect the needs of the staff and the school by arriving early enough so that you and your child/ren are prepared to leave by 6:00 p.m. Parents of children not picked up by 6:00 p.m. will be charged a late fee of \$1.00 per minute for each minute after 6:00 p.m. Cases of health or accident emergencies will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Traffic delays are not considered valid excuses.

### SIGN IN AND OUT

For the safety and well-being of the students, it is imperative that children are signed in and out of The Village program daily. After school, the childcare staff will sign children into the program. To assure fairness in billing, all children are signed into The Village at 3:15 p.m. regardless of actual arrival time. Parents or designated persons listed on the emergency card must sign the child out. If you do not sign your child out, the school will bill you for the maximum cost for that day. If there is repeated failure to sign a child out of The Village, the privilege to have your child participate may be rescinded.

### THE VILLAGE PAYMENTS AND LATE FEES

All prepaid fees for The Village are due on the first of the month and are considered delinquent if not received by the fifth of the month. In cases where payment for The Village is not received by the fifteenth of the month in which it is billed, the school reserves the right to ask the parent(s) to make other childcare arrangements for the student. Please note that Village care is included in Pre-K tuition for any Pre-K students to utilize throughout the year.

## IX SCHOOL POLICIES

### ANNUAL RE-ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Parents will receive Re-Enrollment contracts in early February. The completed contract, along with a non-refundable tuition deposit (that will be credited to your student account), must be returned to the school by the annual published Re-Enrollment date in mid-February. The purpose of this deposit is to ensure a place at Walden School for next September and for the school to determine how many new students to admit based upon who will be returning. Our published Re-Enrollment deadline is firm.

### TERMS OF CONTINUED ENROLLMENT

We delight in working with our families to provide the best education possible at Walden; however, enrollment is a privilege. Walden School reserves the right to terminate enrollment for non-payment of fees, continued academic issues, unresolved behavioral concerns, lack of parental cooperation, or for any other reason deemed appropriate by the Head of School and administration.

## **SIBLING ADMISSION POLICY**

Walden School has a strong commitment not only to individual students, but to families as well. Enrollment preference is given to qualified siblings of currently enrolled students but is not guaranteed. Sibling applicants need to meet all the admission criteria and application deadlines. Each year, there may be more applicant siblings than places available. The Admissions Committee seeks to create balanced classroom communities while also prioritizing the school's commitment to siblings, gender, and diversity. Interested parents should make an appointment with the Director of Admissions and/or attend a Prospective Parent tour in the fall prior to the application year.

## **PLACEMENT AND PARENT REQUESTS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

Walden students learn in flexible multi-age classrooms. Students are assigned to heterogeneous classroom groups by the administrators, specialists, and teachers in the best position to make these assignments. Each year in the Spring, parents are invited to fill out a questionnaire providing their perspective on their student's strengths, stretches, and friendships. The school does not entertain requests for teachers.

Walden staff balance many factors when making classroom assignments. For example, they consider a range of academic abilities, social mixture, gender balance, individual learning styles, student's personality and interaction, students that benefit from being together or separated, overall student behavior, student/teacher considerations, class size, etc.

This process aims to produce a well-balanced classroom. Decisions for classroom placement contribute significantly to creating a positive classroom environment, enabling students to function to the fullest of their abilities. Please rely on our professional judgment, and trust that we will group and provide children with the best possible learning environment.

Parents and students are informed of class assignments in mid-August of each year.

## **PROCESS FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

When your child is a sixth grader, or if you are moving out of the area, you will need teacher recommendation letters to be filled out by Walden faculty/staff as your child matriculates. The Office of Admissions coordinates all admission, matriculation, and transfer documents to other schools. To help ensure that all deadlines and documentation requirements are met, all requests for letters of recommendation must be submitted to the Director of Admissions by November 17.

To request student records, please contact the Front Office Manager at [support@waldenschool.net](mailto:support@waldenschool.net). Requests should be made at least 24 hours in advance.

## **CONTACT AUTHORIZATION FORM**

By filling out a Contact Authorization Form, you permit Walden School to send materials including Progress Reports, Enrichment rosters, classroom updates, and other communication to the individual(s) listed on the form. Both parents, if applicable, must sign the form. Only those individuals listed on a signed form will be added to contact lists; verbal and electronic requests are not valid. Please contact the Front Office Administrator at [support@waldenschool.net](mailto:support@waldenschool.net) with any questions or to obtain a form.

## **ACHIEVEMENT TESTING/STANDARDIZED TESTS**

Students in grades three through six take standardized tests once each year in the fall. Along with other California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) accredited independent schools in the area, Walden School administers the CTP IV (Comprehensive Testing Program) published by the Educational Records Bureau. The school does not encourage prepping your child/ren at home for the test, and we do not "teach to the test" per se. Test results help teachers to meet whole class and individual students' needs.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT**

At Walden, we are dedicated to providing comprehensive support services to ensure the success and well-being of all our students. Our Student Support team collaborates with professionals to address students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. This section of the Family Handbook

provides an overview of the various support services available at Walden.

### **ROLE OF THE LEARNING SPECIALIST**

The Learning Specialist is vital in supporting students with diverse learning needs. They work closely with teachers, parents, and other specialists to develop personalized strategies and interventions that enhance students' academic progress. The Learning Specialist may provide direct instruction and implement accommodations to support student success in the classroom. In addition, the learning specialist administers a yearly reading screener to all K- to 6th-grade students.

At Walden, we recognize if a child has difficulties with foundational skills, it can directly impact their classroom performance. In that case, the Learning Specialist may contact the family to discuss these concerns, obtain background information, and discuss steps to support the student.

### **ROLE OF THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT SPECIALIST AND ASSOCIATE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS**

Our Social-Emotional Support Specialist and Associate Marriage and Family Therapists (AMFTs) are available to address the social, emotional, and behavioral challenges that may impact students' overall well-being and academic performance.

The Social Emotional Support Specialist is available for families to offer guidance and support, while the AMFTs work directly with students, collaborating closely with staff. The AMFTs provide services that support Walden's robust SEL curriculum and are supervised by the Social Emotional Specialist. Referral to the AMFTs begins with Walden faculty or staff and is supported by the Learning Specialist.

A teacher or administrator may request that the AMFTs talk with a student about a particular event or problem that occurred during the school day. In these instances, support is provided to meet the needs of a child at that moment, and parents will be notified as appropriate.

### **CONDUCTING OUTSIDE ASSESSMENTS AND ENGAGING ALLIED PROFESSIONALS**

In some instances, it may be necessary to involve allied professionals, such as educational therapists, neuropsychologists, social workers, or outside support services, in conducting assessments or providing additional student support. If recommendations for further screenings or evaluations by allied professionals are made, the family must bear the financial costs associated with these referrals. All the assessments related to off-campus allied professionals must take place off-campus.

To meet students' diverse needs, the School may sometimes collaborate with educational therapists and outside support professionals who provide services directly on campus. These professionals must sign and agree to Walden's Guidelines Document supplied by our Learning Specialist to implement targeted interventions, accommodations, or therapies to support student growth and success.

### **STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS**

We recognize that some students require accommodations to fully access and participate in the Walden program. Accommodations are determined through an individualized process that considers the student's needs and supporting documentation, such as assessments, medical reports, or evaluations. Accommodations may include adjustments to teaching strategies, modified assignments, additional resources, or assistive technology.

We understand that there may be circumstances in which a parent may request that Walden School provide an adjustment or accommodation for a student's medical, physical, psychological, or learning needs in addition to those accommodations Walden has already provided. In general, it is Walden's policy to provide accommodations or adjustments for a student's minor needs in circumstances in which the Administration determines, in its sole discretion, that doing so is within the reasonable ability of Walden and/or its staff and will not result in an unacceptable impairment to the rights of other students (or employees) or a fundamental change to our educational environment or mission.

We also ask parents to realize that, given the size of our school and our available resources, we may be unable to provide all requested accommodations. To the extent we agree to provide accommodations, we may require sharing responsibility for the accommodation.

## REQUESTS AND DOCUMENTATION

For any accommodation, the parent must contact the Learning Specialist to discuss the need. The Learning Specialist will then advise the parent of the type of documentation needed, which will generally state the student's diagnosis, how the condition limits the student, the recommended accommodations, and the length of time the accommodation(s) will be needed.

### RELEASE FOR COMMUNICATION WITH OUTSIDE PROFESSIONALS

To facilitate effective collaboration between Walden and outside professionals involved in a student's support, we request written consent from parents or legal guardians to share relevant information and communicate with these professionals. This release of information ensures that all parties involved can work together to provide comprehensive support and tailor interventions to meet the student's specific needs. In addition, if any cost is associated with the provider's cooperation (i.e., to answer a set of questions submitted, etc.), the parent must agree to bear the cost of such process.

### ASSESSMENT OF REQUESTS AND LIMITATIONS

While we are committed to providing the best support possible, it is important to acknowledge that certain requests may have limitations based on available resources, expertise, or the scope of services. Each support request is assessed individually, considering the student's needs, available resources, and our team's expertise. We strive to explore all available avenues to meet the needs of our students within the scope of our capabilities. In some cases, the parent may be asked to provide (at the parent's cost) any special equipment needed, training for Walden staff, or other associated matters. In addition, Walden may advise the parent that we will allow a particular accommodation, but the full responsibility for providing the accommodation will rest with the parent.

Please note that this handbook section provides a general overview of our Student Support and does not exhaustively represent every aspect. For more detailed information or specific inquiries, please get in touch with our Learning Specialist or refer to the relevant policies and procedures outlined by Family Handbook.

At Walden, we value the partnership between home and school in supporting our students' growth and success. Together, we can create an environment that fosters learning, emotional well-being, and the development of each student's unique potential.

## NON-COVID PANDEMIC ILLNESS POLICY

Our pandemic illness policy has been developed using information and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and our local Health Departments. The procedures that we will follow depend on the severity and the closeness of the situation to our student and staff population. They may be adjusted as the school, or the local health department, may feel is in the best interest of our school community.

1. If the CDC decides That a Public Health Emergency Exists (DTPHEE) due to a flu variant or other disease, meaning that they are staging anti-viral medications for treatment and other preparations, but there is no confirmed case in the county in which the school is located:
  - a. Parents will be notified of the potential of a local pandemic if the disease spreads.
  - b. Parents will be asked to watch carefully for flu symptoms or other symptoms as we may suggest and will be asked not to send any child to school showing multiple symptoms (any two or more symptoms).
  - c. Teachers and staff will be instructed not to come to school if they have multiple symptoms (any two or more symptoms).
2. If we have a DTPHEE and any confirmed case in the county in which the school is located:
  - a. All parents will be asked to notify the school immediately if any member of the family has symptoms of the flu or the disease at issue.
  - b. Parents will be asked to not allow any child to attend school until the risk of contagion is past for all members of the family.
  - c. Teachers and staff will be instructed to do the same.
  - d. The school will prepare a packet of work and homework for any student to do, if they are able, to avoid falling behind while out of school.

- e. Any student or staff member who shows any symptoms of flu will immediately be removed from class, asked to wear a surgical mask, and sent home.
3. If the above and any student or staff member is sent home with any symptoms of flu/disease in question:
    - a. The school will have every student and staff member thoroughly wash their hands for at least 20 seconds after every recess, lunch or snack time, or incident of person-to-person contact.
    - b. Each staff member and every student will use a disinfectant to clean their personal work area at the beginning and the end of each school day.
    - c. The school will have surgical masks and gloves available for any student or staff member who would feel more comfortable using these items.
  4. If all the above occur and we have a diagnosed case of the flu/disease in question at the school or within any family of the student or staff member:
    - a. The school will be closed until at least one- and one-half times the incubation period.
    - b. The school will be thoroughly disinfected.
    - c. Each staff member and parent will be asked to affirm that no member of their household has shown any symptoms of flu for at least one- and one-half times the incubation period of the flu/disease.

These policies and procedures may be adjusted as the school, or local health department, may feel is in the best interest of our school community.

### EMERGENCY SAFETY PLAN

Walden School has a comprehensive Safety Plan. All classrooms and administrators are supplied with emergency evacuation plans, parent/guardian emergency contacts, and each respective student's allergens and/or other needs.

Walden's Safety Plan is based on current "best practices" guidelines for developing a school safety plan, focusing on three key categories related to safety issues:

**Preparedness** – the process of deciding what to do in the event of an emergency before the emergency occurs. Preparedness involves the coordination of efforts among the school administration, faculty, staff, students, parents, and community.

**Response** – the process of implementing appropriate actions while an emergency is unfolding. In short, responding means "doing what you planned to do." In this phase schools and communities mobilize resources needed to handle the emergency at hand.

**Recovery** – the process of assisting people with the physical, psychological, and emotional trauma associated with experiencing tragic events. Please note that a school's Safety Plan should always be regarded as a "work in progress" since current information and situations generate improved methods and strategies for dealing with various occurrences. Law enforcement officials and other professionals emphasize the need for common sense, flexibility and to "think on your feet." No single plan can allow for every scenario and caregivers must do everything within their means to safeguard the health and safety of their students and co-workers.

### SUBSTITUTE TEACHER POLICY

In the absence of the regular lead teacher, the associate teacher in each classroom will teach the class. In addition, we may ask another associate, specialty, or substitute teacher to join the classroom for the duration of the absence. If a long-term absence is necessary, a long-term substitute teacher will be hired.

### TEACHERS AS TUTORS

Teachers give extra help to students throughout the day. Teachers are not expected to work with students outside of school hours. Teachers are not allowed to serve as paid tutors for students in their own classes.



## PETS AT SCHOOL

Unless a teacher has invited pets for a special classroom pet-sharing day, no family pets are permitted on campus. Dogs are never permitted on the playgrounds at any time during arrival and dismissal.

## FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Frequent field trips are part of the Walden experience. These are typically organized by the classroom teacher or their designee. (i.e., room parent or associate teacher). Before each trip, parents will be notified of the event time and place. Typically, parent volunteer drivers are used unless impractical, at which time a school bus will be chartered.

Walden believes that parent participation is an important part of a successful trip experience.

At the beginning of the school year, any parent planning to drive on a field trip must:

- have their vehicle in good working order;
- fill out a form about their driving experience and the vehicle to be used. Drivers must have a safe driving record;
- have on file in the Business Office a copy of their current, unexpired driver's license and proof of insurance with appropriate limits. The school requires a copy of the insurance policy, including coverage amounts, not proof of insurance card;
- be in good physical and emotional health; and
- be willing to supervise children in addition to your own for the duration of the field trip. You will be assigned several children for whom you will be always responsible regarding their location and safety during the field trip.

Walden School asks all field trip drivers to abide by the guidelines suggested by the teacher as well as the following:

- Faculty count on parent volunteers to be active participants and supervisors of all the classroom children. Supervision of the children should balance common sense, health, and safety.
- Please always keep the children within sight. No child may use a public restroom without an adult. If bathroom stops need to be made, please keep all children with you as you accompany a child into the bathroom.
- Teachers organize carpools to encourage children to interact with a variety of their classmates, not just their friends. We ask that you not make changes in the teachers' carpool assignments.
- We ask that you leave pets and younger siblings at home to assure focused supervision. If you have pets that travel in your family's car, please notify the lead teacher in case one of the children has allergies.
- Since field trips are a natural extension of the classroom experience, we emphasize the educational value of the trip and discourage consumerism. In this light, we ask that you do not buy souvenirs or purchase treats or snacks. Additionally, special purchases for your carpool only may result in hurt feelings for other members of the class.
- Please do not make any additional stops on the way to or from the field trip.

## EMAIL GUIDELINES

Parents/guardians and teachers have found class email to be an excellent way to communicate valuable information relevant to everyone in the class.

In the beginning of the school year, room parents are provided with an email list for all parents and guardians in their class. This list is used to send out class-wide communications about school events, class field trips, and every topic relevant to the whole class.

We ask parents/guardians not to use group communication for any topics not directly related to class activities and logistics. The information distributed through group communication should be an integral part of class activities rather than a forum for personal communication.

If you would like to message individual fellow parents/guardians in your child's class, please consult the school directory for their information and contact them directly. For questions or concerns regarding your child or school policies and procedures, please contact your classroom teacher or a school administrator.

Please email your child's teacher BEFORE you email the class list. Teachers are often asked by other parents about email communications and can only respond effectively if they are informed before the class list is emailed.

## **TECHNOLOGY AT WALDEN**

We are pleased to offer students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade at Walden School access to the computer network for Internet access. Access to the Internet will enable students to explore thousands of libraries, databases, and bulletin boards while exchanging messages with Internet users throughout the world. Families should be aware that some material accessible via the Internet may contain items that are illegal, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive. While our intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives, students may find ways to access other materials as well.

We believe that the benefits to students from access to the Internet, in the form of informational resources and opportunities for collaboration, exceed any disadvantages. Parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources.

Individual users of the school's computer networks are responsible for their behavior and communications over those networks. It is expected that users will comply with the Walden Agreements and Walden's Technology Use Agreement while at school and in all online spaces.

### **ACCEPTABLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY AT WALDEN SCHOOL**

The technology system for Walden School includes access to computers and computer support equipment (printers, scanners, projectors, etc.), network resources, and for older students, the Internet. The opportunity to use this equipment comes with many responsibilities for both the student and the parent/guardian.

The following are not permitted:

- Sending or displaying offensive messages or pictures
- Using obscene language
- Harassing, insulting, or attacking others
- Violating copyright laws
- Trespassing in another's folders, work, or files
- Use of Walden School computers for illegal activities
- Using another's password

### **INTERNET USAGE**

At Walden School, the Internet is used to find information and provide interaction with teachers and staff. Students will understand, through their classwork, the term URL and be prepared to account for sites they visit. During school hours, students will only be permitted to search the internet at the direct instruction and specific guidance of teacher(s). Students found visiting questionable sites may result in a loss of access as well as other disciplinary or legal action.

The following rules apply to Internet usage on campus:

Usage must be for an education or research project assigned by a Walden Staff member.

Students are not allowed to download files from the Internet or other external sources.

Walden reserves the right to monitor any computer usage at any time. Network administrators may review files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Users should not expect that files stored on school servers will always be private. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR FAMILIES**

Blogs, podcasts, and social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Tumblr, Spotify, YouTube, and LinkedIn offer members of the Walden community an opportunity to connect, communicate, and extend learning. However, use of online tools requires diligence and responsibility.

At Walden, we seek to reinforce these ideals through age-appropriate curriculum that focuses on developing ethical behavior, building empathy, understanding privacy, and establishing a tone of decency in all communications. Any misuse of social media, including cyberbullying, compromises these goals and can result in disciplinary action.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES**

- Faculty and staff cannot “friend” or accept as “friends” current students.
- Anyone seeking to post photos, videos, or information on behalf of the School that identifies Walden School, its students, faculty, or staff must first obtain permission from the Communications Office; some Walden families have explicitly requested privacy. If permission is granted, please refrain from using student last names, using only the first name and the initial of their last name.
- When creating a podcast, do not record anyone without their consent or awareness.

### **ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES**

- Be fair, accurate, and respectful in what you write about yourself and others.
- Do not give out any personal information about yourself or others.
- Write about what you know, and make sure you get your facts straight.
- Use common sense. Do not use commentary deemed defamatory, obscene, or libelous.
- Exercise caution regarding copyrighted materials and legal conclusions.
- Families who film, photograph, or record school events must exercise caution when posting images or clips to their personal social media accounts; some Walden families have explicitly requested privacy.
- Walden employees have been advised to use restraint and discretion when interacting with families via social media. Parents should not be offended if “friend” requests or other social media invitations are turned down.

### **INTERNET SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS\***

- Talk with your child about Internet safety as soon as they begin using the Internet. It is never too early to start discussing the importance of being a good digital citizen.
- Set administrative control on computers; this establishes the precedent that you are in charge.
- Use age-appropriate filtering, blocking, and monitoring software on all Internet-enabled devices used by your child, including laptops, wireless phones, and video games. Talk to your children about the same rules established at home applying when they are at other people’s houses or on mobile devices away from home.
- Stay involved with your child’s online world by setting limits on their “screen time” and monitoring who your child is communicating with online. Get to know the websites your child is visiting and educate yourself about your child’s online activities. You can use screen sharing for multiple household computers to help your children with time management and to observe—and curb if necessary—multitasking (especially during homework when higher order thinking skills are needed) or inappropriate behavior.
- Put computers and other technology in a public area of the home. This affirms with your children that they are being observed and provides you an opportunity to monitor their time spent and exposure to content. Young children should always be supervised, while older children who show respect for boundaries are afforded more responsibility and privacy.
- Facebook and Instagram state that children under 13 years old are not allowed to register.
- If your child is registered on Facebook or Instagram, experts advise parents and guardians to require their child to “friend” them as a condition of being allowed to register.
- Explain to your child that they should never give out personally identifiable information online. For example, they should never post detailed information about their whereabouts.
- Make sure your child knows never to meet someone they met online face-to-face without first talking with you about the situation. Talking to strangers in environments such as chat rooms, via multi-player gaming, and “make believe” communities is just like talking to them in the physical world.
- Tell your child to never share their passwords with anyone, including friends.
- Explain the consequences of posting inappropriate material online and that the information is “sticky”—if they would not want an employer, college admissions director, or their future children to see it, they shouldn’t post it on the Web. A child’s reputation can be impacted by a status entry or image that is shared.

- Monitor your child's mobile phone usage and review text messages sent and received, including images downloaded and uploaded.

## X DISCIPLINE

### A RESTORATIVE APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE

Walden School strives to provide an environment in which ethical behavior, mutual respect, self-discipline, character, and empathy are fostered in a developmentally appropriate manner. It is every adult and child's responsibility to positively contribute to the learning environment and the overall sense of community. Students, teachers, and families are expected to recognize the dignity, rights, and responsibilities of others; and all students in turn should feel they are safe at school, accountable for their actions, and valued members of the school community. Students who feel valued are more engaged learners and more invested in the community's success and well-being. The goal of our discipline philosophy is to cultivate enthusiasm for learning, constructive problem solving, and global citizenship.

The Walden Agreements are based on the school's values of collaboration, self-knowledge, community, engagement, discovery, and integrity. The staff and faculty are committed to modeling, teaching, and guiding expected positive student behaviors. Courtesy, kindness, compassion, respect, and problem-solving strategies are practiced and valued by faculty, staff, students, and parents.

Together, our goal at Walden School is to ensure that each child can be a successful and contributing member of our community, and that all students learn to understand how their actions affect others. We believe that parents play the utmost significant role in supporting and guiding their children in achieving these expectations.

### DISCIPLINARY GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

Discipline based on respect, responsibility, and self-control is the shared responsibility of the home and the school. Students are taught appropriate behavioral expectations in classrooms and the Walden Agreements are present in all classrooms to serve as a written and referenced reminder. While we respect that children are often learning how to behave in the world through interactions at school, we hold the expectation that they will put forth their best effort and to conduct themselves in a manner that will promote a safe, productive, and positive learning environment.

Parents/guardians are expected to support the school by encouraging positive behavior and by redirecting problematic behavior. Positive intervention, redirection, and preventative guidance are always the first courses of action for all children and staff. Walden students are consistently afforded opportunities to make positive choices, self-regulate, and reflect upon their behavior before serious or repeated issues arise. Should redirection and other positive motivating techniques not be effective in a particular situation, incentives may be put into effect. All attempts are made to redirect students who are not following the Walden Agreements. Positive reinforcement techniques are utilized, and students are given opportunities to make choices that work for themselves and the school community. Furthermore, students are given an opportunity to self-regulate if extra time or space is needed to make better choices.

### WALDEN AGREEMENTS

1. I cooperate with all the adults at school.
2. If I get mad, I solve it without hurting anyone or anything.
3. I stay with my group unless my teacher gives me permission to be somewhere else.
4. I try to keep myself and others safe.
5. I give my best attention and effort to my schoolwork.
6. I respect other people's rights.
7. I respect my environment and all of the living things in it.
8. I am responsible for my own feelings, my own actions, my own learning, and for using my wise mind to help me do my best.
9. I try to help others keep these agreements by setting a good example.

The Walden Agreements are based upon a philosophy of respect. We define respect as due regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, traditions of others.

We have:

- Respect for all human beings
- Respect for the earth and all living things
- Respect for all school and individual property
- Respect for the guidance provided by teachers, staff, and parents
- Respect for our school community
- Respect for our neighbors and neighborhoods

Each classroom teacher will have in place a set of “classroom norms” created with the students at the beginning of the school year. These norms, in addition to restorative classroom management plans equip teachers to consistently respond to student behavior in the classroom, on the playground, and on field trips.

If a student’s behavior falls outside classroom norms or Walden Agreements, depending on the circumstances, parents may be notified and requested to meet with the teacher, Director of Curriculum, or Head of School to discuss appropriate strategies and consequences, which may include development of a behavior plan.

The adult in charge (teachers or supervisors) will handle the problem through one-on-one counseling with the student whenever possible. If redirection and opportunities for making better choices are not successful, this will usually result in a specific warning about the inappropriate behavior followed by consequences such as missing an activity or reflection time (natural consequences are discussed as a part of the reflection period) or issuing an apology, if the situation calls for it.

In all instances, the role of the adult is to model firmness and mutual respect by identifying the underlying needs present in the situation. Effective discipline recognizes the reasons kids do what they do and works to change those beliefs, rather than merely attempting to change behavior. Our restorative approach to discipline is solution focused and rooted in teaching effective communication and problem-solving skills.

Please keep in mind that the school has sole discretion to determine what approach is appropriate under the circumstances, which means that in cases of serious or repeated misconduct, the school may decide that immediate dismissal is warranted.

## **XI CONDUCT, COOPERATION, AND COMMUNITY**

Every independent school need and expects the cooperation of its families, who understand and embrace the school’s mission, share its core values, and fully support its curriculum, faculty, and staff. When joined by a common set of beliefs and purposes, the school and its parents form a powerful team with far-reaching positive effects on children and the entire School community. Working together, families and school professionals strongly influence children to become better educated; they also help them mature by modeling adult working relationships based on civility, honesty, and respect.

Families best support a school climate of trust and respect by communicating concerns openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. In most cases, family concerns should be directed first to the classroom teacher and then to the Director of Curriculum if necessary. Finally, if a satisfactory conclusion is not reached, the family should contact the Head of School. Efforts by families to lobby other parents will be viewed by the school as counterproductive.

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

At Walden School, decision-making authority at the highest level resides in a volunteer Board of Trustees, whose membership includes current parents/guardians. The Board focuses on three areas critical to the success of any independent school: it selects, evaluates, and supports the Head of the School, to whom it delegates authority to manage the school; it develops broad institutional policies that guide the Head in running the school; and it is accountable for the financial well-being of the school.

The Board of Trustees does not intervene in the daily affairs of the school, such as curriculum development or hiring and evaluation of faculty and staff. In its official business, the Board acts only as a whole; individual Trustees, including the Board Chair, have no authority to act unless specifically authorized by the Board acting as a whole.

Families with concerns about the school or decisions made by the administration or faculty are encouraged to inquire about and follow the school's review process outlined above.

## **FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION**

Families play an essential and positive role in the life of Walden School. Not only are families advocates for their students, but they also support the faculty and administration through volunteer activities and events.

The relationship between families, the faculty, and the administration is governed by the school's written enrollment contract and handbook, in which its procedures are spelled out. By enrolling their child in Walden School, families agree to subscribe to its mission, follow its rules, and abide by its decisions. Trust and mutual respect are essential underpinnings of effective working relationships with parents.

While families may not agree with every decision by the School, the School expects that parents and guardians will communicate respectfully with the School's Faculty and Administration.

## **WALDEN SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS**

Some of the most important principles at Walden School are founded on respect for others and personal responsibility. Parents play a formative role in developing their child's sense of justice, equity, and the dignity and worth of all members of our school community. As one of the most influential role models in a child's life, one of the best ways for a parent to teach is to lead by example.

Accordingly, Walden School expects the behavior of each parent and responsible adult with children enrolled at our school to adhere to the standards of conduct set forth below.

1. When visiting or volunteering at the school, parents should observe all school rules, including checking in at the office.
2. If a parent feels that another child's actions have infringed upon their child's rights, under no circumstances shall the parent or guardian approach another child while at School to discuss or chastise them. However, the parents may approach the classroom teacher to seek a peaceful resolution to the situation. A parent or guardian may also come to the other child's parent or guardian.
3. If a parent has questions or issues relating to the classroom or a class, they should first be addressed directly to the staff member in question. Next, parents are requested to set up a private meeting where their concerns can be discussed and the actions giving rise to such matters explained.
4. All communications regarding issues with other parents or staff at the school or school events shall remain respectful and address the issues at hand. Yelling, taunting, threatening, or abusive behavior, cursing, foul language, or derogatory remarks are not acceptable means of communication. Parents are expected to resolve issues through calm dialogue between the parties directly involved while respecting the dignity of others.
5. Parents shall protect the reputation and good name of the people involved. Problems, differences of opinion, and personality clashes are not resolved by involving other people in a disagreement or by taking sides in the argument. Therefore, issues should not be casually discussed with other parents in the school but should be dealt with one-on-one with the person or persons with whom the parent has a problem.
6. It is easy for opinion to be mistaken for fact and rumors perpetuated by inaccurate information. Therefore, parents are expected to approach the relevant personnel within the school to verify the factual basis of a story should they have any questions. This approach can quickly clarify the events in question and the intent involved and will minimize inaccurate information from being passed throughout the community.

A positive and constructive relationship between Walden School and families is essential to the School's educational objectives, mission, and operations. Accordingly, the School reserves the right not to extend the privilege of enrollment or re-enrollment to a student, or to dismiss an enrolled student, if the Head of

School or their designee concludes, in each case in their sole discretion, that the actions of parents sufficiently impair a positive and constructive relationship.

## XII COMMUNICATING CONCERNS AND GRIEVANCES

Should you develop concerns about a classroom issue, curricular matter, a child, or the work of another parent, speak directly with your child's teacher. A parent must never communicate any type of concern about a student to other parents nor that child's parent. Respectful and appropriate communication is always expected of all members of the community.

If no resolution is reached in working with the classroom teacher, schedule an appointment with the Head of School to address your specific concerns. You may be asked to draft a letter outlining the incident of concern and your desired resolution. Information will be gathered from all parties involved, and a resolution will be sought as quickly as is possible. The Head of School's decisions are final in such cases.

If additional support is needed, in many cases, the student may be referred to the Director of Curriculum or Head of School to address an issue, which may include some or all the following procedures:

- A student is referred based on a behavioral choice or a series of choices that could not be addressed in the classroom. The school will issue an initial response within 48 hours (about 2 days).
- A meeting may be arranged between the parents, the student if appropriate, the classroom teacher, and the student support faculty. The school has discretion to deny the student the ability to return to class until the team has met and a behavior plan has been implemented.
- An individualized behavioral contract may be created. This may include requests for more information, a plan to teach desired behavior changes and monitor the student's progress, and/or alternate schedules.
- A follow-up meeting may be scheduled, for 3-4 weeks to check in on the student's status. In general, the behavioral contract either ends because the behavior is corrected, continues for a specified time, or is modified as the situation warrants.
- A second follow-up meeting may be set, for 2 weeks later. In general, the case is resolved, the time clock resets as appropriate.

All timelines provided in this process are general, only, and the school may decide, in its sole discretion, to adopt different timelines depending on the circumstances.

## XIII DAILY PROCEDURES

### SCHOOL HOURS

The school day for all Walden students begins at 8:25 a.m. School ends at 3:00 p.m. It is particularly important that parents are considerate of the starting and ending times of their child's school day.

|                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Pre-K- 6 <sup>th</sup> grades | 8:25 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. |
| Village morning care          | 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. |
| Village afternoon care        | 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. |

The Village is offered every day that school is in session, except for the last day of school and most days with an early dismissal. Please check The Pond calendar for more details.

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Enrichment Classes | 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. |
|--------------------|------------------------|

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Walden's policies and procedures are designed to ensure the safety of our students and the requirements of the City of Pasadena. We must ensure the least disruption to the school's neighbors for us to maintain our conditional use permit. We ask you or your child's designated drivers to follow these procedures and policies when picking up or dropping off your children at Walden. Please be sure that you give these instructions to everyone who might drop off or pick up your children at Walden School. Using

the name cards on your visor also helps to avoid delays in our pick-up process.

Please note that state licensing of our Pre-Kindergarten program requires that all Pre-Kindergarten children must be walked into the pre-Kindergarten room or yard and signed in by the parent/guardian or caretaker. Full signature is mandatory. Pre-Kindergarten children cannot be dropped off in the arrival car line.

### **AUTHORIZED PICK-UP LIST**

Your child will only be released to individuals you authorize. Authorizations need to be in writing and part of your child's Emergency Contact Form. If your child will be going home with a friend or a different caregiver, it is essential that you notify the teacher in the morning. To minimize disruptions to the classroom during the school day, please communicate last minute changes to your pick-up routine to the Front Office at (626) 792-6166 and "Press 0".

### **CARPOOLS AND RIDE SHARE SERVICES**

Every adult who drops off or picks up a student must be on the authorized pick-up list to enter the school grounds. The use of ride-share services, such as Uber and Lyft, are not permitted for drop off and pick up of students. Walden allows students to be released to an authorized "Hop, Skip, Drive" driver when families list this company on their child's Emergency Information Form. Drivers will be asked for the "student password" and be asked to show a driver's license and provide their signature on the class dismissal sheet. The school will deny access to companies providing this service if there are repeated violations of our traffic instructions.

### **BASIC DRIVING INSTRUCTIONS**

The Walden driving pattern has cars arriving from the back (East) of the school. Cars should be traveling East on Colorado Boulevard, and then:

1. Turn right onto Daisy Avenue. (Daisy is the first street East of San Gabriel Boulevard.)
2. Make an immediate right into Thompson Alley behind the tire business. Stay to your far right. While in line to pick up your child, please do not block business driveways.
3. Turn left into Sewell Alley. You will now be directly behind the furniture business, the antique slot machine building, and then the two Walden buildings. Again, hug the right side of the alley.
4. Continue at Sewell Alley and stop at the East Gates to drop off or the South Gate on Rose Alley to pick up children. No parking or stopping in the alleyway during arrival and dismissal.
5. Exit by turning right on Rose Alley, and then turn right on San Gabriel Boulevard. The City of Pasadena prohibits left turns from Rose Alley to southbound San Gabriel Boulevard.

### **ARRIVAL**

All car drop-offs for arrival will take place at the East Gates. You may choose to walk your child onto the school grounds utilizing the South Gate. Please drop your child off at Walden between 8:00 – 8:25 a.m., so that school may begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. All gates except the Late Gate\* (see below) will close and lock promptly at 8:25 a.m. Please do not ask anyone to let you or your child into the play yard after the gate has been closed by a staff member. For the safety of the children, a staff member will close the gates and secure the yards.

#### **LATE GATE**

If you arrive late (after 8:25 a.m.), The South Gate to the South Yard becomes the Late Gate (8:25-8:35 a.m.). You can still utilize the drive-up and drop-off system; staff will be available until 8:35 a.m. to help your child get safely from the car to the gate.

If you are parking and walking in late, please walk your child to the Late Gate between 8:25–8:35 a.m. Children entering the Late Gate after 8:25 a.m. will be marked as tardy. If arrival is after 8:35 a.m., use the school's Front Office doors and sign your child/ren in. We ask that parents never "drop their child off" alone at the front of the school. The City of Pasadena prohibits parents from parking in front of the school on San Gabriel Boulevard during school hours.



## **RAINY DAYS**

Children will be dropped off at the East Gate near the Toby Hayward Community Room. The drop-off traffic line will be slower than usual; plan to arrive at school earlier.

## **EARLY MORNING CHILDCARE**

This fee-based childcare option is available from 7:00 – 8:00 a.m. Please follow the basic driving instructions as stated above and park your car in the alley in marked stalls only. Do not block our neighbors' access to their driveways or garages. Walk your child into the Toby Hayward Community Room through the East Gate and sign-in.

## **DISMISSAL**

All dismissals will occur from the South Gate. All children will be dismissed at 3:00 p.m., but you may arrive to pick your child up between 3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Students will sit with their teacher in the designated class area. Teachers will sign out students as parents/caregivers pick up the students.

The play structure in the South Yard is closed between 3:00 – 3:30 p.m. during Dismissal. Parents are responsible for supervising their child/ren during dismissal once the teacher has signed out the student.

## **RAINY DAY DISMISSAL**

All children will be released at the East Gate near the Toby Hayward Community Room in the South Building.

## **LATE PARENT (after 3:30 p.m.)**

If you arrive late to pick up your child, your child will be checked into The Village at 3:30 p.m. and billed as "occasional use," if no billing plan is pre-selected.

## **THE VILLAGE CHILDCARE DISMISSAL**

When you arrive to pick up your child, please park your car in the alley in marked stalls only. Cars not in marked stalls will be ticketed! Do not block our neighbors' access to their driveways or garages. Buzz the bell at the East Gate to allow entry to the Toby Hayward Community Room and sign your child out.

## **PARKING**

If you decide to park your car and walk your child into/out of school, please enter the school at the South Gate.

### **NEVER PARK**

- In front of the school on San Gabriel Boulevard. Parents are not allowed to park in front of either building of the school during the school day.
- On San Gabriel Boulevard just south of the school exit driveway. Parked cars block the view for exiting cars and create a safety hazard.
- On San Gabriel Boulevard just north of the school. These are private businesses that need their own parking.
- In driveways or alleys behind or around the school.

## **TRAFFIC REMINDERS**

- We have a one-way stream of traffic, but the apartment tenants do not. Please be considerate of them as they exit and enter their homes.
- Many residents will need to get into or out of their garages and driveways during the pick-up hours. Walden traffic must yield to the residents, including backing your car up when necessary.
- If you park on Daisy Avenue and walk your child through Rose Alley to the South Gate, please be respectful of the noise level near our neighbors' homes. Please do not walk your child through the apartment complexes but walk them through the alley to school.
- Do not "jaywalk" your child across San Gabriel Boulevard. Use the crosswalk at Colorado

- Boulevard.
- The City of Pasadena police have specified that all students must exit cars on the right side of the car only.
- Do not get out of your car in the car line unless you are helping your Pre-K child into a car seat.
- Please follow staff and faculty instructions during arrival and dismissal.

## **VISITORS ON CAMPUS**

Visitors on campus must register with SchoolPass, our validation system, with the Front Office Manager and receive a nametag. If a student would like to bring a visitor to the school, arrangements must be made well in advance with the school office. Alumni visitors are welcome but also need to register with the Front Office Manager upon arrival. They will be issued an alumni visitor badge. If alumni would like to stay for the day, this visit will need to be scheduled in advance with the school office. Please contact the Front Office Administrator or email [support@waldenschool.net](mailto:support@waldenschool.net).

## **PHONE MESSAGES TO STAFF AND CHILDREN**

Voicemail messages for staff will be answered as soon as their schedule permits, usually before and after school. We ask that you review your family schedules for the day on the way to school so that children know what to expect. Should there be an unforeseen change in plans, you may call the Front Office, and we will get a message to the teacher and your child, or you may email the teacher directly in the morning. In an emergency/accident situation, please call the school and press "0" and your message will, of course, be delivered to your child and the teacher immediately.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Absences and tardies appear in your child's progress reports and become part of their permanent attendance record. Please make sure your child arrives on time to ensure a smooth start to the day.

### **ABSENCES**

We ask that you phone the Front Office by 8:00 a.m. if your child will be absent from school. You may call the school and follow the voicemail instructions for student absence notification (extension 300). The beginning of the school day is also the best time to request homework assignments for students who will be absent. Please be sure to call the school and verify that assignments are ready to be picked up. Students are responsible for all homework assigned during their absence. The teachers will be happy to supply the necessary assignments by 3:30 p.m. of the day it is requested.

Sometimes, it is necessary for students to leave the school during the day for appointments. To guarantee the accuracy of absence/tardy reports, we ask that you let us know by note in advance when a student will be leaving school early for any reason. The note should come to the Front Office and will be copied for the teacher. Any student leaving after 8:30 a.m. must be signed out in the Front Office by the parent or guardian before leaving the building.

### **TARDINESS**

It is imperative that all children be prompt to class. Late arrivals disrupt instruction and the concentration of children and faculty alike. Unnecessary or consistent tardiness interrupts lessons and circle time, and your child must catch up with what is in progress. Your promptness also teaches children that they must be responsible for preparing promptly for school. Arriving after 8:25 a.m. is tardy. If entering at the "Late Gate" (South Gate of south play yard) between 8:25-8:35 a.m., or the Front Office after 8:35 a.m., the child must be signed in by their parent or guardian before reporting to class. This procedure is imperative in case of an emergency where accurate counts of children are critical. If you know in advance that your child will be absent or tardy on a particular day, a brief note to the teacher is a courtesy. Please note that excessive tardiness (greater than 5 per month) will result in a tardy reminder to the family. If there are ten (10) or more tardies in a month, the parents will meet with an administrator to discuss the tardy problem.

### **FAMILY VACATIONS**

By law, illness is the only valid excuse for student absences. The school calendar provides generous vacation opportunities, and we encourage all families to plan out-of-town trips to coincide with the

days when the school is closed, and no parent conference is scheduled. We strongly discourage parents from removing their children on regular school days. Make-up work can never provide the same depth of understanding as the presentation, discussion, and supervision of classroom practice. Consistent attendance fosters a positive attitude of commitment to a strong educational program. In addition, unnecessary absences unfairly increase the workloads of both teacher and student and complicate the timing between a child's current assignments with make-up work.

## HEALTH

By law, for the health and safety of all students and teachers, no child can be admitted to our program without a completed health form signed by a physician. All new students are given this form prior to entering the school. The office should be kept up to date with any changes in the child's health status (i.e., immunization, hospitalizations, allergies, and health problems of any kind). All student health information is updated on the Magnus Health Website.

### ILLNESS

If your child becomes ill at school, they will be sent to the sick bay where an assessment will be made as to the severity of the child's condition. The administrator or office personnel may consult the parent. Situations in which a student would be sent home include fever, vomiting, diarrhea, sneezing, headache, pink eye, coughing, a change of exposing others to illness, or severe discomfort.

Children should be kept at home when they are visibly ill or have a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. It is especially important to keep a child out of school if there are any symptoms of COVID. Parents must call and let the office know when your child is ill. If it is a highly contagious condition (strep throat, pink eye, or COVID), parents must inform the office as well.

If a child is showing symptoms of COVID, they must visit a medical provider to receive a note indicating that a child is safe to be at school or students must receive a negative COVID test. Students with a medical release or negative test must also be symptom free before returning to school.

Due to the highly contagious nature of COVID, it is necessary for your sick child to be picked up within an hour.

### INJURIES

Wounds are cleaned and cared for according to American Red Cross first aid procedures. Parents or guardians are notified by the office or extended care staff for all potentially serious injuries and for any head injury. If a child sustains a severe injury, and a parent cannot be reached, the family's doctor will be contacted, and if necessary, 911 emergency services will be called. The same procedures are followed on field trips.

### CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS

(Strep Throat, Lice, Chicken Pox, Ringworm, Pink Eye)

There are several illnesses that are common to school communities, such as strep throat, lice, chicken pox, ringworm, and pink eye. As a precautionary measure, parents and guardians should check their students' hair and body periodically. Please contact the school office if you suspect that your student has any contagious infection or illness. Once reported, the student's class and any other classes or groups that the student came into contact with will be alerted immediately for health awareness and precautionary actions.

### MEDICATIONS

Students are not to take medications on their own and are not to keep such medications in the classroom. Necessary medications or pills *must* be administered by the school office personnel. Parents should bring the original medical container to the office with written prior authorization and provide specific instructions from the pediatrician for dispensing as needed. It is the obligation of the parent to inform the office personnel if a student is on any kind of on-going medications taken at home or at school and to inform us if the child has any notable health problems such as severe allergies, asthma, etc. Please be sure to update your child's information forms if a new health issue arises. Parents will be required to give written permission for dispensing of any over-the-counter

medication as well.

## **ALLERGIES**

It is imperative that we be informed of and updated about serious allergies or asthma and that we are told the procedures for care in the event of a problem. A list of these allergies will be made available to all teachers and personnel and will be kept in every room. Food allergies are a critical concern and food sharing is never allowed to protect the safety of our students. Please reinforce this at home.

## **EPIPENS**

Students who have been prescribed an EpiPen must always keep the pen with them. This means that EpiPens, unlike other medications, should be kept in the child's classroom for ease of use. In the best-case scenario, two EpiPens would be on campus: one in the classroom and one in the school office. In keeping with current state laws, Walden does not keep additional EpiPens on hand.

## **AED**

Walden School has an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on campus to aid in an emergency. AEDs are used when a person has gone into cardiac arrest. From the RedCross.org website, an AED is "... a medical device that analyzes the heart's rhythm." If necessary, it delivers an electrical shock, known as defibrillation, which helps the heart re-establish an effective rhythm." All faculty and staff members are trained in the use of AED as part of their First Aid and CPR certification.

## **GENERAL EMERGENCIES (EARTHQUAKES, FIRE, ETC.)**

Walden School maintains disaster plans in case of earthquakes, fire, and intruders. In the event of any evacuation, our gathering place for an evacuation (i.e., fire) is the South Yard; for a Lockdown/Barricade situation involving an active shooter, the classrooms are equipped with safety locks and will hold all children. Parents will be notified with instructions.

Teachers will account for and supervise the children in their classes in the event of an emergency. They will stay with the students until they are picked up by an authorized person. Non-teaching staff will assist as directed, including relieving teachers who may be needed for first aid. Office personnel will handle home/school communications via cell phone and email/text, as available. Every attempt will be made to bring a speedy reunion between parents/guardians and children. Please be certain to sign your child out so that all children can be properly accounted for.

Walden School follows the Los Angeles County "Big Five" emergency protocol. Administration and staff have been trained in proper protocol. "The Big Five" emergencies that we prepare our students and staff for are: Shelter in Place; Drop, Cover, and Hold On (earthquake); Secure Campus (a potential threat); Lockdown/Barricade (an immediate threat or active shooter); and Evacuation (including a fire).

Earthquake drills are held regularly; according to the earthquake guidelines of Los Angeles County and the State of California, FEMA, and the USGS, children are taught to duck and cover with one hand over the head and face and the other holding onto a desk or table leg. Fire drills are also held regularly, and evacuation plans for each classroom are posted by the exits. Lockdown/Barricade drills are regularly held to teach children how to be safe in the unlikely event of an intruder/active shooter. Every building and all fire extinguishers are inspected annually by the fire department, and each classroom is supplied with an emergency pouch. Walden maintains emergency supplies for each student containing: food bars, water, and blankets for use if an extended stay at school is necessary.

## **CLASSROOM SUPPLIES**

Although the school provides materials and supplies for class projects and activities, personal supplies such as paper, rulers, pencils, markers, etc. should be replenished by parents, as needed, for their child. Teachers will provide a list of personal classroom supplies in their summer welcome letters to families.

## **SCHOOL LIBRARY**

The library is open five days a week. Exact times are posted on the library doors. Children are permitted to use the library, at the discretion of their teachers, at recess and lunch, and at the discretion of The

Village staff. Parents are welcome to borrow books as well. The library is happy to accept appropriate, hardcover, gently used volumes. Please contact the Library Manager at ext. 118 regarding book donations.

## **ACTIVISM**

Walden is committed to the promotion and acts of social justice. Walden's curriculum and our diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work informs our perspective on the role of student activism in our community.

Walden seeks to provide students with the skills and experiential learning opportunities to productively engage in civil discourse across conflicting intellectual and moral viewpoints with compassion and the goal of achieving educational awareness, solidarity, and dismantling oppressive systems.

Student-initiated activism announcements must be approved by the administration and should underscore that off-campus events cannot be sponsored by Walden though chaperoning, supervision, or transportation. This policy is intended to facilitate student activism safely and coordinated.

\*Student initiated activism that includes hate speech or is driven by any group that is identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group will not be tolerated.

## **STUDENT FUNDRAISING**

Clubs, student interest groups, student community involvement projects, and classroom projects that plan to include fundraising and/or the collection of goods work with their teacher, Director of Curriculum, and the Head of School. Students will be asked to develop a proposal submitted for approval before the activity begins. The objective of this process is to support students' learning about planning, organization, and implementation of successful fundraising efforts to support an identified purpose.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

Children love to celebrate their birthdays with their school friends. Birthday celebrations at school will be incorporated into the normal routine of a class at the teacher's discretion. Teachers will plan and prepare for their own class birthday celebrations in collaboration with parents and guardians. Check with your child's teacher in advance to find out the guidelines for in-class celebrations and allergies, which might preclude a child from joining the festivities. Parents of children with dietary restrictions may provide alternatives. Facilities for refrigeration are not available.

## **PARTIES AND GATHERINGS**

Most children will make their best and closest friends at school, and these are the children whom they will want to invite to their parties. Although the size of parties varies, we ask that great awareness and sensitivity to children's feelings be exercised with party invitations. Invitations to parties may not be distributed at school.

## **FOOD – FUEL FOR SCHOOL**

We can help your children to learn about nutrition at Walden, but we need your help. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and students who skip breakfast or who grab a doughnut are often tired and easily distracted by mid-morning.

As educators, we believe there is a strong relationship between nutrition and learning. Our nutrition lessons emphasize the connection between the variety of foods needed each day to provide essential nutrients and how these foods affect the human body in its ability to process information, exercise, and perform daily tasks.

The modern teaching tool is called "My Plate," designed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the government's primary food group symbol, consistent with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This model replaces the "Pyramid." It is made up of five food groups with daily servings recommended for each group. In accordance with this guide, we teach your children how to be informed consumers by being aware of a product's list of ingredients. We ask that you support our efforts and invite your child to participate in snack and lunch planning and preparation using "My Plate" as a guide. If you need some suggestions for healthful breakfast and lunches, our library has books and cookbooks for you to borrow.

We have four food policies at Walden that are enforced for the health and welfare of the children. The following items may not be eaten at or brought to School:

- Chewing gum – absolutely no gum is allowed at school before, during, or after school hours. It distracts many children from paying attention in class, and it gets stuck on shoes, carpets, chairs, and tables.
- Sodas, candy, sweet drinks, sugary foods – should these items be in your child’s lunch, we will ask that it be returned to their lunch box and eaten at or on the way home.
- Canned fruits or puddings – they can be hard to open, often have sharp edges, and leave a mess if they are not eaten entirely.
- Frozen meals, “Cup of noodles,” and similar foods requiring hot water or microwave access.

Please be certain that your child has lunch and snack each day. Hot/Cold Lunch service is available five days a week and can be ordered up until 12:00 a.m. each day from an outside service administered by the Director of Operations.

If you bring lunch to school after the day has started, you may drop it off in the front office. Please deliver late lunches to the office no later than 11:30 a.m. Food deliveries such as mobile order, delivery services, and large quantity orders are not allowed. (Example: Postmates, DoorDash, and Uber Eats)

### NUT-FREE CAMPUS

Walden is a nut-free school. There are several students at Walden who have nut allergies ranging from mild to severe, even fatal. Students are naturally inclined to share food even though sharing food is not permitted. Therefore, it is imperative for the safety of all our students that no nuts are brought to school for any students. Peanut butter is not allowed. In cases of class parties, it is imperative that only foods which are nut free and not processed on equipment which processes nuts are brought to school. Please reinforce with your child the importance of not bringing nuts and not sharing food.

### TRASH-LESS LUNCH AND WATER BOTTLES

Our mission states that we all have stewardship for the world in which we live. To realize this daily, students are expected to bring "no waste" lunches using reusable containers like canvas or nylon sacks or lunch boxes. Food and drinks should be in thermoses, plastic ware, or other durable containers. Utensils should be washable metal, plastic, or wooden, and the use of cloth napkins is suggested. Please avoid disposable items like individual juice boxes or pre-packaged plastic containers of yogurt, applesauce, or snack foods.

Filtered water is available at water fountains in both buildings and students are encouraged to bring refillable water bottles.

### SCHOOL CLOTHING

Walden students are active children. Our program involves a good deal of physical activity, both in our physical education classes and in other aspects of the school day. We request that you provide comfortable clothing that is neat, modest, and appropriate. Students should wear athletic shoes only. Sandals with heel straps may be worn; however, appropriate athletic shoes must be available for participation in physical education classes.

Additional Guidelines:

- Tobacco or alcohol-related or violence-oriented theme clothing are not permitted.
- Clothing with racist, sexist, and/or inflammatory slogans or anything offensive to the community may not be worn.
- No *undergarments* may be showing.
- T-shirts and tops should overlap the tops of shorts, pants, or skirts. Clothing should not be overly tight and spaghetti-strap tops are not appropriate. As a guide, shorts, skirts, and dresses should be no shorter than where your child’s fingertips touch their legs when the arm is extended.
- No jewelry other than simple, non-dangling earrings or watches should be worn to school.
- Decisions regarding the appropriate appearance for students are at the discretion of the school administration. If it is determined that a student is dressed inappropriately, parents will be called

to bring a change of clothing, or more appropriate attire may be provided.

## **HATS**

Children may wear hats on the play yards to protect their eyes and face from the sun, but inside, hats may only be worn at each teacher's discretion.

## **CELL PHONES, TOYS, AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

It is the school's policy that students may not have or use cell phones or smart watches on campus. For emergency situations, cell phones may be left in the office to be picked up by the student upon departure. If a cell phone is seen out of a backpack or in use during school hours, or if it rings or makes noise during school hours, it will be confiscated and must be retrieved by a parent at the end of the day.

Toys and personal belongings are not allowed at school except on share days or when express permission is granted by a teacher. Share Day items must remain in the child's cubby until the designated time. Weapons or objects relating to violence are NEVER appropriate.

Personal electronic devices such as iPad, phones, kindles, and video games are not allowed at school without pre-approval. All personal electronic devices will be confiscated by the teacher and must be retrieved by a parent at the end of the day.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Please make sure that all items such as lunch boxes, books, jackets, sweaters, etc. are plainly marked with your child's name. Our Lost and Found is in the South Yard. The Lost and Found should be the first place that students look for lost items. Since the amount of clothing, etc. that finds its way to the Lost and Found is substantial, unclaimed items are given to a local charity at the end of each month. Valuable items should not be brought to school. If a valuable item is found, it will be held in the Front Office.

## **FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

Students should be prepared to have everything they need for each school day. Should a student forget their lunch, homework, or other items, at the discretion of each teacher, the student may have the opportunity to call home. Parents may drop off these belongings in the Front Office.

## **MONEY AT SCHOOL**

In general, please do not send money to school with your child. If money is sent to the school, please seal it in an envelope and write your child's name, teacher's name, and what the money is for on the front of the envelope.

## **TRADING**

Trading cards, stickers, virtual pets, or other toys are often sought items for trades. Trading should occur at home under parent supervision to avoid hurt feelings.

# **XIV GENERAL STATEMENTS AND POLICIES**

## **NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT POLICY**

Walden abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the court order.

## **FAMILY EDUCATION AND PRIVACY ACT OF 1974**

According to the Family Education and Privacy Act of 1974, parents, and alumni 18 years of age and older

may review their own school records. Release of information to other schools or other appropriate agencies requires the signature of a parent, or the student, if s/he is 18 years old. Arrangements for the review of a student's cumulative file must be made with the Director of Admissions, and the file must be viewed in the presence of the Director of Admissions to help ensure the integrity of the child's cumulative academic file for school transfer.

### **CHILD ABUSE LAWS**

Walden School abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. The law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protection Services.

### **XV CONCLUSION**

Building and sustaining the health of the Walden community is the responsibility of everyone. A positive and constructive relationship between families and the school leadership, administration, and faculty and staff are essential for the fulfillment of the school's mission and educational purpose. It is understood that all parents have read the Handbook and will follow its guidelines.