



WALDEN SCHOOL

Pasadena, California

Family Handbook

Updated August 2026

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Preface

Walden School is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the California Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Pasadena Area Independent Schools (PAIS), the Progressive Education Network (PEN), the Educators Consortium for Service Learning (ECSL), the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), the California Teacher Development Collaborative (CATDC), the Independent School Alliance for Minority Affairs (ISA), the National Business Officers Association (NBOA), the Enrollment Management Association (EMA), Southern California People of Color in Independent Schools (SoCalPOCIS), and Private School Village. In 2022, Walden School was granted another consecutive seven-year term of accreditation by CAIS and WASC.

This handbook addresses questions about Walden's school culture, safety, and other policies and procedures. No set of guidelines can cover every situation that might arise, and the policies here are intended to apply under ordinary circumstances. Walden retains the discretion to deviate from these policies and to address individual circumstances in the manner it determines is in the best interest of our students, staff, and community. Policies may be revised during the school year; families will be notified of any changes.

This handbook is a general guide to Walden's program and policies. It is not, and does not create, an enrollment contract. Where this handbook and a family's signed Enrollment Contract differ, the Enrollment Contract controls.

1. Mission & Philosophy

1.1 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 to lay the foundation for wisdom, to encourage the spirit of lifelong learning, and to teach that we all have stewardship for the world in which we live.

1.2 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, they are more likely to retain the excitement and joy of learning. In addition to laying a firm academic foundation, Walden encourages disciplined and imaginative thinking and helps students see the interrelatedness of all that they learn. We stress the importance of self-esteem, graciousness and generosity, and an appreciation of differences among people, as well as the responsibility each of us has as members of a school community.

1.3 Diversity, Belonging, and Justice Statement

Walden School seeks to foster an inclusive community 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 creating a school culture that values honest and open dialogue, mutual respect, and acceptance of different values and beliefs.

1.4 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 actual or perceived identity — including but not limited to gender, gender identity and/or expression, race, ethnicity, hair texture or protective hairstyle, sexual orientation, religion, age, or ability. 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 should feel empowered to interrupt the behavior and report it to faculty or administrators immediately. Any student who feels they have been the victim of harassment, or who has witnessed it, is strongly encouraged to notify a faculty member or administrator as soon as possible. Complaints are investigated promptly, and appropriate action is taken.

1.5 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 that is sexual in content or implication, including unwelcome advances, teasing or 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 free from unlawful harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Every member of the Walden community — faculty, staff, students, and families — has the right to pursue their work and education in such an environment. We pledge timely diligence in investigating known or alleged incidents, and vigilance in building a community that is aware of, educated about, and dedicated to a culture of zero tolerance for these behaviors.

1.6 Discrimination

Walden School prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, religion, marital status, registered domestic partner status, age, national origin or ancestry, immigration or citizenship status, physical or mental disability, medical condition (including genetic characteristics), sexual orientation, hair texture and protective hairstyles historically associated with race (consistent with California's CROWN Act, Education Code § 212.1), or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. This prohibition extends to discrimination based on the perception that a person has one of these characteristics, or is associated with someone who does.

1.7 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.

These nine agreements are the foundation of behavior, discipline, and community life at Walden, referenced throughout this handbook and posted in every classroom.

1.8 Guidelines for Parental Support

Families who choose Walden have made an informed decision, and we welcome your support of Walden's philosophy of education and its expression in day-to-day school and classroom life. To make your child's experience as productive as possible, we look forward to a strong, positive relationship between families and the school. The following guidelines state the reasonable expectations we have of one another.

What Families Can Expect from Walden

- Timely, relevant communication — calls and emails returned within two business days.
- Regularly scheduled and, when needed, informal conferences with pertinent, helpful information about your child's progress.
- Proactive contact from us about areas where your child needs additional support.
- Opportunities to learn about our program and clear answers to your questions.
- Written narrative progress reports twice a year.
- Clear, timely communication about health and safety matters.
- A productive working relationship with your child that supports both social-emotional and intellectual growth.
- Appropriate safety guidelines and behavior expectations, consistently enforced, with appropriate follow-up.

What Walden Expects from Families and Guardians

- Open lines of communication with teachers, staff, and administrators, and timely sharing of information that may affect your child's learning.
- Respect for teachers' time — requesting informal conferences only when necessary and attend scheduled conferences.
- Attendance at events designed to inform you about Walden's program.
- Follow-through on requests made to support your child's growth.
- Support for your child's teachers, and a productive relationship with the school community.

- Respectful, calm communication with your child's teachers and Walden staff, and modeling of inclusive behavior for your children.
- Support for the school's rules and disciplinary decisions, and safe, respectful behavior at school events.
- Adherence to county and school health and safety guidance during any health or safety event.

Additionally, Walden Encourages Families To

- Get informed and involved in Walden Family Connection (WFC) and its many volunteer opportunities.
- Model the value of volunteerism for your children.
- 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 Night, school presentations, and at least two school-sponsored community-building activities each year.

2. Governance

Walden School is incorporated under the laws of the State of California as a nonprofit public benefit corporation. A self-perpetuating Board of Trustees governs the school, with new members confirmed by the community of parents and staff, and the Head of School administers the school day-to-day.

2.1 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees holds the highest level of governance authority at Walden and is responsible for the school's long-term welfare, mission, and financial health. As a self-perpetuating board, current Trustees identify, vet, and nominate new members based on the experience and perspective the Board needs; the community of parents and staff then confirms nominees before the Annual All-School Meeting (see Section 4.2).

It can be helpful for families to understand the difference between governance and day-to-day management. The Board governs: it sets broad policy, strategic direction, and financial guardrails for the school. The Head of School manages: leading faculty and staff and making the daily decisions of school life within the direction the Board sets. In practice, the Board:

- Hires, evaluates, and supports the Head of School, and delegates to that person the authority to run the school day-to-day.
- Approves the annual budget and sets broad institutional policy to protect Walden's long-term fiscal stability and mission.
- Oversees major legal, facilities, and strategic matters, including capital projects and long-range planning.
- Leads fundraising efforts and models philanthropic leadership for the community.
- Acts only as a whole body — individual Trustees, including the Board Chair, have no authority to act or speak for the Board on their own.

The Board does not involve itself in the school's daily operations — including curriculum, teaching methods, individual hiring or personnel matters, admissions, student discipline, or

classroom placement. Those decisions rest with the Head of School and Walden's professional staff. Families with a question or concern about a day-to-day matter should follow the communication path described in Sections 4.1 and 14, starting with the classroom teacher; the Board is not the venue for an individual family's concern.

Board members include parent representatives, two or three Walden faculty, the Head of School, and community members whose professional expertise supports the school's mission. The Board meets monthly.

New Trustees are expected to bring: a commitment to Walden's mission, philosophy, and goals; intellectual integrity and an institution-centered perspective; a cooperative spirit that reinforces agreed-upon Board policy; complementary expertise; and a willingness to be actively involved in fundraising. The Principles of Good Practice inform the Board's work for Member Schools established by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).

3. Communication

Effective, two-way communication is central to Walden's goal of involving families in their child's education. We share employment changes among staff with the community when appropriate for both the individual and the school; we ask families to respect the personal and professional boundaries of Walden employees and to keep in mind that staff transitions are a normal part of any healthy school community.

3.1 Website and “The Pond”

Walden's website (www.waldenschool.net) provides program information, calendar updates, and more. Members of the Walden community also have access to “The Pond,” a password-protected section of the site containing school activity information, helpful links, forms, and your child's biannual progress reports.

3.2 Updating Your Contact Information

Your family's contact information, including your student's Vital Health Record, is maintained on The Pond and the Magnus Health Portal, which is also accessible via The Pond.

To keep your records accurate, review and update this information at least once a year, or whenever your circumstances change, such as new addresses, phone numbers, emergency contacts, or health-related details.

General Contact Information

To update your general contact information (e.g., phone numbers or addresses), please use the “Family Profile Update” button on the right side of The Pond homepage. Once you update it, it will automatically sync to Magnus Health overnight.

Magnus Health Records

To update additional contact information, such as emergency contacts or authorized pick-ups, please update it in Magnus Health under the Vital Health Record heading. You can access Magnus Health via the “Magnus Health” button on the right side of The Pond homepage. This will update immediately.

3.3 Court Orders

Any court-mandated exclusions or conditions regarding a child's custody or safety must be on file with Walden School. See Section 18.1 for how Walden handles custody-related communication.

3.4 Publications to Know and Read

- **Walden Weekly** — arrives in your inbox every Thursday and is the one-stop resource for all events, ideas, and highlights in the community.
- **Broadcast Emails** — sent periodically for school events and activities beyond the Weekly.
- **Classroom Updates/Newsletters** — sent weekly on Sundays by your child's Classroom Teacher, detailing classroom happenings as well as messages from Room Parents.
- **Walden Annual Report** — Walden's audited annual financial report, published as a nonprofit organization, along with recognition of major donors.
- **Walden Yearbook** — produced by Walden Family Connection volunteers and the Communications Office, given free to all students and staff.
- **Social Media** — used selectively to share community stories on Facebook and Instagram. Follow @lifeatwalden.

4. Community

4.1 Community Guidelines

When conflict or concern arises, we encourage resolving it face to face — other forms of communication can take on a life of their own and lose their context. We teach students to do the same, in part by modeling it ourselves.

If you have a question or concern about curriculum or a classroom matter, please: reach out to your classroom teacher first; if further discussion is needed, contact the Director of Curriculum or Head of School to make an appointment, and approach all parties respectfully.

Please avoid: sending mass emails to your class or the school, or posting about classroom or school issues on social media. Parents are encouraged to “try on” curricular changes as they occur, allowing for ongoing exploration and growth in the classroom.

4.2 All-School Events

Every school thrives on active participation. Please check the online calendar on the Walden website for exact dates. Notable annual events include New Family Orientation (early September); Walden 101, held the first week of school; Back-to-School Night, for adults only (late September); Walden Homecoming (early October); Grandparents & Grand Friends' Day (November); Winter Sing, our Ponderers' (4th–6th grade) winter performance (December); Big Help Community Action Day (January); Spring Sing, our Pre-K–6th grade musical and dance performance (March); Open House (May); and the Annual All-School Meeting, where new Trustees are confirmed (late May).

4.3 Parent Supervision During Community and All-School Events

Please keep a watchful eye on your children during meetings and events outside regular school hours, on and off campus. Faculty and staff are often occupied and not available to supervise children during community events such as Homecoming, Winter Sing, and Open House.

5. School Finances

5.1 Tuition & Fees

Walden School is a nonprofit organization; all fees support the school and its program. Because the school is sustained through tuition, prompt payment is important.

5.2 Payment Plans

Walden offers three tuition payment plans:

10. One payment, due June 1
11. Three payments, due June 1, October 1, and February 1
12. Ten payments, due the 1st of each month, June through March

5.3 Late Payments

The Business Office sends a monthly electronic statement five days before each payment is due. Walden accepts checks only from families who have opted into the one-payment plan; families on the three-payment or ten-payment plans are expected to enroll in ACH auto-pay through our VCPay platform. If paying by check, please write your student's name on the check to ensure proper account credit. A payment not received within five (5) business days of its due date is considered late, and a \$50 late fee is added to the account. An account that remains delinquent may move through a series of steps — a payment-plan conversation at 30 days, restrictions on extracurricular participation and record transfers at 60 days, and possible suspension or dismissal with re-enrollment blocked at 90 days — as described in Walden's Tuition Delinquency Policy, available from the Business Office. Questions about student accounts should go to the Business Office.

5.4 Frequently Asked Questions

Is tuition pro-rated for shorter months? No — each payment represents a portion of the full year's cost, not a fee for a specific month or day.

Are The Village fees pro-rated for shorter months? No, for the same reason.

What happens if my check bounces? This applies to families on the one-payment plan, since checks are the only payment method accepted for that plan. A returned check is subject to immediate collection and a \$25 handling fee. A second returned check requires that a cashier's check or money order for all future payments.

5.5 Withdrawal Information

Per the (Re)Enrollment Contract: if a student leaves during the school year, the family remains obligated to pay the full year's tuition listed in the contract; no portion is refunded or cancelled. If a student will not return the following year, the Re-Enrollment Contract may be cancelled by written notice before June 1, though the deposit already paid is non-refundable. On June 1, the obligation to pay full tuition becomes fixed and irrevocable, regardless of the number of installments used. Please contact the Business Office with any questions about the complete (Re)Enrollment Contract.

6. Flexible Tuition

Full detail on this program, including how financial need is assessed and the notification and appeals process, are available in Walden's standalone Flexible Tuition Policy from the Admissions or Business Office; this section summarizes it in the context of the rest of the handbook.

6.1 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 our community, which is why every family has the opportunity to enroll at a tuition level that fits their financial circumstances. On average, approximately 30% of Walden families attend at a reduced tuition rate. Admission to Walden is need-blind: financial aid status does not affect an admissions decision, and financial aid is awarded to admitted families only after that decision is made.

6.2 Qualifying for Flexible Tuition

Walden believes the primary responsibility for financing education rests with the immediate and extended family. Need is defined as the difference between the school's full cost of tuition and what a family can reasonably contribute, determined by considering total family income, assets (especially housing) and liabilities, standard and unusual living expenses, discretionary funds, family size, and the number of children attending tuition-charging schools.

6.3 Criteria to Receive Flexible Tuition

- Available to students at any grade level and based on demonstrated need.
- Each family's unique financial circumstances are carefully considered each family's unique financial circumstances through a comprehensive application process.
- Subject to the Board-approved annual budget, qualifying families pay reduced tuition and, in some cases, reduced fees.
- Families are expected to use their resources toward timely payment of their reduced obligation.
- Discounts for most auxiliary programs are available to qualifying families.
- Flexible Tuition is reviewed annually; renewal is prioritized for returning families but is not guaranteed, and families must reapply each year.

6.4 How to Apply

Walden School uses the Clarity Application, administered by Mission Enrollment, to determine a family's flexible tuition level and ability to pay. Visit the flexible tuition section of the Walden website for full details, or reach out to the Admissions Office with questions.

1. Create an account on the Clarity website to begin.
2. Complete the application (about 40 minutes); you may save your progress and return at any time.
3. Pay the application fee at the end of the process.
4. Watch for follow-up emails from Walden and Clarity — you may be asked for additional tax documentation, such as S-Corporation or Schedule E partnership returns with corresponding K-1s, 1120s, or Form 1065.

Application deadlines for each admission cycle (typically mid-December for returning families and siblings, and late January for new applicant families) will be published on the Walden website and communicated by the Admissions Office — please confirm the exact dates there rather than relying on prior years. New families are notified of their Flexible Tuition decision alongside their admissions offer; returning families are notified in late March.

In-app support and email support (support@claritytuition.com, available in English and Spanish) are available throughout the process, and Walden's Admissions Office is always glad to help.

6.5 Confidentiality

Information entered into Clarity is shared confidentially with Mission Enrollment, Walden's independent Flexible Tuition partner. Walden keeps all financial documents and all decisions about who receives Flexible Tuition strictly private. Teachers, Trustees, and students are not informed of individual Flexible Tuition applications or decisions, and families are asked not to discuss confidential tuition matters with one another.

7. Philanthropy at Walden School

7.1 Investing in Values

The strength of Walden's educational program reflects five decades of gifts of time, talent, and financial generosity from Walden families. We count on current families to continue that legacy.

7.2 Volunteering, Campus Access, and Screening

Volunteering is essential to Walden life and can take many forms — from classroom help to Walden Family Connection committees to short-term, at-home projects. Opportunities are shared in the Walden Weekly and Room Parent emails; talk with WFC chairs, teachers, or administrators to find a good fit for your skills and time.

All school volunteers must be screened and authorized before volunteering, and must use SchoolPass — Walden's visitor-management platform — every time they come to campus. A driver's license is needed to register; on first use, SchoolPass issues a PIN that serves as your ongoing sign-in credential.

7.3 Volunteer Contributions

Volunteer time and contributions are indispensable in helping the Walden community thrive and in sustaining everything that makes Walden unique. Rather than a transactional requirement, Walden invites each family to give in a spirit of connection and generosity. We encourage every family to contribute 20 hours or more each year in ways that align with their abilities, interests, and schedule — whether through a Walden Family Connection community-building team, graphic design or photography, supporting Admissions, or helping with fundraising. Beyond classroom volunteering, we hope you'll find at least one activity or event to help sustain and enhance the Walden mission. There is no requirement to log volunteer hours, and families are not billed for unmet hours at the end of the year — we simply hope you'll give what you can, freely and generously.

7.4 Board Committees

The Board invites community members to serve on several committees; you do not need to be a Trustee to join. These include the Walden Equity Committee, the Development Committee (including as a Class Agent), the Facilities Committee, and the Governance Committee. Interested families who bring a commitment to Walden's mission, intellectual integrity, a cooperative spirit, and complementary expertise should contact the Board President.

7.5 Classroom Volunteers

When working with students, please keep our emphasis on self-reliance in mind — avoid doing for a child what they can do themselves. Keep to your scheduled time and the class's ground rules, give the class your full attention rather than bringing other children or projects, and make clear to your own child that you are there to help the whole class so that they can continue their routine.

7.6 Walden Family Connection

Walden Family Connection (WFC) exists to foster a collaborative, inclusive community that enhances every Walden student's educational experience and well-being. The name reflects a shift in focus from “parents” to “families,” recognizing the many kinds of family structures in our community and centering the relationships — between families, the school, and one another — that WFC is built on. Through volunteerism, active involvement, and authentic engagement, WFC supports Walden's mission, cultivates mutual respect, and strengthens the bonds between families, students, teachers, and administrators — echoing the same spirit of curiosity, responsibility, and stewardship described in Walden's own Mission Statement (Section 1.1). In practice, that looks like:

- Championing individuality — welcoming diverse perspectives and making sure every family's voice is heard and valued.
- Encouraging responsibility, initiative, and inquiry, and inviting parents and caregivers to actively participate in the school community and in their children's learning.
- Leading by example, modeling ethical behavior and integrity in all WFC activities.
- Supporting positive conflict resolution through open, respectful dialogue among families, teachers, and administrators.
- Celebrating the full diversity of Walden families and promoting a culture of understanding and respect.

WFC builds community among families by organizing events and connection opportunities; with teachers, it coordinates volunteer support and open communication, and fosters mutual respect and appreciation for the work of Walden's teaching staff; and with school administrators, it partners closely and communicates regularly so its activities stay aligned with Walden's mission and goals.

All Walden parents and caregivers are members of WFC, which also supports the fundraising goals set by the Board of Trustees through organized events and community-building activities. The Walden Family Connection Council (WFCC) leads WFC's day-to-day operations — coordinating volunteer initiatives, providing resources to Room Parents and other Lead Volunteers, and facilitating family connections — and works closely with the Head of School and senior administration. In addition to the Council positions, WFC volunteer opportunities include leadership roles as community or activity leads, as well as support roles on event and activity teams. The full Walden Family Connection meets at least once a year, with committees meeting as needed; childcare may be available for meetings with reservations.

7.7 Room Parents

Room Parents are Lead Volunteers who build community within their child's classroom and support both the classroom teacher and Walden Family Connection throughout the year. As a visible part of Walden's volunteer leadership, Room Parents represent the school's mission and help foster warm, effective communication between the classroom and its families, communicating directly with WFCC for event logistics and coordination, or with their class's assigned Faculty Liaison for questions about mission and curricular alignment.

Room Parent responsibilities include:

- Sending class-wide communications on behalf of the classroom teacher, using templates and key dates provided by WFCC.
- Coordinating class events such as a fall gathering, birthday celebrations, and an end-of-year celebration.
- Assisting the teacher with recruiting parent and caregiver volunteer drivers for field trips.
- Organizing two required community-building events for the class each year — a fall event for parents and caregivers, and an end-of-year celebration for students and teachers during school hours — using a per-family community-building budget set by WFCC (currently \$50 per family, spread across both events).
- Working with the faculty and staff appreciation committee to promote appreciation activities that provide equitable opportunities to celebrate and thank faculty and staff for their daily dedication to Walden students, including the holiday gift card program as well as non-monetary opportunities for collective appreciation throughout the year.
- In years where applicable, collaborate with the classroom teacher on a class item for the Spring Fundraiser auction.

Outside of birthday celebrations and class parties — which are funded collectively by the families of the celebrating children — Room Parents should only organize collections that are part of an official Walden initiative, to keep things fair and consistent for every family (see Section 7.8).

Interested volunteers should contact WFCC in spring to learn about Room Parent openings for the next school year. Room Parents are part of Walden's broader Lead Volunteer community, with fuller guidance on budgets, event planning, and recruiting available through WFC.

7.8 Fundraising

Philanthropy at Walden is mission-based and volunteer-centered, but it necessarily includes fundraising. Like most independent schools, Walden relies on giving beyond tuition to fund enrichment, professional development, and facilities. Because our community is relatively small, every gift — of any size — makes a meaningful difference.

The Walden Fund. Our annual giving campaign is the school's highest fundraising priority. All families, including those receiving Flexible Tuition, are asked to participate; Walden's goal is 100% participation among Trustees, faculty, staff, and families. Gifts are deductible to the extent provided by IRS guidelines, as Walden is a 501(c)(3) organization — consult your own tax or financial advisor for specific advice.

Walden Family Connection Fundraising. Each year, the WFC supports fundraising at Walden through family-led activities and events. These initiatives support Walden's general operating budget, benefiting every Walden student, and help enable the school to offer a vibrant slate of cost-free educational and community-building events to all families throughout the year. WFC fundraising initiatives typically include the Spring Fundraiser (May), Read-a-Thon (February/March), and Pizza Fridays (year-round). They may vary from year to year based on the talents and interests of current families. Past initiatives have included a golf outing.

Third-party and in-kind requests. With permission, Walden allows but does not promote requests from independent organizations (such as Girl Scouts). Unauthorized collections of money or in-kind support for parties, trips, gifts, or classroom projects are not permitted, and Room Parents, faculty, and staff may not solicit cash gifts for classroom activities or personal teacher gifts beyond the Faculty & Staff Appreciation Program described in the 7.7 Room Parent section above. Each class is given a budget for cash needs. Approved in-kind requests may include classroom holiday projects, food and decorations, community service collections, and student-organized charitable sales.

8. The Village (After-School Care)

The Village is Walden's after-school childcare program, available to all students Monday through Friday from 7:00–8:00 a.m. and 3:00–6:00 p.m., and on some non-school holidays. As an extension of the school day, Walden's philosophy, policies, and behavior expectations apply during The Village. Because it is a helpful but not mandatory service, participation may be unavailable to children or families who do not follow its behavior guidelines or the school's philosophy and procedures. Details are posted at www.waldenschool.net under Our Program.

8.1 Late Pick-Up Charges

The Village closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. Parents of children not picked up by then are charged \$1.00 per minute thereafter. Health or accident emergencies are handled case by case; traffic delays are not considered a valid excuse.

8.2 Sign In and Out

For students' safety, children must be signed in and out of The Village daily. All children are signed in at 3:15 p.m. regardless of actual arrival time, to ensure fair billing. A parent or a person listed on the child's Emergency Contact Form must sign the child out; if a child is not

signed out, the family is billed for the maximum daily cost, and repeated failure to sign out may result in the loss of Village privileges.

8.3 Payments and Late Fees

Prepaid Village fees are due on the first of the month and delinquent if unpaid by the fifth. If payment is not received by the fifteenth of the billed month, the school may ask the family to make other childcare arrangements. Village care is included in Pre-K tuition.

9. Enrollment & School Policies

9.1 Annual Re-Enrollment Process

Families receive Re-Enrollment contracts in early February. Families must return the completed contract and a non-refundable tuition deposit (credited to the student account) by the published Re-Enrollment deadline in mid-February, which is firm. The deposit secures a place at Walden for the following September and helps the school determine how many new students to admit.

9.2 Terms of Continued Enrollment

We delight in working with our families, but enrollment at Walden is a privilege, not an entitlement. Because a positive, constructive relationship between the school and each family is essential to Walden's educational mission and operations, the Head of School has final and sole discretion to decline to renew a student's enrollment, or to end an enrolled student's attendance, for non-payment of fees, unresolved academic or behavioral concerns, a breakdown in constructive family-school cooperation, or any other reason the Head of School determines is appropriate. Because Walden is an independent school governed by its Enrollment Contract rather than the California Education Code's public-school suspension and expulsion framework, these decisions are not subject to the procedural protections that apply to public school students.

9.3 Sibling Admission Policy

Walden is committed to individual students and to families. Enrollment preference is given to qualified siblings of currently enrolled students. However, it is not guaranteed — siblings must meet all admission criteria and deadlines, and the Admissions Committee balances sibling priority against classroom composition, gender balance, and diversity. Interested families should contact the Admissions Office or attend a Prospective Parent tour in the fall before the application year.

9.4 Placement and Parent Requests for Classroom Teachers

Walden students learn in flexible, multi-age classrooms. Administrators, specialists, and teachers assign students to heterogeneous classroom groups each spring, informed by a family questionnaire about your student's strengths, stretches, and friendships; the school does not entertain requests for a specific teacher. Staff balance academic range, social mix, gender balance, learning styles, personality, behavior, and class size to create a well-balanced classroom that lets every child thrive — we ask families to trust our professional judgment. Families and students are informed of class assignments in mid-August.

9.5 Letters of Recommendation and Student Records

When your child is a sixth grader, or if your family is relocating, you will need faculty recommendation letters as your child matriculates. The Admissions Office coordinates all admission, matriculation, and transfer documents. To meet deadlines, please submit requests for recommendation letters to the Admissions Office by mid-November—confirm the exact date each year with Admissions. To request student records, contact the Front Office at least 24 hours in advance.

9.6 Contact Authorization Form

Completing a Contact Authorization Form allows Walden to send materials—progress reports, enrichment rosters, classroom updates, and other communications—to the individuals listed. Both parents/guardians, if applicable, must sign. Only individuals named on a signed form are added to contact lists; Walden does not accept verbal or electronic requests. Contact the Front Office with questions or to obtain a form.

9.7 Achievement Testing

Students in grades three through six take the CTP4 (Comprehensive Testing Program), published by the Educational Records Bureau (ERB), early each fall. Walden offers this assessment because we've found it serves our students well, both during and after their time here — and because it gives our students a predictable, familiar place to build a specific set of skills each year.

As a progressive institution, we're mindful that a week of timed, isolated testing is only a narrow snapshot of a child's much broader learning journey, and that systems built around ranking students by scores and norms, prioritizing content over process, and rewarding repetition over depth sit apart from our values. At the same time, tests and test-taking are a fact of life for students everywhere, and we don't think it serves our children to enter that world without some exposure. Approached as a skill to build — much like learning to think like a writer, a mathematician, or a scientist — the CTP4 gives students the chance to practice structure, tool selection, and strategy, developing what we sometimes call “thinking like a test-taker.”

We do not encourage at-home test prep or “teach to the test”; results help teachers meet whole-class and individual student needs. Questions about the ERB or the CTP4 can be directed to Kelli Dawn Holsopple at kholsopple@waldenschool.net.

10. Student Support Services

Walden's Student Support team collaborates with families and outside professionals to address students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. This section provides an overview of the support services available.

10.1 Role of the Learning Specialist

The Learning Specialist supports students with diverse learning needs, working with teachers, families, and other specialists to develop personalized strategies and interventions, and by administering a yearly reading screener to all K–6th grade students. If a child shows difficulty with foundational skills that could affect classroom performance, the Learning Specialist may contact the family to discuss concerns, gather background information, and plan next steps.

10.2 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) address social, emotional, and behavioral needs that may affect a student's well-being and academic performance. The Social-Emotional Support Specialist is available to families for guidance; the AMFTs work directly with students, supervised by the Social-Emotional Support Specialist, in support of Walden's SEL curriculum. Referrals to the AMFTs begin with Walden faculty or staff and are supported by the Learning Specialist. A teacher or administrator may ask an AMFT to talk with a student about a specific event during the school day; families are notified as appropriate.

10.3 Outside Assessments and Allied Professionals

Where helpful, Walden may involve allied professionals — educational therapists, neuropsychologists, social workers, or other outside providers — in assessments or additional support. Families bear the financial cost of any referral for further screening or evaluation, and off-campus assessments must take place off-campus. When an outside educational therapist or support professional works with a student on campus, that professional must sign and agree to Walden's Guidelines Document, supplied by the Learning Specialist.

10.4 Student Accommodations

As a private school, Walden is not governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) framework that applies to public schools. Still, we are subject to Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act and California's Unruh Civil Rights Act. Consistent with those laws, Walden makes reasonable modifications to our policies, practices, and program for students with documented medical, physical, psychological, or learning needs, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of our program or impose an undue burden given our school's size and resources. Accommodations are determined through an individualized process and may include adjustments to teaching strategies, modified assignments, additional resources, or assistive technology.

Given Walden's size and staffing, we may not be able to provide every accommodation a family requests. When we agree to provide one, we may ask a family to share responsibility—for example, by providing specialized equipment or outside training at the family's cost.

10.5 Requests and Documentation

To request an accommodation, contact the Learning Specialist to discuss your child's needs. The Learning Specialist will advise on the documentation needed, which generally addresses the diagnosis, how the condition affects the student, recommended accommodations, and the expected duration of need.

10.6 Release for Communication with Outside Professionals

To coordinate support effectively, Walden requests written consent from parents or guardians to share relevant information with, and communicate directly with, outside professionals involved in a student's care. If a provider charges for their cooperation (for example, to respond to a set of written questions), the family agrees to bear that cost.

10.7 Scope and Limitations

We are committed to providing the best support possible, but some requests may be limited by available resources, expertise, or scope of service. Each request is assessed individually. In some cases, a family may be asked to provide special equipment, staff training, or related items at their own cost, or Walden may permit an accommodation while placing responsibility for providing it with the family. This section is a general overview and does not describe every aspect of Student Support; for specific questions, contact the Learning Specialist. At Walden, we value the partnership between home and school in supporting every student's growth, well-being, and potential.

11. Health & Safety

11.1 Health Forms and Immunizations

California law requires a completed health form, signed by a physician, before any child may be admitted to our program; new students receive this form before enrolling. Please keep the office updated on any change in your child's health status, including immunizations, hospitalizations, allergies, or other health conditions. All student health information is maintained through the Magnus Health website.

Under California's Health and Safety Code § 120325 et seq. (Senate Bill 277), children entering child care, public school, or private school in California must be fully immunized according to the state schedule, except for a medical exemption issued by a California-licensed physician. Personal belief exemptions are no longer accepted for new enrollments. Families with questions about current requirements or medical exemptions should contact the office or review the current schedule published by the California Department of Public Health.

11.2 Illness and Communicable Conditions

Keep children home when visibly ill or running a temperature of 100.4°F or higher. If your child becomes ill at school, they will be seen at the sick bay, where staff will assess the situation and may consult you by phone; common reasons a child is sent home include fever, vomiting, diarrhea, persistent coughing or sneezing, pink eye, headache, or general severe discomfort. Please call the Front Office to let us know when your child is ill, and let us know promptly if your child has a highly contagious condition (such as strep throat, pink eye, lice, ringworm, or chicken pox), so we can alert affected classrooms for health awareness and precaution.

For a significant local or regional communicable-illness event, Walden will follow current guidance from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the CDC, which may include return-to-school documentation, adjusted hygiene routines, or temporary changes to school operations. Families will be notified promptly of any such guidance and what it means for their child.

11.3 Injuries

Wounds are cleaned and cared for according to American Red Cross first-aid procedures. Parents or guardians are notified for any potentially serious injury 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 will be called. The same procedures apply on field trips.

11.4 Medications

Students may not take medication on their own or keep it in the classroom; school office personnel must administer medications and pills. Parents should bring the original medical container to the office along with written prior authorization and the pediatrician's specific dispensing instructions. Please inform the office of any ongoing medication your child takes, at home or at school, and of any notable health condition such as severe allergies or asthma, and keep your child's health forms current. Written parent permission is also required before dispensing any over-the-counter medication.

11.5 Allergies and Nut-Free Campus

Please keep us informed and updated about serious allergies or asthma, and let us know the care procedures for any potential problem. A list of student allergies is shared with all teachers and personnel and kept in every classroom.

Walden is a nut-free campus. Several students have nut allergies ranging from mild to life-threatening, so no nuts, including peanut butter, may be brought to school, and food sharing is never permitted. For class parties, only nut-free foods that are not processed on shared equipment with nuts may be brought. Please reinforce these rules with your child at home.

11.6 EpiPens

A student prescribed an EpiPen should always have it with them; unlike other medications, EpiPens are kept in the classroom for immediate access, with a second EpiPen kept in the school office when possible. California Education Code § 49414 gives private schools like Walden the choice — rather than the mandate that applies to public schools — of whether to maintain undesignated (“stock”) epinephrine on campus. Given our proximity to emergency medical services in Pasadena, Walden relies on individually prescribed EpiPens rather than stock epinephrine at this time; families with a student who has a serious allergy should discuss their child's specific plan with the office.

11.7 AED

Walden maintains an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on campus for use in a cardiac emergency. All faculty and staff are trained in AED use as part of their First Aid and CPR certification.

11.8 Emergency Safety Plan and General Emergencies

Walden maintains a comprehensive Safety Plan, reviewed regularly and built around three phases: preparedness (deciding what to do before an emergency occurs, in coordination with administration, faculty, staff, students, families, and the community), response (carrying out the plan as an emergency unfolds), and recovery (supporting people through the physical, psychological, and emotional aftermath of a difficult event). All classrooms and administrators keep emergency evacuation plans, family emergency contacts, and each student's allergy and health information on hand.

Walden follows the Los Angeles County “Big Five” emergency protocol: Shelter in Place; Drop, Cover, and Hold On (earthquake); Secure Campus (a potential nearby threat); Lockdown/Barricade (an immediate threat); and Evacuation (including fire). Administration and staff are trained in this protocol, and earthquake and fire drills are held regularly, following Los Angeles County, State of California, FEMA, and USGS guidance. Classroom exits post evacuation plans; the fire department inspects buildings and fire extinguishers annually; and each classroom keeps an emergency pouch. Walden also maintains emergency supplies (food bars, water, and blankets) for each student in case an extended stay at school is necessary. In an evacuation, our gathering point is the South Yard; in a Lockdown/Barricade, classrooms are equipped with safety locks. Teachers stay with their students until an authorized person picks them up; families should always sign their child out so every student can be properly accounted for.

Walden also maintains a Workplace Violence Prevention Plan, required under California Labor Code sections 6401.7 and 6401.9, which sets out staff-facing procedures for preventing, reporting, and responding to violence or threats of violence on campus; it uses this same Big Five protocol for any on-campus emergency response.

11.9 All-Gender Restrooms

Every restroom at Walden is a single-occupant facility used by one student at a time. In addition, consistent with California Senate Bill 760 — which requires every California school serving grades 1–12, public and private, to provide at least one all-gender restroom for voluntary student use by July 1, 2026 — Walden maintains two designated all-gender restrooms available for any student's voluntary use during the school day: one in the Front Office and one in the North Building, near the Director of Curriculum's office. Both are clearly signed, unlocked, and accessible during school hours and school functions.

11.10 Our Commitment to Immigrant and Multilingual Families

Walden welcomes every family in our community regardless of immigration or citizenship status. While the laws that limit on-campus immigration enforcement apply directly to public school districts, Walden voluntarily follows the same principles as a matter of our own values and Diversity, Belonging, and Justice commitments.

- Walden does not ask about, record, or share a student's or family's immigration status except where required by law to administer a specific program.
- Any request by a law enforcement or immigration officer to access campus, a student, or student records is directed immediately to the Head of School, who will require valid legal process (such as a judicial warrant or court order) before granting access, except where an immediate threat to safety requires a different response.

- Families with questions or concerns are encouraged to speak confidentially with the Head of School. General “know your rights” information for families is available through the California Department of Education at cde.ca.gov.

12. Discipline

12.1 A Restorative Approach to Discipline

Walden strives to foster ethical behavior, mutual respect, self-discipline, character, and empathy in a developmentally appropriate way. Every adult and child shares responsibility for the learning environment and the sense of community; students, teachers, and families are expected to recognize one another's dignity, rights, and responsibilities, and all students should feel safe, accountable, and valued. Our discipline philosophy aims to cultivate enthusiasm for learning, constructive problem-solving, and global citizenship, grounded in the Walden Agreements' values of collaboration, self-knowledge, community, engagement, discovery, and integrity. We believe families play the most significant role in supporting and guiding children toward these expectations.

12.2 Disciplinary Guidance and Procedures

Discipline grounded in respect, responsibility, and self-control is a shared responsibility of home and school. The Walden Agreements are posted in every classroom as a written, referenced reminder of behavioral expectations. We expect students to put forth their best effort and act in ways that promote a safe, positive learning environment, while recognizing that children are still learning how to navigate the world.

Families are expected to support the school by encouraging positive behavior and helping redirect problematic behavior. Positive intervention, redirection, and preventative guidance are always the first response for children and staff alike. Walden students are consistently given opportunities to make positive choices, self-regulate, and reflect before issues become serious or repeated; if redirection alone is not effective, natural consequences, reflection time, or an apology may follow.

Each classroom teacher establishes “classroom norms” with students at the start of the year; these, together with restorative classroom management plans, help teachers respond consistently to behavior in the classroom, on the playground, and on field trips. When a student's behavior falls outside classroom norms or the Walden Agreements, families may be asked to meet with the teacher, Director of Curriculum, or Head of School to discuss strategies and consequences, which may include a behavior plan. Effective discipline recognizes the reasons behind a child's choices. It works to address them, not just change behavior in the moment—our restorative approach is solution-focused and rooted in teaching communication and problem-solving skills.

Walden has sole discretion to determine the appropriate response to any incident. In cases of serious or repeated misconduct, that may include immediate dismissal from enrollment, consistent with Section 9.2.

13. Conduct, Cooperation, and Community

Every independent school needs and expects the cooperation of families who understand and embrace its mission, share its core values, and support its curriculum, faculty, and staff. When school and families are joined by common purpose, children benefit and mature by watching adults model civility, honesty, and respect. Families best support a climate of trust by raising concerns openly and constructively with the teacher or administrator closest to the issue — typically the classroom teacher first, then the Director of Curriculum, and finally the Head of School if needed. Efforts to lobby other families are counterproductive and are discouraged.

13.1 Board of Trustees and Administration

Decision-making authority at Walden resides in a volunteer Board of Trustees, which includes current parents and guardians. The Board selects, evaluates, and supports the Head of School; sets broad institutional policy; and is accountable for the school's financial health. It does not intervene in daily affairs such as curriculum or the hiring and evaluation of faculty and staff, and acts only as a whole body — individual Trustees, including the Board Chair, have no independent authority. Families with concerns about school decisions are encouraged to follow the review process described above.

Families play an essential, positive role at Walden, both as advocates for their own children and as supporters of faculty and administration. The enrollment contract and this handbook govern the relationship between families and the school. By enrolling, families agree to support Walden's mission, follow its rules, and abide by its decisions. While families may not agree with every decision, we expect all communication with faculty and administration to remain respectful.

13.2 Walden School Expectations of Families and Caregivers

Parents play a formative role in shaping a child's sense of justice, equity, and respect for others, and one of the most powerful ways to teach that is by example. Walden expects every parent and responsible adult connected to an enrolled student to meet the following standards:

- When visiting or volunteering at school, observe all school rules, including checking in at the office.
- If another child's actions have affected your child, never approach that child directly to discuss or reprimand them; instead, raise the concern with the classroom teacher, or reach out directly to the other child's parent or guardian.
- Direct questions or concerns about a classroom first to the staff member involved, then request a private meeting if the matter needs further discussion.
- Keep all communication about issues with other parents or staff respectful and focused on the matter at hand — yelling, taunting, threats, cursing, or derogatory remarks are never acceptable.
- Protect the reputation and good name of everyone involved; resolve disagreements one-on-one with the person concerned rather than involving other families or taking sides.
- Verify facts with the relevant school personnel before concluding, to help prevent inaccurate information from spreading through the community.

A positive, constructive relationship between Walden and its families is essential to the school's mission and operations. Accordingly, the school reserves the right to decline enrollment or re-enrollment, or to dismiss an enrolled student, if the Head of School concludes, in their sole discretion, that a parent's or guardian's conduct sufficiently impairs that relationship.

14. Communicating Concerns and Grievances

If you have a concern about a classroom issue, curricular matter, or another family, speak directly with your child's teacher first. A parent should never raise a concern about a specific student with other families or with that student's family directly. Respectful, appropriate communication is always expected.

If a concern is not resolved with the classroom teacher, schedule an appointment with the Head of School; you may be asked to submit a letter describing the incident and your desired resolution. Information will be gathered from all parties, and a resolution will be sought as quickly as possible; the Head of School's decision is final.

When a student is referred to the Director of Curriculum or Head of School for a behavioral concern that could not be resolved in the classroom, the process may include: an initial response from the school within 48 hours; a meeting with parents, the classroom teacher, and student support staff (the school may decide the student cannot return to class until a behavior plan is in place); an individualized behavioral contract, which may include a plan for teaching new behaviors and monitoring progress; and one or two follow-up meetings, typically 3–4 weeks and then 2 weeks later, to check on progress. These timelines are general guidance only; Walden may adopt a different timeline depending on the circumstances.

15. Daily Procedures

15.1 School Hours

- Pre-K–6th grade: 8:25 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- Village morning care: 7:00 – 8:00 a.m.
- Village afternoon care: 3:30 – 6:00 p.m.
- Enrichment classes: 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

The Village runs every day school is in session except the last day of school and most early-dismissal days; check The Pond calendar for details.

15.2 Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Walden's arrival and dismissal procedures are designed to keep students safe and to meet the requirements of the City of Pasadena, including minimizing disruption to our neighbors so Walden can maintain its conditional use permit. Please share these procedures with anyone who might drop off or pick up your child, and use the name cards on your visor to help avoid delays.

California licensing for our Pre-Kindergarten program requires that all Pre-K children be walked into the Pre-K room or yard and signed in with a full signature by a parent, guardian, or caregiver — Pre-K children cannot be dropped off in the arrival car line.

15.3 Authorized Pick-Up List

Your child is released only to individuals you authorize in writing on your child's Emergency Contact Form. If your child is going home with a friend or a different caregiver, notify the teacher that morning; for last-minute changes, call the Front Office at (626) 792-6166 and press 0.

15.4 Carpools and Ride-Share Services

Every adult dropping off or picking up a student must be on the authorized pick-up list to enter school grounds. Ride-share services such as Uber and Lyft are not permitted for student drop-off or pick-up. Walden allows release to an authorized “Hop, Skip, Drive” driver when a family lists that service on the child's Emergency Information Form; drivers must provide the student password, a driver's license, and a signature on the class dismissal sheet. The school may deny access to a ride service that repeatedly violates traffic instructions.

15.5 Basic Driving Instructions

Cars arrive from the back (East) of the school, traveling East on Colorado Boulevard, then:

- Turn right onto Daisy Avenue (the first street East of San Gabriel Boulevard).
- Make an immediate right into Thompson Alley behind the tire business, staying to the far right; please don't block business driveways while waiting.
- Turn left into Sewell Alley, staying to the right as you pass the furniture business, the antique slot machine building, and the two Walden buildings.
- Stop at the East Gates (the Community Room Gate and the North Yard Gate) to drop off, or the South Gate (the Solar Panel Gate) on Rose Alley to pick up — no parking or stopping in the alleyway during arrival or dismissal.
- Exit by turning right on Rose Alley, then right on San Gabriel Boulevard (the City of Pasadena prohibits left turns from Rose Alley onto southbound San Gabriel Boulevard).

15.6 Arrival, Late Gate, and Rainy Days

All car drop-offs happen at the East Gates (the Community Room Gate and the North Yard Gate); you may also walk your child in through the South Gate (the Solar Panel Gate). Please arrive between 8:00–8:25 a.m. so school can begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. All gates except the Late Gate close and lock at 8:25 a.m.; please don't ask staff to let a late child into the play yard after the gate has closed.

If you arrive after 8:25 a.m., the South Gate (Solar Panel Gate) becomes the Late Gate until 8:35 a.m., with staff available to help your child from car to gate. If walking in late, use the Late Gate between 8:25–8:35 a.m.; children entering after 8:25 a.m. are marked tardy. After 8:35 a.m., use the Front Office doors and sign your child in — please never drop a child off alone at the front of the school, and note that the City of Pasadena prohibits parking in front of the school on San Gabriel Boulevard during school hours.

On rainy days, children are dropped off at the East Gate (the Community Room Gate) near the Toby Hayward Community Room; plan for a slower drop-off line and arrive a bit earlier.

15.7 Assemblies

Every Wednesday and Friday at 8:30 a.m., the whole Walden community gathers for assembly in the Toby Hayward Community Room. Classes come together around a single concept for about fifteen minutes — a time for musical performances, storytelling, skits, math presentations, class performances, serious conversations, and welcoming alumni and relatives, with something a little different happening nearly every week.

Assembly is also a place where children build reflection and perspective over time simply by sitting and participating together on the Community Room floor; anyone who speaks, presents, or performs is modeling for the whole community. Over the course of a Walden education, assembly helps students develop personal autonomy alongside a sense of belonging to something larger, a heightened awareness of and sensitivity to others, audience etiquette grounded in self-discipline, and a calm, purposeful ethos. Families are always welcome and encouraged to attend.

Because assembly is intentionally brief, its opening moments of quiet music, story, and reflection give the gathering its centering power for every child in the room. A child who arrives after assembly has begun is warmly greeted at the Late Gate and waits nearby with a staff member until assembly ends, rather than being brought in partway through. This waiting time is never intended as a consequence — mornings are complicated for every family for all kinds of reasons, from traffic to a hectic start to the day — and staff treat it as a calm, intentional moment for a child to settle and transition before joining their class. If an assembly runs longer than usual or includes a special guest, staff use their judgment and bring children in when it makes sense; on a typical fifteen-minute morning, though, waiting until the close is the most respectful option, both for the children already gathered and for the child joining a little later.

15.8 Early Morning Childcare

This fee-based option runs 7:00–8:00 a.m. Follow the basic driving instructions above, park only in marked alley stalls without blocking neighbors' driveways or garages, and walk your child into the Toby Hayward Community Room through the East Gate (the Community Room Gate) to sign in.

15.9 Dismissal

Dismissal happens at the South Gate (the Solar Panel Gate). All children are dismissed at 3:00 p.m., though you may arrive any time between 3:00–3:30 p.m.; students wait with their teacher in the designated class area, and teachers sign students out to parents or caregivers. The South Yard play structure is closed 3:00–3:30 p.m. during dismissal, and parents are responsible for supervising their child once the teacher has signed them out.

On rainy days, dismissal happens at the East Gate (the Community Room Gate) near the Toby Hayward Community Room in the South Building. If you arrive after 3:30 p.m., your child will be checked into The Village and billed as occasional use unless you already have a billing plan on file. For Village pick-up, park only in marked alley stalls (unmarked spots will be ticketed), and buzz the bell at the East Gate (the Community Room Gate) to enter the Toby Hayward Community Room and sign your child out.

15.10 Parking and Traffic

If parking to walk your child in or out, enter at the South Gate (the Solar Panel Gate). Never park in front of the school on San Gabriel Boulevard, just south or north of the school, or in driveways or alleys behind or around the school.

- Our traffic flows one way, but apartment tenants' traffic does not — please be considerate as they exit and enter their homes, including backing up when necessary to let residents by.
- If you park on Daisy Avenue and walk through Rose Alley, be mindful of noise near our neighbors' homes, and walk through the alley rather than through the apartment complexes.
- Never let your child cross San Gabriel Boulevard outside the crosswalk at Colorado Boulevard.
- Pasadena police require that students exit cars on the right side only.
- Stay in your car in the pick-up line unless helping a Pre-K child into a car seat.
- Please follow staff and faculty instructions during arrival and dismissal at all times.

15.11 Visitors on Campus

All campus visitors must register with SchoolPass and the Front Office and receive a nametag. If a student wants to bring a visitor to school, arrangements must be made well in advance with the office. Alum visitors are welcome and should register with the Front Office upon arrival to receive an alum visitor badge; schedule full-day visits in advance.

15.12 Phone Messages, Attendance, and Absences

Staff answer voicemail messages as schedules allow, typically before and after school. Please review the day's plan with your child on the way to school; for an unforeseen change, call the Front Office (press 0 for an emergency) or email the teacher directly in the morning.

Absences and tardies appear on your child's progress reports as part of their permanent attendance record. Please call the Front Office by 8:00 a.m. if your child will be absent (extension 300 for voicemail instructions); the morning is also the best time to request homework, which teachers will have ready by 3:30 p.m. Students are responsible for all work assigned during an absence. For early dismissals, send a note in advance to the Front Office, and sign your child out there before leaving if departing after 8:30 a.m.

Arriving after 8:25 a.m. is tardy; children entering the Late Gate (8:25–8:35 a.m.) or a parent or guardian must sign in at the Front Office (after 8:35 a.m.) before reporting to class to help ensure accurate counts in an emergency. A brief note in advance is a courtesy if you know your child will be tardy or absent. Excessive tardiness (more than 5 per month) results in a reminder to the family; 10 or more tardies in a month leads to a meeting with an administrator.

By law, illness is the only valid excuse for a student absence. Walden's calendar offers generous vacation time, and we encourage families to plan trips around days when school is closed. No conferences are scheduled — removing children on regular school days is strongly discouraged, since make-up work cannot replicate the depth of classroom discussion and practice. Unnecessary absences add to the workload of both teacher and student.

16. Campus Life & Classroom Policies

16.1 Classroom Supplies

The school provides materials for class projects and activities; families should replenish personal supplies such as paper, rulers, pencils, and markers as needed. Teachers share a personal supply list in their summer welcome letters.

16.2 School Library

The library is open five days a week; hours are posted on the library doors. Children may use the library at recess and lunch at their teacher's discretion, and after hours at Village staff's discretion. Parents are welcome to borrow books, and the library gladly accepts gently used, appropriate hardcover donations — contact the Library Manager with questions.

16.3 Activism

Walden is committed to social justice, and our curriculum and diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work inform our perspective on student activism. We aim to give students the skills and experiences to engage productively in civil discourse across differing viewpoints, with compassion and a goal of educational awareness and solidarity. The administration must approve student-initiated activism announcements; Walden cannot sponsor, chaperone, supervise, or transport off-campus events. Student-initiated activism involving hate speech, or driven by a group identified as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, will not be tolerated.

16.4 Student Fundraising

Clubs, student interest groups, and classroom projects that involve fundraising or collecting goods work with their teacher, the Director of Curriculum, and the Head of School, and students develop and submit a proposal for approval before the activity begins — part of learning to plan, organize, and carry out a fundraising effort for an identified purpose.

16.5 Celebrations and Birthdays

To maintain an inclusive community, Walden does not host class-wide parties built around a specific holiday. If your family has a meaningful tradition or celebration you'd like to share with the class, please talk with your child's teacher about a good way to do so.

Birthday celebrations are woven into a class's normal routine at the teacher's discretion, planned in collaboration with families; each teacher may have different preferences for how birthdays are celebrated. Room Parents coordinate with the teacher to understand the classroom's birthday traditions, create an initial list, and help facilitate communication with families. In contrast, parents of the birthday child are encouraged to organize the celebration itself. Check with your child's teacher for in-class celebration guidelines and any allergy considerations that might affect participation; families of children with dietary restrictions may provide alternatives. Note that refrigeration is not available.

At the end of the school year, Room Parents organize a class celebration for students and teachers, following the end-of-year party guidance provided by WFCC.

16.6 Parties and Gatherings

Many children's closest friendships form at school, which naturally shapes party guest lists; we ask families to be thoughtful and sensitive about invitations. Do not distribute invitations to outside parties at school. Chewing gum is not allowed at school before, during, or after school hours.

16.7 Food — Fuel for School

Please make sure your child has lunch and a snack packed each day, or is signed up for the school's hot/cold lunch service, available five days a week. Food fuels learning and play, so we ask families to send balanced, kid-manageable meals your child can open independently.

Pizza Fridays are a recurring, volunteer-run lunch option organized class by class. Each class is assigned a small number of parent or caregiver volunteers for its Pizza Friday date during the year, coordinated through a sign-up published by WFCC; Room Parents help recruit volunteers from their class.

16.8 Trash-less Lunch and Water Bottles

Our mission calls us to stewardship for the world we live in. In that spirit, students are asked to bring “no waste” lunches in reusable containers such as canvas or nylon sacks or lunch boxes, with food and drinks in thermoses, reusable plasticware, or other durable containers; washable metal, plastic, or wooden utensils and cloth napkins are encouraged, and disposable items like juice boxes or single-serving yogurt or applesauce cups should be avoided. Filtered water is available at fountains in both buildings, and students are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle.

16.9 School Clothing

Walden students are active, and our program includes plenty of physical activity both in PE and throughout the day, so please provide comfortable, neat, modest, and appropriate clothing. Athletic shoes are required for PE participation; sandals with heel straps may be worn otherwise.

- Tobacco-, alcohol-, or violence-themed clothing is not permitted.
- Clothing with racist, sexist, or inflammatory slogans, or anything offensive to the community, may not be worn.
- Undergarments should not be visible, 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 reach at least to where a child's fingertips fall when their arm is extended.
- No jewelry other than simple, non-dangling earrings or watches.

Decisions about appropriate dress rest with school administration; if a student's clothing is judged inappropriate, we will call a parent to bring a change of clothes, or provide more appropriate attire.

Hats. Children may wear hats on the play yards for sun protection; indoors, hats are worn only at each teacher's discretion.

16.10 Cell Phones, Smartwatches, and Electronic Devices

Students may not have or use cell phones or smartwatches (including devices like Apple Watch or Gizmo watches with calling, texting, or recording capability) on campus during the school day. For emergencies, a phone may be left, powered off, in the office to be picked up at departure. A phone or smartwatch seen out of a backpack, in use, or making noise during school hours will be confiscated and must be retrieved by a parent at the end of the day; the same applies to personal electronic devices such as iPads, e-readers, and handheld games, which are not allowed without pre-approval. Toys and personal belongings are not allowed except on Share Days or with a teacher's express permission, and Share Day items must stay in a child's cubby until the designated time. Weapons or objects associated with violence are never appropriate.

California's Phone-Free Schools Act (AB 3216) requires public schools to limit student phone use during the day; independent schools like Walden are not required to follow it, but our long-standing device policy reflects the same goal of keeping the school day focused and present. Every Walden student also reviews and signs the school's Technology & Internet Agreement each year — see Section 17.1.

16.11 Lost and Found, Forgotten Items, Money, and Trading

Please label lunch boxes, books, jackets, sweaters, and similar items clearly with your child's name. Lost and Found is located in the South Yard and should be a student's first stop for a missing item; unclaimed items are donated to a local charity at the end of each month, so please don't send valuables to school (any valuable item that is found will be held in the Front Office).

If a student forgets their lunch, homework, or another item, they may, at the teacher's discretion, call home; families may drop off forgotten items at the Front Office. Please avoid sending money to school; if it is necessary, seal it in an envelope labeled with your child's name, teacher's name, and purpose. Trade cards, stickers, virtual pets, and similar items at home under parent supervision to avoid hurt feelings.

17. Technology, Internet Safety, and AI at Walden

17.1 Technology at Walden

Students in 3rd–6th grade have access to Walden's computer network and, under teacher guidance, the internet, opening the door to research, collaboration, and discovery — along with the reality that some material online may be inaccurate, inappropriate, or offensive. Families are responsible for setting and conveying the standards their children should follow when using media and information sources; users of Walden's network are responsible for their own behavior and communications, and are expected to follow the Walden Agreements and Walden's technology policies at school and in all online spaces.

Walden maintains three companion documents that go into more detail than this handbook and are available from the Front Office or The Pond: the Technology Acceptable Use, Internet Safety, and Social Media Policy; the Artificial Intelligence Use Policy, which describes how AI tools may and may not be used by students, families, and teachers; and the Technology &

Internet Agreement that every student reviews and signs each year, built around the Walden Agreements. These documents are reviewed and updated periodically as technology changes.

Walden's technology system includes computers and support equipment (printers, scanners, projectors), network resources, and, for older students, the internet. The following are never permitted on Walden's network: sending or displaying offensive messages or images; using obscene language; harassing, insulting, or attacking others; violating copyright law; accessing another person's folders, work, or files without permission; using Walden equipment for illegal activity; or using another person's password.

17.2 Internet Usage

At Walden, internet access supports classwork and communication with teachers and staff; students learn what a URL is and are expected to be able to account for the sites they visit. During school hours, students may search the internet only under a teacher's direct instruction and guidance, for an assigned educational or research purpose. They may not download files from the internet or other outside 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 users should not expect that files stored on school servers to be private, though freedom of speech and access to information are honored within reason. Students found visiting inappropriate sites may lose network access and face other disciplinary consequences.

17.3 Social Media Policies and Guidelines for Families

Blogs, podcasts, and social platforms offer real opportunities to connect and extend learning, but they require diligence and responsibility. Walden's curriculum reinforces ethical behavior, empathy, privacy, and decency in online communication; misuse of social media, including cyberbullying, compromises those goals and can lead to disciplinary action.

- Faculty and staff do not “friend” or accept friend requests from current students.
- Anyone posting photos, video, or information on Walden's behalf that identifies the school, students, faculty, or staff must first get permission from the Communications Office — some Walden families have specifically requested privacy. If permission is granted, use only a student's first name and last-name initial.
- Never record anyone for a podcast or similar project without their consent or awareness.
- Be fair, accurate, and respectful about yourself and others; never share personal information about yourself or others; write only about what you know and verify your facts.
- Use common sense — avoid defamatory, obscene, or libelous commentary, and exercise caution around copyrighted material and legal conclusions.
- Families filming, photographing, or recording school events are requested to ask other families for permission before posting images or videos showing their students to personal social media — some Walden families have specifically requested privacy.
- Walden employees are asked to use restraint and discretion when interacting with families on social media; parents should not be offended if a friend request or invitation is declined.

17.4 Internet Safety Tips for Parents

- Talk with your child about internet safety as soon as they start going online — it's never too early to build good digital citizenship habits.

- Set administrative controls on home computers and devices, and use age-appropriate filtering, blocking, and monitoring software across laptops, phones, and gaming devices; make clear that home rules apply everywhere, including at other people's houses.
- Stay involved in your child's online world — set screen-time limits, know who they're communicating with, and get to know the sites and apps they use.
- Keep technology in a shared area of the home when possible, which reinforces that use is observed; young children should be supervised directly, while older children who show good judgment can be given more independence.
- Most major platforms restrict registration to age 13 and up; if your child is on a platform like this, consider requiring them to “friend” you as a condition of use.
- Remind your child never to share identifying details online, such as detailed information about their location or routine.
- Make sure your child knows never to meet an online contact in person without talking to you first — talking to strangers online carries the same risks as talking to strangers in person.
- Tell your child never to share passwords, even with friends.
- Talk about the permanence of what's posted online — if it isn't something they'd want a future employer, school, or their own children to see, it shouldn't be posted.
- Periodically review your child's phone or device usage, including messages and shared images.

18. General Statements and Policies

18.1 Non-Custodial and Separated Parents

In the absence of a court order limiting a parent's access, Walden provides both parents or guardians of a student equal access to academic records and school-related information about their child, consistent with California Family Code § 3025. Walden remains neutral between separated or divorced parents and will not restrict either parent's communication with the school unless a court order on file directs otherwise; the custodial parent (or the parent seeking a restriction) is responsible for providing the school with a certified copy of the relevant court order.

18.2 Pupil Records and Privacy

Because Walden does not receive federal education funding, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, sometimes called the Buckley Amendment) does not directly apply to our school. California law provides parallel protection: under California Education Code §§ 49069.7 and 49076, parents and guardians of a currently enrolled or former student have an absolute right to inspect and review their child's official school records, and alumni age 18 or older may review their own. As a matter of policy and professional practice, Walden also voluntarily follows FERPA's core principles regarding consent before releasing records to a third party. Arrangements to review a student's cumulative file should be made with the Admissions Office, and the file is reviewed in the presence of Admissions staff to protect the integrity of the record for any future school transfer.

18.3 Mandated Reporting and Child Abuse Prevention

Walden School complies with California's Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA). All Walden faculty and staff are mandated reporters and must, by law, report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate child protective or law enforcement agency. Consistent with California Senate Bill 848 (2025–26 Session), which strengthens grooming-recognition training and background-screening requirements for private school employees, Walden staff receive enhanced, regular training on recognizing and responding to signs of abuse or grooming behavior. Families can reach out to the Head of School with any questions about these protocols.

19. Conclusion

Building and sustaining the health of the Walden community is everyone's responsibility. A positive, constructive relationship between families and the school's leadership, administration, faculty, and staff is essential to fulfilling Walden's mission and educational purpose. Enrollment at Walden School means that a family has read this Handbook and agrees to follow its guidelines.