

WALDORF
SCHOOL OF BALTIMORE

Family Handbook

2026-27



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Introduction and Background

MISSION STATEMENT

The Waldorf School of Baltimore educates and inspires children to think, feel, and act with depth, imagination, and purpose.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Waldorf School of Baltimore is to build a foundation for life-long learning and integrity for its students. We seek to send into the world confident young people who will lead a life of purpose and direction. We are guided in our work by the pioneering insights of philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner.

We accomplish this by:

- Providing a quality, comprehensive Waldorf education within a fully developed campus.
- Growing the school while maintaining a financially secure organization with a faculty and staff committed to professional development and excellence.
- Fostering intellectual, artistic, and spiritual growth.
- Encouraging a dedication to community service and care for the environment.
- Building a vibrant and inclusive school that brings insights for the renewal of education to the greater community.

VALUES & PRINCIPLES STATEMENT

We value humanity, connection, equity, gratitude, imagination, freedom, and responsibility. We offer an education grounded in these value-driven principles:

The foundation of our work is guided by our understanding of human development, as indicated by the insights of Rudolf Steiner. The pace, priorities, and practices of our entire program, Early Childhood through Middle School, grow out of this foundation.

We strive to create caring, life-long connections with all students, all families, all staff, and our full community based upon principles of equity and restorative justice to feel a sense of true belonging. We strive for our student and staff populations to be reflective of the diversity within the Greater Baltimore area.

We foster a sense of gratitude for our place and time in the world as it evolves by providing the children with deep, timeless, meaningful experiences which inspire wonder and are steeped in Goodness, Beauty, and Truth.

We support and guide every student toward higher learning through an arts-integrated and experiential curriculum that develops critical and imaginative thinking, environmental stewardship, social health, and creative problem solving.

We strive to prepare children for a life of purpose and direction by fostering free and courageous individuals with an emerging balance of capacities and temperament, capable of forging their own

unique paths in the world as responsible, emotionally intelligent, wise, compassionate, and resilient people.

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, Waldorf Education is based on a profound understanding of human development that addresses the needs of the growing child. Waldorf teachers strive to transform education into an art that educates the whole child—the heart and the hands, as well as the head. As a Waldorf school, our approach to educating children is based on the pedagogical and social insights of Rudolf Steiner and the guidance offered by two national bodies—the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and the Waldorf Early Childhood Association Network.

The Waldorf School of Baltimore is an independent, non-sectarian, co-educational school, serving children from nursery through grade 8. Our broad and comprehensive curriculum is structured to respond to the developmental phases of childhood—birth to 6 or 7 years and 7 to 14 years—and is supported by current neurological studies of brain development. Teachers bring age-appropriate content that nourishes healthy growth for the Waldorf student. All subjects—mathematics, the sciences, the humanities and the arts—are thoroughly investigated and experienced. Waldorf students cultivate their intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual capacities to become individuals certain of themselves and of service to the world.

- In the Children’s Garden (preschool and kindergarten), early childhood development is addressed through a curriculum built upon a child’s innate ability to learn through imitation and immersion in imagination through creative play. The classroom environment provides aesthetic beauty and activities, involving a variety of sensory experiences that engage the whole child and develop the senses. This builds the strong foundation of skills and a rich variety of experiences that provide the basis for more formal academic life.
- In the Lower Grades (grades 1-5) and Middle School (grades 6-8), the child’s learning builds upon the language immersion and experiences of the early childhood program. Instruction shifts to lessons that ask the child to imagine and reflect on the subjects presented. The ability for more conscious and consecutive thinking emerges through formal mathematics, reading, and writing lessons. The pictorial world of the creative imagination is nurtured throughout. Foreign languages and subjects such as music, art, handwork, and eurythmy are held in equal importance to the other academic subjects. Respect for others, responsibility to the community, appreciation of one’s own accomplishments, and love of learning are integral parts of the curriculum. The depth and breadth of the Main Lesson curriculum trains and strengthens the students’ ability to concentrate and focus attention, fostering a deep understanding of the concepts being taught.

Within this philosophy and pedagogy, the Waldorf School of Baltimore implements a curriculum that develops the critical and creative thinking required for the issues facing our time and our city.

ACCREDITATION

The Waldorf School of Baltimore is accredited by the Association of Independent Maryland Schools (AIMS) and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North American (AWSNA). We are a full member of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association (WECAN) and are licensed by the

Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The Children’s Garden preschool programs and the Forest Explorers Aftercare Program are licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education, Office of Child Care.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING STATEMENT

WSB actively encourages and supports diversity and inclusion in our community. We strive to strengthen diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging through our pedagogical and administrative policies and practices. We welcome people of (but not limited to) all races, gender identities, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, abilities, ages, and religions. Our community works to embrace and deepen our own understanding of both our strengths, which support our goal for the inclusion of all, as well as the challenges hindering our progress toward this goal. We actively stand against hatred, prejudice, and discrimination. As an accredited member of AWSNA, Waldorf School of Baltimore stands behind the following AWSNA statement on racial comments in the works of Rudolf Steiner: “Waldorf Education espouses principles of respect for human dignity. Any narratives or indications made by Rudolf Steiner that are in contradiction to these principles are not the basis for Waldorf Education and we unequivocally denounce such statements.”

SCHOOL-WIDE AGREEMENT

This school-wide agreement is held in conjunction with our DEIB statement, our school values statement, and the AWSNA Principles. We believe that all members of the community—students, faculty, staff, parents, and volunteers—have the right to feel safe and to have their culture and identity acknowledged and respected. We recognize the importance of supporting the diversity of experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge, and skills. Everyone in the community has an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

ADMISSIONS PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is reflective of all Waldorf schools and drives our admissions process. We strive to attract and enroll families that desire a Waldorf education and will enrich our institution, and children whose educational and social needs can be supported and cultivated by our teaching methods. We are committed to creating an academic environment that is rigorous and reflective of the community and world. Our classes are composed of diverse personalities, cultures, faiths, intelligences, and work styles.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Waldorf School of Baltimore does not discriminate on the basis of race (including protective hairstyles), gender or sex (including pregnancy), color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, genetic information, age, military status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other legally protected characteristic in the administration of its educational program, admission policies, financial aid policies, employment practices, and other school-administered programs.

Waldorf School Organization

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Waldorf School of Baltimore is governed by an independent Board of Trustees made up of no fewer than 13 members.

The Board:

- Has a minimum of four officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer).
- Has a committee structure that comprises Standing Committees and Advisory Committees.
- Has members who serve terms of three years, renewable once for an additional three years.

THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Under Maryland law, the Board of Trustees is the entity legally responsible for the school.

The Board:

- Is charged with ensuring the long-term, mission-based, sustainable success and viability of the school.
- Is concerned with the needs of the school over several generations; therefore, its focus is setting the strategic direction of the school.
- Meets regularly to set policy and to monitor progress of the school's strategic plan.
- Does not manage the day-to-day or tactical operations of the school.
- Hires the Head of School to take responsibility for the day-to-day managerial responsibility of the school. The Head of School works within the general parameters and principles established by the Board.
- A copy of the Strategic Plan and a list of current Trustees can be found on the school website: www.waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/community/governance.

The Board of Trustees has the following responsibilities to:

- Define the mission and vision of the school.
- Assure that the school continues to provide the opportunity for a quality Waldorf education to students in the Baltimore metropolitan area.
- Develop and monitor the Strategic Plan in furtherance of the school's mission and vision.
- Lead the efforts necessary to assemble the financial and other resources necessary to the successful operation of the school.
- Adopt the annual operating and capital budgets, monitor expenditures in relation to the budgets, and otherwise oversee the financial affairs of the school.
- Assure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements and establish policy in non-pedagogical areas.
- Hire, evaluate, and retain/fire the Head of School.
- Represent the school to the external community and promote the school to the families of potential students.

For more information on the Governance Structure at the Waldorf School of Baltimore, please visit our website: www.waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/community/governance.

2026-27 BOARD MEMBERS

Lisa Bleich, At-Large Member

Emma Balay-Wilson

Chris Brohawn, Secretary

Kristian Derwin

Jeri Forman

Britt Harlow, Vice President

Lida Lawrence

Tom Livingston, President

Kendra Petrick

Aubrey Poysa

Thomas Proctor

Brooke Redgrave

Robbie Shilliam

Lynn Taylor

Rob Wray, Treasurer

De’Nae Whittington

Emeritus Trustees:

Dana DiCarlo

Chaddie Hughes

Larry Snyder

Pat Whitehead

THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

The Board delegates execution of the school’s mission to the Head of School who is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations and activities of the school, for supporting the strategic plan, overseeing all other employees (teachers and administrators) and volunteers, either indirectly or directly, to achieve the Board’s established ends. To assist in the pedagogical and administrative life of the School, the Head of School forms a Leadership Team. This team consists of the Head of School, the Academic Director, Finance Director, Admissions Director, and Advancement Director.

The Head of School facilitates meetings of the Central Team which consists of the leaders from different groups of the school: The Board of Trustees, the Parents Association, and the Leadership Team. Their job is to ensure the goals and priorities of each group are aligned; to receive and act on community concerns and questions; to make sure communication flows consistently; and to hold one another accountable in a way that helps guarantee all constituencies of the school community are well served.

THE COLLEGIUM

As set out in the By-Laws (Section 8, sub-section a, point 8), the Head of School is responsible for convening and maintaining a Collegium.

The Collegium provides pedagogical and anthroposophical leadership throughout the school, based on the AWSNA Principles of Waldorf Education. It ensures that the social and spiritual health of the school community is nurtured. The Collegium advises the Academic Director on the development and delivery of the curriculum, addressing the pedagogical and developmental needs of our students.

FACULTY MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES

In Waldorf schools, the teaching faculty shares in the administrative and governing function of the school. The entire teaching and administrative faculty participate in meetings and work groups that relate to their particular areas. The regular groups are the Full Faculty Meeting, Children's Garden Meeting, Grades Meeting, and Office Meeting.

The Full Faculty Meeting consists of most part-time and all full-time teachers and administrative staff and meets regularly to discuss and direct the ongoing life and operation of the school. An important segment of each meeting is devoted to deepening the group's understanding of the students, educational practices, and Waldorf education.

COMMUNICATING QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

If you have questions or concerns regarding your child's educational experience, please communicate directly with the class or subject teacher. When reaching out to the subject teacher, please CC your Class Teacher. Should you feel that further discussion is necessary, contact the Academic Director, Dr. Jennifer Larson, jl Larson@tw sb.org, to plan next steps.

Confidential communication of concerns, questions, suggestions, or compliments may be directed to the Head of School. This can be done in the following ways:

- Email the Head of School, Kim Richardson, krichardson@tw sb.org.
- Schedule an appointment by phone with the Head of School (410 367-6808 ext. 201)

OUR PARENTS' COMMITMENT

Like thousands of other parents around the world, you have chosen Waldorf education for your child. Every Waldorf school is unique, but like most schools, each is composed of interrelated groups: the Board, faculty, parents, and students. It is the role of parents to support their school's mission by upholding the administrative and financial policies of the school, and to contribute to the development and maintenance of positive working relationships with the school. The ideal for any Waldorf School is that individuals take responsibility for the whole by contributing as much as they are able on their own initiative. Parents support the life of the school with their time and talent. Parent volunteers enrich the school in many ways: in the classroom; on committees; at fundraising and cultural events; participating in study groups and in the Parents Association; providing expertise in practical areas; and helping with enrollment.

ANNUAL FUND

The Annual Fund is the fundraising engine that helps power the Waldorf School of Baltimore each year. Your annual gift is one of the most meaningful and comprehensive ways you can support the school. Annual Giving helps make possible what tuition alone cannot: meaningful financial aid, annual salary increases and professional development for our dedicated faculty, strong academic and specialty programs, and the materials and resources that enrich learning every day.

Every gift, at every level, makes a difference.

The Annual Fund launches each fall and runs through the end of the school year. We strive for 100% parent participation and ask every family to make the Waldorf School of Baltimore Annual Fund their first philanthropic priority each year. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. There are many ways to make a meaningful gift to the Waldorf School of Baltimore. Choose the one that works best for you. WSB is a 501(c)(3) non-profit with EIN: 23-7305478.

GIVE ONLINE

Make a secure one-time or recurring gift through Zeffy, our online giving platform. 100% of your donation goes to WSB, with no platform/transaction fees deducted from your gift: bit.ly/WSB-26.

GIVE BY CHECK

Checks may be made payable to Waldorf School of Baltimore and mailed to: 4801 Tamarind Road Baltimore, MD 21209.

DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS

Put charitable funds you have already set aside to work for WSB by recommending a grant directly from your donor-advised fund (DAF).

GIFTS OF STOCK

Gifts of appreciated stock or securities can be a tax-smart way to make a significant gift while potentially reducing capital gains taxes. Contact the Advancement Office for current transfer instructions.

IRA CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS

Eligible donors may make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from an IRA to WSB. Consult your financial or tax advisor to determine whether this giving option is right for you.

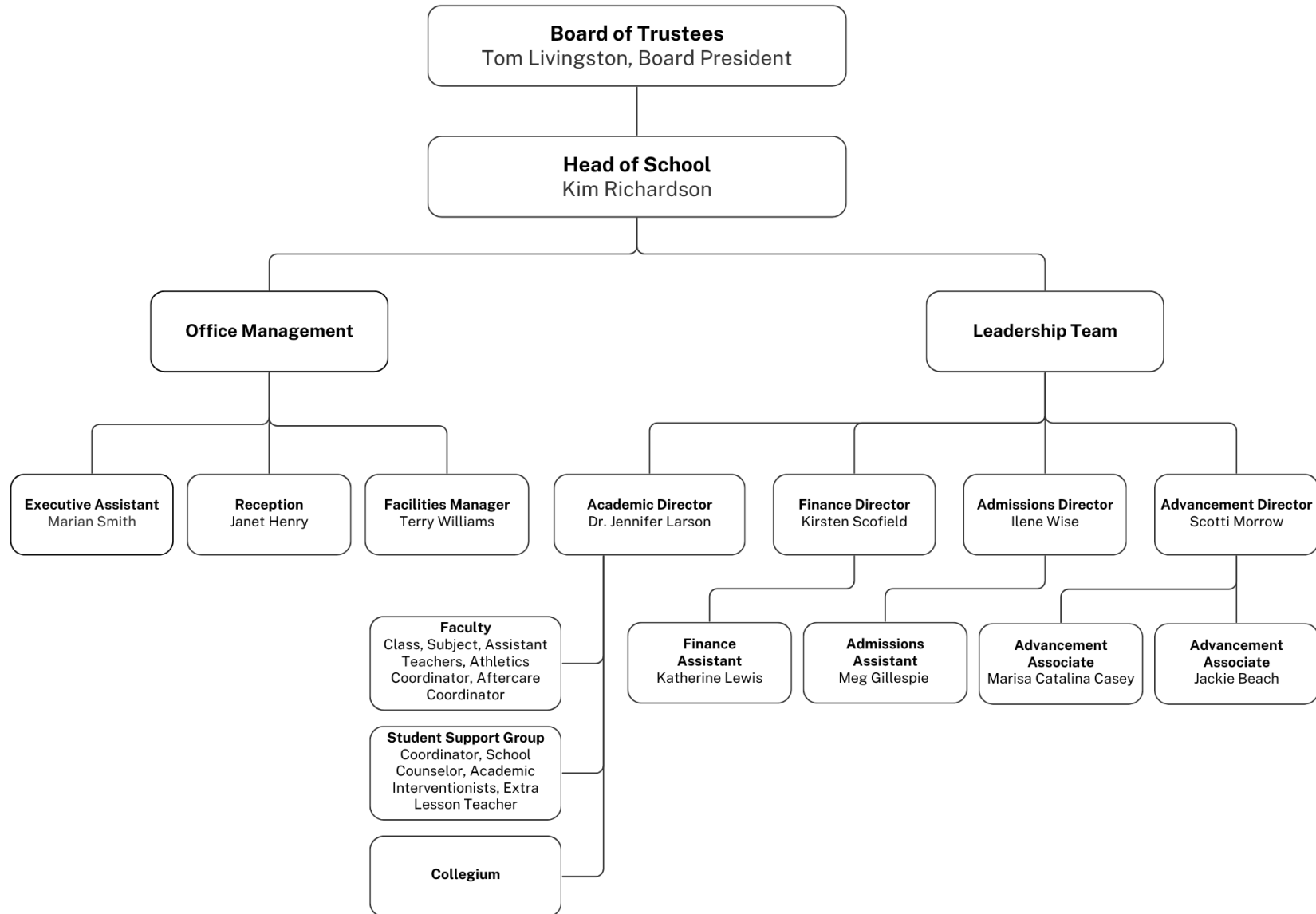
LEAVE A LEGACY

Make WSB part of your legacy by including the school in your will, trust, retirement plan, or estate plans. A planned gift today can help ensure that Waldorf education continues to inspire children for generations to come.

GIVE IN HONOR

Celebrate a teacher, family member, alumnus, or friend with a gift in their honor or memory. We are happy to notify the person or family you designate of your thoughtful tribute.

2026-27 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Parents Association

WELCOME!

The Parents Association (PA) welcomes you to the 2026-27 community of families at WSB. Together, our families' diverse backgrounds and experiences enable us to connect, support, and strengthen our community. We all share common ground in choosing to join our wonderful school, and the PA strives to build a supportive culture and strong community here.

PA MISSION & GOALS

The mission of the PA is to connect, support, and strengthen the WSB community by promoting alignment with WSB values and mission, facilitating enriching activities, acting as a community resource, and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive environment. The PA is committed to representing parental voices to the appropriate groups and channels within the school. There are no dues for the PA, and all current parents and guardians are automatically members by enrolling a student at WSB.

Our goals for the 2026-27 school year are to:

1. Create a positive Parents Association community centered on learning and growing together.
2. Enhance parent participation and connection in the school.
3. Enrich the WSB community by contributing to festivals, events, and community strengthening activities.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PART OF THE PA?

All parents and guardians of current WSB students are automatically members of the Parents Association. PA membership means a commitment to finding the ways that each of us can support WSB. We do not collect annual dues. Instead, we rely on parents to volunteer time and talents to collectively create the annual events that bring our community together, raise funds for our school, and benefit all of our children. Being part of the PA means participating in our community, whether that involves donating your time, baked goods, or greens for festivals; or simply attending a PA meeting.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

We encourage you to find what works for you. Your efforts are vital to our school and very much appreciated. Here are a few ways to contribute:

- **Attend PA community meetings.** There will be several throughout the year PA meetings are a chance to build community learn together. You can also share and learn from fellow parents' experiences, questions, and insights. Agendas will be sent out prior to meetings. Find dates and times on the school website's calendar. Submit a topic or question for any meeting at WSBPALeadership@gmail.com.
- **Get involved with the PA!** From baking bread, to helping plan the annual Fair, to pitching in to make our festivals as special as they are, there are many ways to contribute to PA

activities. Email the PA to learn about opportunities. Many hands make light work, and it feels great knowing you helped put those glowing smiles on everyone's faces!

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SCHOOL?

- **Your child's class teacher is the primary source for the specifics of your child's education:** curriculum, classroom routine, social development, etc. Subject area teachers are available to discuss their classes and areas of expertise. Developing relationships with your child's teachers gives a deeper understanding and appreciation of your child's Waldorf education.
- **Each class has one or more PA Class Representatives to help families stay informed and connected.** They work with their class teachers and facilitate communication between PA Leadership and families. Class Reps take an active role in creating connections between parents and caregivers in the class.
- **Read WSB's email newsletter every Friday.** The *Waldorf Weekly* is the school-wide communication for event reminders including assemblies, workshops, fundraisers, and deadlines. It also features school news and classroom highlights for each week. The keepsake-worthy photos of students at work and play are not to be missed! Archived *Weeklys* are available at bit.ly/WSB-Newsletters.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH OTHER WSB PARENTS & FAMILIES?

- **Learn about the WSB Green Team, Book Club, workshops, mending circles, adult educational events, and parent groups** to acquaint yourself with our WSB community and the Waldorf curriculum and philosophy. Keep tabs on events via the [website calendar \(waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/calendar\)](http://waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/calendar) and learn about groups in the *Weekly* or by emailing WSBPALeadership@gmail.com.
- **Keep an eye out for any class-wide social gatherings planned by your Class Representative.** Or reach out to your Class Rep to offer an idea!
- **Volunteer.** The PA's Volunteer Coordinator can set you up to volunteer in the ways most meaningful to you. We have volunteer teams who specialize in baking and making food, donating greens for festivals, and volunteering time to sell raffles tickets, act as characters in Children's Garden festivals, help coordinate events, and more. Meet like-minded parents and support school events at the same time!

PA ORGANIZATION & STRUCTURE

The PA Leadership Team is responsible for managing all PA operations. Often this team is led by one PA Chair with other members including an Incoming Chair and an Outgoing Chair, who assist with PA Leadership duties. Additional leadership members perform specific necessary functions that change from year to year, e.g. Events Chair, Fair Chair, Volunteer Coordinator, PA/Board Liaison, Treasurer, etc. The PA Leadership Team confirms one or two PA Class Representatives for each class who support the class teacher and families and represent their class needs to the PA. The PA Leadership Team also forms parent volunteer committees as needed. Decisions are made in a collaborative consensus process. There is no compensation for any PA Leadership Team or Class Representative role. All work is done exclusively on a volunteer basis.

PA CHAIR: The PA Chair develops the direction of the PA for the year, holds PA Leadership Team Meetings, builds consensus with other PA Leadership Team members, and works closely with the Head of School to ensure all PA events and activities are appropriately coordinated within the WSB organization. They review the PA account of funds and lead budget decisions. They lead PA Community Meetings and help plan and prepare various PA events. The PA Chair has been in a PA leadership position, with demonstrated positive leadership skills, and is willing to take on the added commitment and time requirements of this role. The incoming PA Chair is generally selected by the outgoing PA Chair in consultation with the PA Leadership Team and the Head of School.

PA OUTGOING CHAIR: The previous year's Chair assumes a lighter role as they transition out of the Chairship. The Outgoing Chair helps inform the PA Chair, and together with the Incoming Chair, they make collective decisions for various aspects of the PA. With the PA Chair, the Outgoing Chair and Incoming Chair meet with the Head of School to ensure transparency and communication across the school.

INCOMING CHAIR: The Incoming Chair will assume the PA Chairship the following year. This person assists the Chair and Outgoing Chair in decision making, and in doing so gains experience to become the Chair the following year. With the PA Chair, the Outgoing Chair and Incoming Chair meet with the Head of School to ensure transparency and communication across the school. Incoming Chairs are appointed by the PA Leadership Team and Head of School. The Incoming Chair is typically a parent with a child in the Grades who has been an active Class Representative, demonstrated positive leadership skills, regularly participated in PA meetings and events, and is able to take on the added commitment.

BOARD/PA LIAISON: A Board of Trustees member traditionally serves as a Board/PA Liaison on the PA Leadership Team to represent the needs of each group to the other and ensure timely and accurate communication between groups.

PA CLASS REPRESENTATIVES: Each class has one or two Class Representatives (CRs) whose child/ren is/are in the respective class. CRs support the class teacher and families to help build their class community. They work closely with the Leadership Team to communicate PA information to class families and coordinate their class's participation in activities and events. CRs represent their class by attending PA Community Meetings and Class Meetings held by their class teacher. All parents may volunteer to serve as a Class Rep in their child's class. Class teachers and the PA Leadership Team collaboratively confirm CRs. The PA publishes a list of CRs at the beginning of the school year.

PA LEADERSHIP FOR 2026-27

Chair: **Nicole Labruto** – Children's Garden and Lower School Parent

Outgoing Chair: **Jenna Lingsch** – Lower School Parent

Incoming Chair: **Tamara Shriver** – Children's Garden and Lower School Parent

Treasurer: **Samantha Tigert** – Children's Garden Parent

Parent Volunteer Coordinator: **Kate Manchester** – Children's Garden Parent

Waldorf Fair Co-Chairs: **Bethe Brohawn** and **Britt Harlow** – Lower and Middle School Parents

PA/Board Liaison: **Chris Brohawn** – Lower and Middle School Parent

HOW DOES THE PA FIT WITHIN THE WSB ORGANIZATION?

At WSB, governance and decision-making are collaborative processes. We have four groups involved in school governance and decision-making. They are 1) the Board of Trustees, 2) the School Administration, 3) the Collegium, 4) and the Parents Association. The PA works with the other elements of the WSB organization to provide support for parents, provide resources for WSB activities, build community, and support the overall health and growth of WSB.

PA EVENTS

The PA welcomes, encourages, and relies on parent participation in all our events. We value your skills, interests, and experiences and hope they may find expression in support of these events. Please contact the PA Leadership Team if you or other members of your class are interested in volunteering for a specific event.

THE WALDORF FAIR: The Waldorf Fair is a day of family fun, food, music, and lots of wonderful crafts and items for sale from local artisans. Open to the public, there are activities for everyone, young children and adults alike. Funds are raised via vendor fees and ticket sales. It is managed by PA Leadership and parent volunteers on the Fair Committee. All parents are expected to volunteer for class-specific activities. PA Class Representatives coordinate the duties and volunteering for each class. This all-hands-on-deck event is the biggest PA fundraiser of the year.

FAMILY FUN/PARENTS NIGHT OUT: When possible, the PA offers school-wide opportunities for families to gather with their children for a few hours of low-key fun with apple picking, games like trivia or BINGO, or hikes at local parks. A Parents Night Out may be planned for adults only at a local restaurant.

PARENT WORKSHOPS: When possible, the PA helps organize opportunities for parents to participate in adult educational workshops. Through these workshops, we aim to build community through common interests.

In addition to the school's festivals and these PA events and fundraisers, novel events and projects occur from time to time. Check the *Waldorf Weekly* for opportunities. We hope you find being a part of our WSB community a meaningful, engaging, and enjoyable journey. Thank you for bringing your family to our shared school.

The PA Leadership team can be reached anytime at WSBPALeadership@gmail.com.

Alumni Community

The WSB community is lifelong. We stay connected with alumni and alumni families through a quarterly newsletter, four- and eight-year class reunions, and an annual fall gathering for alumni and alumni parents ages 21+. Alumni are always welcome back for beloved traditions throughout the year, especially May Day and the Waldorf Fair.

How We Communicate with Families

Clear, consistent communication helps families stay connected to school life. Below are the primary ways WSB shares important information, news, and opportunities with parents and caregivers.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The online school calendar: waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/calendar is the best place to find current dates for school events, meetings, festivals, breaks, and other important activities.

THE WALDORF WEEKLY

The *Waldorf Weekly* is our primary source of schoolwide news and is emailed to families every Friday. It includes important announcements, upcoming dates and reminders, student and classroom highlights, Parents Association news, and other updates from across the school. We encourage families to make reading the *Waldorf Weekly* part of their weekly routine. Questions or troubleshooting related to the newsletter may be sent to Communications@twsb.org.

PARENT PORTAL

Every parent and caregiver receives login credentials for the Parent Portal: waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/parent-portal. New families receive access information by email in mid-August.

Through the Parent Portal, families can:

- View student report cards
- Register for Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Access the online Student Directory
- Update household and contact information
- Add or update grandparent and grandfriend information

Please keep all parent and caregiver cell phone numbers current. These numbers are used for emergency SMS notifications, including weather-related closures and other urgent school communications. Keeping grandparent and grandfriend information current also ensures they receive relevant school news and invitations, including Grandparents & Grandfriends Day.

CLASS MEETINGS

Class meetings are an important part of the partnership between families and teachers at WSB. They offer parents an opportunity to understand what their children are learning, how and why it is being taught, and what to expect as the class moves through the year. Teachers may share curriculum, demonstrate elements of the classroom experience, discuss child development and Waldorf pedagogy, and address questions specific to the class. We strongly encourage parents and caregivers to attend.

LEARNING MORE ABOUT WALDORF EDUCATION

Throughout the year, WSB offers opportunities for parents and caregivers to deepen their understanding of Waldorf education, including class meetings, workshops, talks, and community events. Families can learn more about our educational approach and the ideas that inform Waldorf education at: waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/about. A Parent Library is also located in the Children's Garden lobby, and faculty members are happy to recommend books and other resources for families interested in learning more.

ASSEMBLIES

In-school assemblies build community and occur throughout the year. During these assemblies, the whole school, or a portion of it, meets to share a story, a play, or other event. They provide a wonderful opportunity for families to see students demonstrate their work.

Our whole-school assemblies are more formal occasions. Family members and relatives are invited to attend. Details of assemblies can be found on the online calendar and in the *Waldorf Weekly*. As our community grows, please note that some events may be standing room only. If you or a family member requires accessibility accommodations, kindly inform your class teacher in advance.

INTERIM REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Communication between parents and teachers is essential in supporting each child's growth and development. Please contact teachers about individual concerns and inform teachers of any factors in the child's home or personal life that might influence the school experience. In families with two households, both parents are required to attend parent/teacher meetings together to ensure that both parents receive the same information. We hold one conference per child.

- Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled after the 1st and 2nd reporting periods. These conferences address your child's progress and issues concerning your child's social, emotional, and academic growth. Upon request, subject teachers may also be available to meet with parents. Parents or teachers may also schedule additional meetings with teachers.
- Written reports for the Children's Garden are issued at mid-year and at the end of the year.
- Grades interim reports are issued three times a year. If students are struggling with a particular academic or behavioral issue, an interim report will be sent home between reports to inform the parents of any new issues, describe how the teacher and student are addressing the area of concern in school, and inform the parents how they can offer support at home.
- Reports are accessed through the Parent Portal on the school's website www.waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/parent-portal and by clicking on the "Parent Portal" button link. For login questions please contact Janet Henry at Reception@twsb.org.
- All financial obligations must be settled to receive the year-end report.

Upon request, non-custodial parents may be included on mailing lists for newsletters and announcements of school events. Upon request, the school will provide copies of progress reports to, or schedule a conference with, a non-custodial parent. If a custodial parent requests that the non-custodial parent not receive progress reports, etc., concerning the child, the school requires a court order.

FIRST GRADE READINESS

- All children who turn 6 years old by August 1st are eligible by age for First Grade.

Readiness for first grade is determined by many factors. All children, and especially those with birthdays in May, June, and July, deserve careful and sensitive individual consideration to ensure that readiness is consolidated in physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Some children may benefit from another year in the Children's Garden.

- The Rising First Grade (RFG) Committee screens each child for first grade readiness in the fall.
- Children's Garden parents are invited to an information session about this process in September or October.
- The teachers will discuss with you the RFG Committee's recommendations for your child.

Parents needing more information regarding this policy should speak with their child's teacher.

Finance

ENROLLMENT CONTRACTS

- Enrollment Contracts for the next school year are sent to parents in January and are due back in February along with deposits.
- Please review the terms of the Enrollment Contract carefully, as it is a legal document.
- Please note that in the event of any failure or delay in the School's performance under the Enrollment Contract resulting from causes beyond the School's reasonable control and occurring without its fault or negligence, including without limitation, Acts of God, fire, pandemic, government restrictions, wars, and insurrections, the tuition and fee obligations under the Enrollment Contract shall continue, and the School shall not be liable for any such failure or delay in its performance. In such circumstances, the school's obligations and duties may be postponed until the school, in its discretion, may safely reopen. School schedules may be extended for a period of time equal to the time lost and/or classes may be conducted remotely or on weekends, at the school's discretion.

The signed contract and the enrollment deposit reserve space for your child for the following year. The enrollment deposit is not refundable. Parents should keep this financial obligation in mind as they plan for the year.

TUITION PAYMENT POLICY

- As of June 1st, a family is obligated for the full annual tuition and fees as specified in the contract.
- The enrollment deposit is not refundable. Parents are reminded to carefully review the terms of the enrollment contract.

For your convenience there are several ways in which a family may pay tuition:

- One payment by check or money order directly to the school by June 1st.

- A ten-payment plan paid through Preferred Computing Resources Company (PCR).
- A eleven-payment plan paid through Preferred Computing Resources Company (PCR).
- A financial aid plan (ten or eleven payments for families receiving financial aid) through the Preferred Computing Resources Company (PCR).

E-Check payments through PCR are made automatically from either savings or checking account with a \$10 fee per payment. **Families with more than 1 child will only be charged a single \$10 fee for all the children's tuition payments that month.** Families may choose a starting payment date of May 20th or June 5th. Families may also elect to pay their tuition by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express) through PCR. The credit card option has a convenience fee of 5%. Late payments are subject to late fees as specified in the Enrollment Contract. A \$50 per check charge is incurred for returned checks. Families who enroll late will need to make catch-up payments at the time of enrollment.

- As stated in the contract, the school shall not permit a child to continue to attend school unless tuition and other charges are paid to date. In addition, the school shall withhold any diploma, certificate, or scholastic record if all tuition and other incurred charges are not paid.
- It is the parents' responsibility to contact the Finance Director, Kirsten Scofield, kscofield@tsb.org if there are any difficulties with meeting financial obligations.

FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM

The Waldorf School of Baltimore is committed to diversity within its student body and seeks to promote access to the school for qualified students from a variety of backgrounds and income levels. To support this commitment, the school offers a tuition assistance program to families demonstrating financial need. Assistance through this program is offered only to students whose families qualify for aid based on financial need. Admissions decisions are made prior to, and separately from, decisions about financial aid.

A family's ability to pay is determined by a needs-analysis program. Total income, assets, number of dependents, cost of educating all children in fee-charging institutions, extraordinary expenses, and retirement needs are some of the factors taken into consideration. The computation tables used by the needs-analysis program reflect need criteria based on a "modest standard of living" as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The financial aid program exists to help fill the gap between a family's ability to pay and the actual cost of tuition. The Financial Aid Committee attempts to meet individual needs, but its decisions are influenced by availability of funds and number of applications. In general, the financial aid available from the school is limited, and families are encouraged to explore all available non-school resources for assistance.

Financial aid information and application are available online at our school website www.waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/admissions/tuition in early December. The completed application forms are due back in early January. It is important for families to meet the deadlines as outlined in the instructions to receive full consideration by the Financial Aid Committee. Financial materials submitted by parents are treated with strict respect for confidentiality.

REFUND POLICY

- The Enrollment Deposit is non-refundable.
- Families who withdraw in writing prior to the June 1 deadline are obligated only for the Enrollment Deposit.
- Families who withdraw after June 1 are obligated for the full tuition.

The school recognizes that there may be circumstances beyond a family's control that may necessitate a student's withdrawal. These circumstances may include a job transfer to another state or a job loss.

- In these cases, a family may submit a written request for early release to the from the Enrollment Contract to the Finance Committee (via the Head of School and Finance Director) with documentation of the circumstances.
- If a release is granted, the family will be obligated for the Enrollment Deposit plus 1/12 of the tuition balance for each month beginning in June up to and including the month of the release.

Records

TRANSCRIPTS, REPORTS, AND REFERRALS

All requests for transcripts, reports or referral forms come to Reception; do not give these forms directly to any teacher. The records request form is provided by the school to which the student is applying. For electronic records request, please have the records request form sent to Reception@twsb.org.

Every attempt is made to send out all records within one week; however, weather related school closings, scheduled holidays, and unforeseen illness or events may increase the time required for processing a request. Parents are asked to make every effort to get requests in with ample time before an application deadline. Parents are also asked to submit requests at least **one full week before a holiday break** if they want the request processed before the break.

The records process is documented during each step. All financial obligations must be current for student records to be sent. This includes, but is not limited to, tuition.

WSB Safe & Sound Policies

HEALTH & EMERGENCY FORMS

1. **Health and Emergency Contact Forms are kept on file for each child.** All health and vaccine information must be kept up to date. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the school with any updated vaccine information. Refer to Health Requirements under the New Student Forms section on the website www.waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/parent-portal.

- Forms are available on the school website, on the Parent Portal and Resources page, and submitted through the Portal.
- Forms must be returned well before the first day your child attends school, as required by the Baltimore City Health Department. Families will be notified of the specific deadline in advance.
- **Emergency Forms must be updated every year.** This is a requirement of the Maryland State Department of Education and helps ensure the safe care of your child. Please make sure emergency forms are up to date! Notify the office ([Reception @twsb.org](mailto:Reception@twsb.org)) with any phone, workplace, address, or insurance changes that may occur during the school year.

ILLNESS

We strive to keep our community healthy and in school. In the event of illness, please contact Reception at 410-367-6808, ex. 200 or [Reception @twsb.org](mailto:Reception@twsb.org) to notify the school that your child will be absent and for guidance on your child's return to school.

- **Any child with a fever over 100° F, vomiting, or diarrhea must stay/go home.** Children must be fever-free with no fever-reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Diagnosed illnesses must be reported to Reception as many illnesses have specific requirements as to when a student can return to school. We may notify classes of a diagnosed illness so that families can make health-related decisions.
- Hand hygiene is critical in keeping the bugs away. Encourage your child to wash hands well and frequently throughout the day, and to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue.
- Any child who is displaying signs and/or symptoms of a contagious or infectious condition must stay/go home.
- If a child is not well enough to participate in usual class activities, such as playing outdoors, they should be kept home/will be sent home.
- If a child becomes ill while at school, the office will contact the parent to collect the child to return home.
- If a child is absent due to any illness for more than five consecutive days, the Baltimore City Health Department requires that parents provide a physician's note upon the child's return to school. The child will not be allowed to return to school without this note.
- There may be situations in which we require an individual or a group to mask when indoors.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

Certified Medication Technicians (CMTs) at school can administer medication during school hours, according to the Maryland State Department of Education regulations. The school employs the services of Kotula Nursing Services LLC ("KNS"). The school works directly with Donna Kotula, an RN with extensive school health experience. KNS trains our CMTs, supervises them, and visits the school periodically.

The following regulations apply to any medication or treatment a child may require while in the care of school staff. This includes medications for the treatment of acute illness, management of a chronic condition, supplementation, or emergency medication administration.

- Medications include but are not limited to: Prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, inhalers, nasal sprays, eye drops, injections, medicated skin applications, vitamins, supplements, homeopathic remedies, insect repellent, and lip balm.
- Medications will only be administered to a student by a WSB CMT.
- Medications will only be administered to the child when:
 2. WSB has received a Medication Administration Authorization Form (available on the school's website under New Student Forms) signed by BOTH the prescribing physician and the parent. The form can be brought in, emailed, or faxed to WSB. A new Medication Administration Authorization Form is required each school year
 - o WSB has received the medications as follows:
 - Prescription medication must be unexpired and in its original container with the pharmacist's label and prescription information intact.
 - Non-prescription medications, e.g., homeopathic remedies, vitamins and supplements, and insect repellent, must be in the manufacturer's unopened, original container and clearly labeled with the child's name. If a measuring device such as a cup or syringe is needed for the medication, it should be supplied with the medication.
 - Over-the-counter medications may only be used for the reason stated by the physician on the original authorization form. For example, Tylenol prescribed for and kept on hand for chronic headaches cannot be administered for a sore throat or fever.
 - The form of medication listed on the form and the form of medication supplied MUST match. For example, if your child's Medication Administration Authorization Form prescribes Motrin in liquid form, that is what should be supplied to the school. The chewable tablet or capsule cannot be substituted. Another form must be obtained, or the correct medication brought in before it can be administered.
- All forms will be checked for accuracy and completeness. The school has the right to refuse to administer any medication if an order is unclear or missing information. We will do our best to work with you and your physician's office to clarify any information.
- The first dose of any prescription medication must be administered by a parent at home or by the child's physician.
- Medications and the accompanying physician authorizations must be delivered to the office by a parent or designated adult and handed in to the Certified Medication Technician. Please do not give any medications to your child's teacher. Your child may not bring in medications or authorization forms. Any changes in dosage, times, etc. must be made in

writing with a date and signature of the parent and physician. The parent, upon the final date of the requested dosage time period, shall pick up all medications, or the Medication Technician will dispose of it. Medication Technicians will notify parents when a student's ongoing medication is running low or nearing its expiration date.

- All requests for the dispensing of medications must be renewed each school year.
- If you and your child's physician feel that it is appropriate for your child to self-carry an emergency medication, such as an inhaler, the appropriate line must be signed on the authorization form by both you and your child's physician. The Medication Administration Authorization form must be on file, and the actual medication verified by the Medication Technician or Delegating Nurse before the child can self-carry. A backup must be provided to WSB to be kept in the office.
- The student's teacher will be notified that the child is allowed to have the medication with them. If, at any time, a teacher or other faculty member feels that the student is being unsafe or irresponsible in any way with the medication, the Delegating Nurse has the right to refuse to allow the child to self-carry. The medication will then be kept and administered by the Medication Technicians.

MEDICATIONS ON FIELD TRIPS AND OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Our delegating nurse reserves the right to withhold authorization for a student to participate in a daytime or overnight field trip if:

- Proper written authorization from parent and physician, and relevant emergency action plans are not received by the set deadline prior to the trip.
- Authorized medication is not in the properly labeled, original container or is expired or not received at school by the set deadline prior to the trip. (2 weeks prior for day trips, 1 month prior for overnights.)
- In the judgment of the Delegating Nurse, the student's health care needs cannot safely be met on the trip.

FOOD ALLERGY POLICY

The school has a Food Allergy Management and Prevention Plan (FAMPP) available on the school's website under New Student Forms on the Parent Portal and Resources page:

www.waldorfschoolofbaltimore.org/parent-portal. Please note that WSB is **peanut free** due to community member allergies.

INJURY

If a child suffers an injury during the school day:

- Appropriate first aid procedures are followed.
- An accident report is sent home to the parent in the event of a serious injury, and the parent may be contacted directly if the child needs to go home.

Contact information is retrieved from the Emergency Form on file. It is very important that this information always be kept current. Every effort is made to notify the parent immediately of a serious injury or illness.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY

Maryland law (Section 5-704 of the Annotated Code) requires that any teacher, counselor, or other professional employee of the Waldorf School of Baltimore, acting in their professional capacity, who has any reason to suspect that a child has been subject to abuse or neglect, is to immediately make a report to the local Child Protective Services (CPS). In the case of suspected abuse, the employee may notify an appropriate law enforcement agency instead of CPS.

VISITORS TO SCHOOL

PARENTS

- Parents may come into the building to drop their children off, but their length of stay should be brief unless a previous arrangement such as volunteering, or class observation has been made.
- After 9:15 a.m. parents must sign in and receive a visitor badge at Reception before going to any location on the school campus.

OTHER VISITORS

- All visitors must sign in and receive a visitor badge at Reception before going to any location around the school campus.

There is an expectation that all faculty and staff will approach any visitors they do not recognize (and/or do not have a visitor badge) and ask how they can help them. Un-badged visitors must be taken to Reception to sign in.

TRAFFIC FLOW REMINDERS CHILD SAFETY FIRST

To help keep traffic flowing safely and efficiently, be sure your child has everything they need in the morning so that they can be dropped off quickly. Be patient and stay in line. If you need to stop into the school, park to the north of the school or on the west side of Tamarind, across from the school. **Placards for additional adults picking up your child routinely may be available by request.**

BUILDING ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

The Waldorf School of Baltimore makes every effort to make our building and events accessible to visitors. Wherever possible, please call the office **at least one day in advance** of the visit to let us know of any special accommodations needed.

FIRE DRILLS AND EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The school holds drills for fire and emergencies in accordance with pre-planned procedures.

DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS AT SCHOOL

The Waldorf School of Baltimore welcomes trained service animals into the building. Many people with disabilities use a service animal trained for a specific disability in order to fully participate in everyday life.

All other animals should not be brought into the school unless:

- They are participating as part of a formal school activity or event and have been approved by the Head of School or Academic Director; or,
- They are assisting a police officer engaged in law enforcement duties.

POLICY ON ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AT CLASS FUNCTIONS

Consumption of alcoholic beverages while supervising students is prohibited.

When hosting private parties or school-related events off campus consider:

- Am I mindful that my decisions about the use of alcohol will be an example for young people in the community, whether they attend the event or not?
- Do I understand that serving alcohol may be a serious problem for some individuals, and do I strive to consider their needs when making decisions?

SMOKING AT SCHOOL

Smoking in all forms, including cannabis use and vaping, is prohibited in all areas on the school's premises—inside and outside.

WEAPONS AT SCHOOL

It is prohibited for anyone except for police or other professional security personnel with business on the school campus to bring onto school grounds or to any school activity any firearm, dangerous weapon, or dangerous instrument.

STUDENT CELL PHONE AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY

The Waldorf School of Baltimore is a screen and cellphone-free zone in the classrooms and common areas. Students do not need cell phones, smart watches, or other mobile devices to participate in the WSB program, however, some families require that their children carry a phone to school. A student may only use their phone if permission has been granted by a faculty member in charge of the student.

In order to maintain our screen-free environment and manage use of cell phones, smart watches, or other mobile devices, the following rules should be communicated and followed:

- A student cell phone or other device that comes to school must be powered off and stored in the student's locker or backpack.

These devices:

- May not be seen during the school day, during Early Birds, Aftercare, and Afterschool Programs.
- May not be used on school grounds or at Waldorf off-campus events and field trips.

If students do not follow these rules, the device will be confiscated by the teacher or staff member and returned only to the parent.

Use of School Phone

- If a student needs to call a parent or use a phone for any reason, a faculty member may permit them to go to Reception and ask to use a school phone.

ALL SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDING POLICY

To achieve a balance between obtaining photographic souvenirs and allowing each child and adult to enjoy the full experience of a festival or other school event, please abide by the requests below.

- Obtain permission from the teacher before taking photographs or videos in the classroom.
- Parents may take flash-free photographs or videos during assemblies, Spring Concert, Recitals, and Graduation, from the back of the room.
- Parents may take flash-free photographs or videos at All-School outdoor daytime events at a respectable distance that does not interfere with the proceedings or block the view of others. This excludes the Lantern Walk.
- For all other events, parent photography or recording is not permitted without prior permission.
- The school will designate a person to photograph events and make them available electronically whenever possible.
- Class play scenes will be staged during rehearsals and post-performance for photos.
- A designated parent may arrange to video the performance with a camera on a tripod, with permission from the teacher.
- Photos may never be taken by students, unless part of a class assignment with teacher permission.
- Be respectful of other parents' preferences regarding images of children on social media. Do not post images of children without the permission of their parent or guardian.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The use of social media presents certain risks, and we discourage unsupervised use by students. Middle school students often do not have the maturity to navigate the complexities and potential risks of using social media. Ultimately, students are solely responsible for what is posted online.

Remember that the internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. As a general rule, students should view social media in the same way that one would view other forms of communication and follow these responsible use guidelines.

- Always be fair and courteous. It is easier to resolve problems by speaking directly with other people, rather than by posting complaints or other statements to a social media outlet.
- Students should avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, and threatening or intimidating, that disparage people, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation.
- Never post any information or rumors about other people, including fellow students, faculty, the school, or other members of the school community.
- Do not take or post photographs or videos of fellow students or other members of the school community without their permission.
- In addition to being subject to disciplinary action by the school, a student may be subject to legal liability if any postings or other communications on social media sites violate applicable laws. Students may also be liable if they make postings that include confidential or copyrighted information belonging to third parties.
- Online postings may not include school logos or trademarks on any blog or social network without written permission from the school administration.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Experience and recent research has shown that children with less exposure to electronic media during their free time are more successful in school and are better able to imagine, create, and focus during their elementary years. The aim in reducing children's media exposure is to encourage and provide them with opportunities to develop a lively interest in peers, family members and their immediate environment, thereby improving interpersonal communication and fostering a deeper connection to the world around them.

We recognize the difficulties many parents encounter in minimizing their children's exposure to electronic media and offer support in developing alternative activities. We urge parents to follow the developmental guidelines in the Appendix for media use.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

A student may be allowed to use technology in class such as keyboarding, voice-activated programs, e-readers, or other assistive technologies when these accommodations have been recommended after a professional educational or medical evaluation.

Requests for technology assistance should be submitted to Academic Director, Dr. Jennifer Larson, jl Larson@twsb.org and the student's Class Teacher.

TECHNOLOGY USE APPROVED BY CLASS TEACHER (GRADES 6-8)

There may be circumstances when middle school teachers give students permission to use personal electronic devices for academic purposes at school. In such circumstances, parents and students will be required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy and Agreement which will be provided by the school. Students may not use these personal electronic devices for non-academic purposes such as gaming or watching videos.

Any misuse of any of these devices may result in students temporarily or permanently losing their in-school technology privileges.

Dress Code

Our dress code aims to allow students to express themselves individually while reflecting the values of the school. The student's sense of responsibility shows itself in dressing appropriately to meet the day's activities while embodying the school's values.

GENERAL DRESS CODE

- Appropriate and safe dress for all classes and school activities is required.
- Appropriate wear/gear is required for weather conditions (see chart below).
- Bodies must be covered from shoulder to mid-thigh.
- Shoes must be enclosed and/or fastened with Velcro, buckles, or laces.
- Crocs, flip-flops, bare feet, platform shoes, and high heeled shoes are not permitted as they are unsafe for running and climbing.

- Images and writing from television, video games, or movies, as well as images and writing that are violent or of a political nature, are not permitted on clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, and other accessories.
- Students' faces should be visible during school activities and not obscured by hats, hoodies, or hair.
- Discreet makeup is permitted in Grades 6 -8 only
- Analog watches are permitted.
- Use of perfumes or colognes is not permitted.

CHILDREN'S GARDEN WEATHER GEAR

The Waldorf Children's Garden education is an active one, and the children need supportive footwear for walking, climbing, jump roping, etc.

- For safety's sake, shoes need to be enclosed and fastened with Velcro, buckles, or laces; rainboots for rainy days, and snow boots for snowy days.
- Crocs, flip-flops, and bare feet are not permitted as they are unsafe for running and climbing.
- Please follow the specific additional recommendations of your child's Class Teacher.

For outdoor play in all weather conditions, children need the following:

- Sun hats and sunscreen (encouraged).
- The school will be providing a hooded raincoat and rain pants for all CG children. It is important that they don't get lost, so they will be "checked out" from your child's teacher, like a library system. Some days are very wet and rainy, and morning gear is not dry enough for afternoon wear, so we recommend also purchasing an additional set of a rain jacket and pants for your child to wear.
- Umbrellas are not permitted for use by children at school.

GRADES 1-5 WEATHER GEAR

- A rain jacket and pants, a pair of rain boots, and a change of clothes are required.

GRADES 6-8 WEATHER GEAR

- A rain jacket and a pair of rain boots along with a change of clothes are required.

For festivals, assemblies, Eurythmy performances, class plays, and music concerts, students will receive specific instructions regarding dress for each event. These instructions will come from the Festivals Committee, the Eurythmy and Music teachers, and/or their Class Teachers.

Dress code concerns in Children's Garden and Grades 1-5 will not be discussed with students directly; instead, a faculty member will contact parents/guardians to partner with them to address the concern.

Food

Here is a school-provided list of foods that are preferred, discouraged, or prohibited. Teachers may exercise their discretion about whether specific food items are allowed.

Preferred Foods	Discouraged Foods	Prohibited Foods
Sandwiches	Cookies, cake, or brownies	**Peanuts
Whole grains	Potato chips	Soda
Fruits and vegetables	Other processed foods	Sugared fruit drinks
Nuts* or healthy crackers	Lunchables	Candy
Eggs		Gum
Beans		Microwave-ready meals
Tofu		
Cheese		
Other natural foods		
Minimally processed foods		

Please consult with your Class Teacher if you have any questions about this list.

CHILDREN'S GARDEN SNACK AND LUNCH

- Please inform the teacher of any dietary restrictions/allergies your child may have.
- A nutritious mid-morning snack will be served to the children. Snacks may include items such as herbal tea, cooked whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables, freshly baked bread, dairy, and seed butters. Snacks are prepared in class with help from the children. Children enrolled in the Forest Kindergarten bring snack from home on some days.
- School lunches should be brought from home. The Baltimore City Health Department has a variety of recommendations and requirements for school lunches. It requires us to offer cow's milk to children's garden students at lunch, though they are not required to drink it.
- We ask that lunches be free from peanuts, excessive sugars and additives, candy, chocolate, soda, and highly processed foods. Food in the shape of media characters or food advertising media characters is not permitted.

*Due to possible allergies, please check with your class teacher first before sending nuts or nut butters to school. **PLEASE NOTE: WSB is a peanut free school.**

If an item is not appropriate for school, teachers will tell the child that they may save it for snack on the way home from school.

- To help children focus at school, and out of respect for individual families' choices about media, we ask that lunch boxes also be free from TV and movie characters. Thank you for your support!

GRADES 1-8 SNACK AND LUNCH

Please send a mid-morning snack and lunch with your child each full day, or snack only for each half day of school.

Eating habits are built early. We ask that you carefully consider the nutritional quality of your child's school food. It is important that children have snacks and lunches that provide proper nutritional support for their school day.

Please send a thermos for lunches that need hot water. Check with your teacher; some classrooms have hot water available. Please consult class teacher in deciding appropriate class snacks for special occasions. When providing communal snacks and treats please consider the following guidelines:

- Minimally processed foods
- Attention to food restrictions and allergies in the classroom
- Low or reduced sugar and sweeteners

Middle School students may bring food that can be reheated in the classroom microwave oven.

Lunch boxes and backpacks should not exhibit media-related pictures. Please label your child's lunch box.

Student Attendance

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular daily attendance is a critical component of the education of all students. It is particularly vital at Waldorf schools, where textbooks and homework are secondary to teacher-led instruction. Furthermore, Waldorf education is an experiential, arts-integrated program. As such, not all missed work can be duplicated.

Families are expected to respect the integrity of the academic calendar. While reasons for absences will arise, students are discouraged from missing any more school time than is absolutely necessary. All absences are recorded on the students' reports. A student who is absent during the school day may not participate in any after-school activities for that day, including sports, dances, or concerts.

In the Middle School, excessive absences or tardy arrivals will result in the assignment of "extra support" time during or after school, at the discretion of the Class Teacher. This time will help the student to make up some of the work that was missed. Parents will be notified at least 48 hours in advance to make the necessary pick-up arrangements.

For absences due to illness,

- Email the class teacher by 7:15 a.m., if possible, and c.c. Reception@twsb.org.
- A note from parents giving the reason for the absence must be submitted to the front office when the child returns.

Maryland law requires a doctor's note for children returning after an absence of 5 days or more.

PLANNED ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

- Please make every effort to schedule family vacations during the ample breaks provided in the school calendar.
- Give at least 2 weeks written or emailed notice, including the dates of absence, to the front office, the Class Teacher, and any private tutors.
- In addition to the above, middle school students should consult directly with their lass and subject teachers in advance about staying caught up with their work.
- Teachers will assist students, but it will not be possible for them to present all necessary work in advance of an absence. Upon return, teachers can support students in returning to the rhythm of the classroom, but it may not be possible to recreate or provide make-up work for lessons that depend upon classroom discussion, artistic or practical activity, collaborative work, science demonstrations, or other shared experiences. Parents and students have the responsibility for initiating follow-up conversations concerning missed work. The Receptionist and front office are not available to assist with gathering homework and assignments for the students.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Early Birds

- **Early Birds begins at 7:30 a.m.** Children will be dismissed from Early Birds to their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. for Grades and 8:30 a.m. for CG.
- Registration for Early Birds is in August via an [online form](#).
- Early Birds meets on the playground (weather permitting) or in a designated classroom.
- Early Bird children can be dropped off by the gate into the recess field or at the Tamarind Road Car Pool drop-off point.
- If in doubt about where Early Birds will be held, drive up to the Tamarind Road Car Pool drop off point where your child will be directed by a faculty member.

Children's Garden Arrival and Dismissal

Drop Off

- **Drop off between 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.** Park and walk your child to class. Teachers will communicate the weekly schedule of where the class will meet in the morning.
- No parking in the carpool drop-off lane between 7:30 - 8:30 a.m. and 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. There is space to park across the street or beyond the carpool lane.
- If you will be more than 10 minutes late, please call Reception.

Pick-Up:

- **Half Day Preschool Classes:** Garden Gate, 12:00 p.m.

- **Full Day Preschool Classes:** Garden Gate, 3:00 p.m.
- **Kindergarten Classes:** Rainbow Yard, 3:00 p.m.
- **Forest K:** Buckeye Stairs, 3:00 p.m.
- To reduce pressure on the carpool line, parents are encouraged to park across the street and walk to their pick-up location.
- Please pick up your child promptly. If you will be late, please call Reception; it helps a child to know if a parent/caregiver will be late. **Parents must enroll their children in Forest Explorers Aftercare if they pick up later than 3:15 p.m.**
- Children's Garden children in a carpool must be picked up by a parent or designated adult who has written permission for a legal guardian via the Emergency Contact Form or email to Reception. ID may be checked, especially for those who are picking up for the first time.

Notify your child's teacher in writing of any changes in your child's pick-up schedule. Please email or call Reception before 2:30 if plans change during the day. Identification such as a driver's license is required for anyone who is not a parent picking up her/his own child and must be provided upon request.

Grades 1-8 Arrival and Dismissal

- Classes begin promptly at **8:15 a.m.** and are dismissed at **3:20 p.m.**
- Students should arrive at school no later than 8:10 a.m. and be picked up no later than 3:40 p.m. from the Plaza. **Parents must enroll their children in Forest Explorers Aftercare if they pick up later than 3:40 p.m.**

TARDY ARRIVALS

- Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. will be considered tardy and given a tardy slip.
- Email the Class Teacher and Reception, if possible.
- Upon arrival, students stop by the front office to sign in.
- Students must enter the classroom quietly when signaled by the teacher and follow the teacher's protocol for not disturbing the activity in process.
- All tardy arrivals are recorded on the students' interim reports.

EARLY PICK-UPS

- Email the Class Teacher and Reception with as much advance notice as possible.
- Upon arrival, stop by Reception to sign your child out.
- The receptionist will arrange to have the child fetched from class.
- To keep children safely supervised, it is not possible to have them waiting in the front lobby to be picked up.

AFTER SCHOOL AND LATE PICK-UPS:

- We encourage connecting with other parents if you are running late so that they can watch your child until you arrive. Email and call Reception so they can get the message to your child's teacher that permission is granted if this is the case.
- We must have a signed note if your child is being picked up by anyone other than a parent or the person(s) listed on your child's Emergency Form. The school is only authorized to

release students to pre-designated adults. **We reserve the right to request identification for anyone picking up a child.**

- All parents collecting their children before dismissal should alert Reception ahead of time, check in with Reception upon arrival, and then a staff member will collect the child from their class. Advance notice of an early pickup is helpful if you have an appointment, as classes often go outside, and students take longer to retrieve.

Teachers are not available to supervise after Dismissal, and children may not wait in or out of the building alone.

FOREST EXPLORERS AFTERCARE PROGRAM

- Children enrolled in Forest Explorers Afterschool Program go to the Aftercare Room at 3:00 p.m. (CG) or 3:40 p.m. (Grades 1-8) and **must be picked up by 6:00 p.m.**
- Pick up will take place at The Garden Gate unless otherwise instructed.
- For safety reasons, please abide by the parking and pick-up arrangements communicated by the Aftercare Teachers.
- Refer to the Forest Explorers section of this Handbook for more details.

Children often play outdoors. There may be limited visibility in the driveway at the end of the day. Abide by the instructions and **DRIVE CAREFULLY/SLOWLY.**

SNOW AND SCHOOL CLOSING

For emergency school closings or delayed openings due to inclement weather or other events:

- The school will notify WBAL to make an announcement under the name of “Waldorf School of Baltimore” on the WBAL website: www.wbaltv.com.
- The school will also send an **SMS text** to your entire household. In the parent portal, please be sure each caregiver has their **mobile phone number** listed in the **position one slot**. This is the number WSB's SMS Emergency notification system will alert via a text message in the event of a weather related or other emergent closure.
- **You may wish to save in your contacts the school's SMS number so that it is not confused with spam: 608-812-8196.**

TWO-HOUR DELAY: DELAYED OPENING SCHEDULE

We delay opening for inclement weather conditions and other emergencies. All members of the WSB community should allow extra time to arrive at school on time.

ARRIVALS

- No Early Birds
- 9:45 a.m.: Teacher arrival time

Grades 1-8

- 10:00 a.m. Classrooms open to students
- 10:15 - 11:25 a.m. Classes start with an adjusted Main Lesson
- Period 1 is skipped
- Period 2 is from 11:30 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.
- From 12:15 p.m.: Lunch and afternoon classes remain unchanged

Children's Garden

- 10:00 a.m. Classrooms open to students
- Children enrolled in full day programs will arrive in time for classes to start at 10:00 a.m.
- Children enrolled in half-day programs are welcome, but are not required, to attend.
- Parent and Child classes will be cancelled, and a make-up class arranged.

We may dismiss early due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, and we may cancel afterschool activities.

Parents may pick up early if they deem that road conditions or other circumstances warrant an early pick-up. Please phone Reception first.

Student Conduct

POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT, BIAS, AND BULLYING POLICY

Waldorf is committed to providing an atmosphere free of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Every individual in the Waldorf community is to be treated with sensitivity and respect and is entitled to work and learn without fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation, humiliation, and/or degradation from unwanted and unacceptable behavior, including, but not limited to, comments, images, and technology. This policy applies to relationships between adults, between students and/or between adults and students, regardless of the individual's gender and/or age. Students are prohibited from engaging in any form of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Students are further prohibited from taking any act in reprisal or retaliation against another student who has made a report of bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

Bullying, harassment, and intimidation are defined as the use of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, by one or more students or members of the faculty/staff directed at a target that: (a) causes physical or emotional harm to the student or damage to the student's property; (b) places the student in reasonable fear or harm to the student's self or damage to the student's property; (c) creates a hostile environment at school for the student; (d) infringes on the rights of the student at school; or (e) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process of the orderly operations of the school.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic communication, including, but not limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence or any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic, or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages, text messages, social media comments, social media direct messages, or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying includes, but is not limited to, the distribution by electronic means of a communication to one or more than one person, or the posting or materials on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions included in the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying can also include, but not be limited to: (a) the creation of web pages, blogs, or accounts in which the creator assumes the

identity of another person, and (b) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of the posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation constitutes bullying conduct as defined above.

A hostile environment refers to a situation in which certain acts of misconduct cause the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or persuasive so as to alter the conditions of a student's learning environment.

Students found to have engaged in bullying, harassment, or intimidation are subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Students who repeatedly commit acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation will face serious disciplinary consequences, potentially to include suspension or dismissal. To the extent they are not dismissed, students who commit acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation shall receive appropriate educational or therapeutic services concerning bullying prevention.

Students are prohibited from making false reports of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Students found to have made false reports of bullying, harassment, or intimidation are subject to potential discipline, and may receive appropriate education or therapeutic services.

Any student who believes they have been subjected to bullying, harassment, or intimidation should make a report to the school's Academic Director, Head of School, or the student's Class Teacher. Regardless of by whom received, any and all reports of bullying, harassment, or intimidation shall be promptly relayed to the school's Head of School. The school will use best efforts to provide notice of alleged bullying, harassment, or intimidation: (a) to a parent or guardian of the alleged victim, within 3 business days after the date of reporting; (b) to a parent or guardian of the alleged perpetrator, within 5 business days after the date of reporting. Waldorf will promptly investigate any report of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, by speaking with the involved persons and reviewing any pertinent materials. In addressing reports of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, Waldorf shall take reasonable steps to try to protect victims from any additional acts of bullying, intimidation, or harassment.

Waldorf's School Counselor is available to provide support services and references for further resources to: (a) any student who has been subjected to bullying, harassment, or intimidation; (b) any student who has been accused of bullying, intimidation, or harassment; and (c) any student who has been a bystander to bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

Bullying is the harassment of another or others through physical violence, threats of physical violence, physical or verbal intimidation and purposeful interference with another's activities or property that is repeated over time. Bullying may also manifest as verbal abuse, taunts, threats, use of inappropriate language, through the use of emails, social networks, text messages or any other technology, and the continued, mean-spirited exclusion or snubbing of others, as well as negative gossip about others. A bully may be the person who engages in these activities against another, or one who compels someone else to engage in these activities aimed at another.

ANTI-BIAS POLICY

We believe that all members of the community—students, faculty, staff, parents, and volunteers—have the right to feel safe and to have their culture and identity acknowledged and respected. We

recognize the importance of supporting the diversity of experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge, and skills. Everyone in the community has an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance and all who witness or have reliable information about a student, faculty, or staff member, being subjected to harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying, whether verbal or physical, are responsible to report these incidents, defined here forth as bias incidents.

BIAS INCIDENTS

A bias incident often involves noncriminal conduct motivated by hatred, prejudice, or bigotry and directed towards any individual because of legally protected characteristics. Bias incidents can include the use of hateful imagery, language, or actions.

DEFINITION OF A BIAS INCIDENT

Harmful acts, conscious or unconscious, based on race, ethnicity, color, sex, gender identity or expression, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, health, body type, language, family constellation, learning difference, and/or culture. Both intentional and unintentional mistreatments based on these categories will be responded to in order to protect and educate all students, understanding that people unconsciously use biased language, stereotypical thinking, and prejudices. Educators model non-defensive responses when acknowledging bias with the assumption that goodwill is the common practice within the classroom community.

Harmful acts prohibited by the school may include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical Aggression:** physical harm or destroying property.
- **Social Aggression:** rumors, identity-based slurs, or exclusion from a group.
- **Verbal Aggression:** name calling, teasing, or threatening any of the above implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, achievements, or other school matters.
- **Intimidation:** phone calls, mean tricks, or taking possessions, etc.
- **Written Aggression:** threatening notes or graffiti, text message, or direct message.
- **Sexual Harassment:** comments or actions of a sexual nature that make the recipient uncomfortable.
- **Racial, Cultural, or Ethnic Harassment:** comments or actions containing racial or ethnic overtones (direct or indirect) that make the recipient uncomfortable.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents or legal guardians, employees, and all unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with Waldorf are hereby notified that Waldorf does not discriminate on the basis of sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual harassment and sexual violence), in the administration of its educational program, admission policies, financial aid policies, employment practices and other school-administered programs. All students, employees or applicants, or third parties are protected from sex discrimination taking place in Waldorf-sponsored programs and activities, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, whether that discrimination comes from a Waldorf employee, fellow student, or a third party. This policy applies to all of Waldorf's education programs and

activities, whether those occur on Waldorf's facilities, a school bus, another location sponsored by the school, or elsewhere (e.g., field trip).

II. **DEFINITIONS**

Discrimination:

Conferring benefits upon, refusing, or denying benefits to, or providing different treatment to a person or group of people on the basis of sex.

Sexual harassment:

The faculty actively works with the students at all ages, and in age-appropriate manner to support the development of a healthy social group. The Waldorf School of Baltimore supports all laws designed to protect our students from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment may be defined as: Any form of unwelcome sexual behavior or conduct, imposed by one person upon another. Normally, sexual harassment requires a pattern of behavior. However, there are situations in which one serious incident can constitute harassment.

Two types of sexual harassment are recognized:

1. The requiring or soliciting of sexual favors through the use of power.
2. Any unwelcome or communication or conduct of a sexual nature.

Anytime a student feels they are being sexually harassed by another student it should be reported to a faculty member or the Academic Director.

Student Support

EVALUATION AND EXTRA EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT POLICY

The Waldorf School of Baltimore enrolls students with a range of abilities, developmental levels, and learning styles. Although the school cannot accommodate all children, it may provide some limited supplementary services and accommodations, consistent with School resources. Please reach out to Academic Director, Dr. Jennifer Larson, jl Larson@twsb.org with student learning needs, evaluations from medical professionals, and any concerns.

Classroom accommodations and extra support will be developed by the Student Support Group (SSG) in collaboration with the faculty, family, and educational professionals, if involved.

At times, approved assistive technology devices are provided and cared for by the family (see Assistive Technology Policy). Outside therapies may be recommended by the SSG. If extra support, accommodations, and/or outside professional resources are not adequately addressing the learning or social-emotional needs, it may be determined that the child will be better served in a smaller setting or different program.

STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP (SSG)

The Student Support Group (SSG) coordinates and monitors internal and external resources and classroom accommodations for students identified as needing extra support. Classroom

accommodations and extra support will be developed in collaboration between the SSG, teachers, family, and educational professionals. Outside tutoring or other therapies may be recommended. The SSG coordinates/provides resources and tracks the progress of all students identified as needing extra support. Accommodations and extra services are documented in a Student Learning Profile which is shared with the teachers and staff that work with the student. SSG works out of the Kim John Payne, Integrated Student Support (ISS) program, and other supplementary strategies.

STUDENT SUPPORT COORDINATOR

The school's Student Support Coordinator manages communication and data tracking between the teachers, parents, school staff, and outside vendors to ensure that students' needs can be reported and addressed effectively.

ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONISTS

The school's interventionists work with small groups of students (or at times, one-on-one) who need extra support with developing their academic skills. Referrals for intervention can be made by parents or school staff to the Student Support Coordinator.

EXTRA LESSON TEACHER

The Extra Lesson Teacher offers educational exercise in movement, form drawing, and painting for individuals or class groups to strengthen spatial orientation, balance, and movement coordination to support the learning process.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR

The school counselor is a licensed practitioner who supports the students, faculty, and families as it relates to a student's healthy social emotional development by leading proactive social emotional learning opportunities and responding to students who may be experiencing a crisis.

SOCIAL INCLUSION APPROACH & RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

It is our goal to assist students to resolve and learn from their social conflicts. The Social Inclusion Approach provides a structure that supports the possibility of bringing all students involved in a social difficulty to a greater awareness of the implications of their actions and lays the foundation for change to improve the situation.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORS OF CONCERN

Along with behavior that impacts peers and school culture, students may also exhibit behaviors that significantly impact their own internal state, requiring support. Below are some examples. The presence of one isolated behavior does not necessarily indicate a need for intervention. When concerns are persistent, increase in frequency or intensity, interfere with learning, relationships, or daily functioning, or represent a significant change from a student's typical presentation, staff are encouraged to consult with the Student Support Group. Early collaboration allows concerns to be explored before they become more significant and supports a proactive, relationship-based approach to student well-being.

- Difficulty separating from caregivers or transitioning into the school day that persists beyond what would typically be expected.
- Persistent anxiety, excessive worry, fearfulness, or distress that interferes with participation in classroom or school activities.

- Frequent physical complaints (e.g., headaches, stomachaches, or visits to the health office) when no medical cause is apparent and concerns appear related to emotional distress.
- Difficulty adapting to changes in routine, transitions, or unexpected events
- Frequent reassurance seeking, perfectionism, or fear of making mistakes that limits independence or participation.
- Repetitive thoughts, behaviors, or rituals that interfere with learning, social relationships, or daily functioning
- Intense emotional reactions that occur frequently, are difficult to recover from, or appear disproportionate to the situation.
- Persistent negative self-talk, excessive self-criticism, expressions of hopelessness, or a noticeable decline in self-confidence.
- Marked changes in peer relationships, increasing social isolation, or difficulty developing or maintaining healthy connections with others.
- Any statements or behaviors suggesting a risk of self-harm or suicide should be addressed immediately in accordance with established school safety procedures.

STUDENT SUPPORT PROCESS FOR BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

At the Waldorf School of Baltimore, our goal is to support the development of self-discipline and assist students to resolve and learn from their social conflicts. Conflicts happen every day and provide opportunities to learn about ourselves and others. We are committed to a community that promotes peaceful solutions.

The overall goal of discipline is to provide a safe and secure school environment and aid in the moral development of the child. The school communicates with parents and takes action to address behavior that causes physical injury, emotional distress or disruption of student education. Discipline at the Waldorf School of Baltimore is an important, integral part of the curriculum.

Students need age-appropriate guidance and consequences to develop the following:

- Respect for self, teachers, staff, and other students
- Respect for the classroom and the school rules and policies
- Appropriate use and care of materials
- Problem-solving skills

The goal of the student support process is to identify and respond to students' areas of need through a collaborative and developmentally informed approach, ensuring that each child receives the support necessary to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The goal of a disciplinary response in any situation is to prevent disruption of student education and to promote the development of a positive school culture.

Disciplinary responses help the students:

- Understand why behavior is unacceptable and the harm it causes or has caused.
- Identify what could have been done differently in the same situation.
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Learn appropriate social strategies and skills to use in the future

The disciplinary response to any violation of the school-wide behavior expectations and norms draws on the professional judgement of the teachers and administrators for making such a decision, using a range of discipline management techniques that take into account the nature of the behavior, the age of the child, and the needs of the class as a community.

Though we cannot resolve all difficulties to the satisfaction of all parties, we strive to address issues promptly as they arise and to keep parents informed of our progress through the process of addressing student behavioral concerns.

TERMS TO KNOW

Behavioral Notice of Concern

The Academic Director sends a Behavioral Notice of Concern to notify parents and guardians of particular issues or patterns in the student's behavior at school. If a student has a pattern of violating any of our school-wide behavior expectations, the Academic Director will contact their parent/guardian with a Behavioral Notice of Concern and may schedule an initial parent conference. Additional disciplinary actions may also occur (see Behavioral Concern Response Levels below). A copy of the Behavioral Notice of Concern is placed in the student's file.

Incident Report

An Incident Report is a written communication to parents/guardians that will be issued as a Level 3 response for a single behavioral incident. Additional disciplinary actions may also occur (see Behavioral Concern Response Levels below). A copy of the Incident Report is placed in the student's file.

Modified Schedule

Occasionally, the length of the child's day may be modified. A successful shortened day is a tool which is used to help a child whose behavior indicates that they may not be quite ready for a full-morning or full-day experience.

Reflection Room (Grades 5-8)

The Reflection Room is a quiet space for students to consider their actions, understand the consequences of their behaviors, and develop strategies for improvement. It encourages mindfulness and self-awareness, fostering a deeper understanding of oneself and one's impact on others. The Reflection Room is monitored by the School Counselor and/or the Academic Director and takes place during lunch recess. Students complete a reflection activity, discuss their actions with an administrator, set goals for their behavior, and participate in meaningful work. Families receive communication through email about a student's visit to the Reflection Room. If a student receives multiple visits to the Reflection Room, an administrator will reach out to the parent and teacher for a meeting to discuss how to support the student's behavior in class. Students may also voluntarily refer themselves to the Reflection Room for behavioral support and self-reflection.

Student Observation

As part of a Level 2 or Level 3 response, an administrator or a member of the SSG may conduct an observation of a student's classroom behavior and interactions for the purpose of advising teachers

and parents in providing additional behavioral support.

CHILDREN'S GARDEN BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS

These behaviors are intended as examples. Other behaviors not listed may incur the same responses.

Level 1: Non-participation (ex. refusing to join in circle time or follow basic directions), disruptive behavior (ex. waking others during rest time, talking over teacher or interrupting), name-calling.

Level 2: Overstepping others' physical boundaries, overly aggressive play (ex. pushing, grabbing objects out of others' hands), exclusive behavior (ex. seeking to leave others out of play or conversations), teasing, taunting.

Level 3: Destroying property, elopement on campus (ex. running away from teachers, not coming when called), biting, spitting, pinching, hitting/shoving, unsafe behaviors, incidents of racism/ bias.

Level 4: Elopement off campus, extreme physical aggression, extreme overstepping of physical boundaries, verbal aggression.

PLEASE NOTE: If there is shown to be a documented pattern of any of these levels of behavior, families will be **required** to attend a student support meeting with the Classroom Teacher, counselor, Academic Director, and any other appropriate teachers/administrators.

CHILDREN'S GARDEN BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES

In Children's Garden classrooms, the consistency of a daily rhythm allows the children to know, out of habit, what is expected of them at any given time.

Responses to **Level 1 and 2** behaviors will be addressed through teacher redirection of students using redirection to a more positive behavior, reparative activities, loss of privileges, and supervised removal from class for a short period.

PLEASE NOTE: In instances of **Level 3** behavior, repeated **Level 1 or 2** behavior, or behavior that seriously impacts the safety of the classroom, the student will be:

1. Removed from the classroom to process their behavior and gain strategies for repair.
2. If re-entry is not possible or not advisable due to the nature of the behavior, parents/guardians will be notified and **required** to pick up their child.
3. If the behavior continues, a student support meeting and a plan of action will be coordinated by the Student Support Group and Academic Director to create a clearer picture of what is triggering the behavior and the best course of action to support the student within the classroom. This plan of action may result in a Modified Schedule in some instances.

PLEASE NOTE: In some cases, it will be required that the student remain at home until a plan of action is developed.

Sometimes, children can also be supported by changes in diet, daily routines, or adjustments to other habits. Parents/Guardians can be of assistance by informing teachers of changes at home that may result in atypical behaviors by their child.

PLEASE NOTE: Dismissal from the school may become necessary in cases of:

1. **Level 4** behavior
2. Family failure to abide by school guidelines or support plan requirements
3. Interventions at the school level are shown to be ineffective in addressing the student's behavior

GRADES 1-5 BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS AND RESPONSES

These behaviors are intended as examples. Other behaviors not listed may incur the same responses. **Repeated Level 1 behaviors may incur Level 2 responses.**

LEVEL 1

Behavior Examples: Calling out, disruptive behavior, non-participation (ex. refusing to follow directions), name-calling.

Level 1 Responses:

When a **Level 1** incident occurs, teachers will use a variety of methods to encourage students in appropriate behavior. Strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Redirection to a more positive behavior
- Meaningful work
- Alternative seating in the classroom
- Taking a movement break
- Supervised removal from classroom for a short period
- Conversation with the student and/or the student's parents
- Artistic exercises/stories

Level 2

Behavior Examples: Profanity, disregard for established classroom agreements, minor vandalism, minor theft, minor dishonesty, exclusive behavior (ex. seeking to leave others out of play or conversations), teasing, taunting.

Level 2 Responses:

When a **Level 2** incident occurs, teachers will use a variety of methods to encourage students in appropriate behavior using **Level 1 or Level 2 responses**. Responses may include:

- Parent phone call/email
- Reflection Room (5th grade)
- Meaningful work
- Student observation by an administrator or SSG member

Level 3

Behavior Examples: Overstepping physical boundaries, overly aggressive play, tantrum (ex: unable to de-escalate without significant adult intervention), verbal and physical aggression, bullying, cheating, elopement on campus, verbal or physical threats, unsafe behaviors, sexual advances, destroying property, incidents of racism/bias.

Level 3 Responses:

Parents will be notified as soon as possible through an Incident Report. These behaviors will be referred to an administrator for determination of appropriate disciplinary measures. Additional responses may include but are not limited to:

- Incident Report
- Parent conference
- Reflection Room (5th grade)
- Early dismissal during the school day AND the student may be required to remain home until a meeting is scheduled with parents to discuss a plan of action and re-entry terms.
- Suspension

Level 4

Behavior Examples: Elopement off campus, bringing weapons or illegal substances to school with intent, extreme threats against the campus or individuals, intentional injury, sexual assault, major vandalism, major destruction of property.

Level 4 Responses:

These behaviors will be immediately addressed by the Academic Director and/or Head of School. Students may be suspended from school until appropriate action has been decided. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Suspension
- Expulsion

PLEASE NOTE: When a student's behavior seriously impacts the safety of themselves or others, such as verbal or physical aggression, bodily injury, or unsafe behavior, the student will be:

1. Removed from the classroom to process their behavior and gain strategies for repair.
2. Separated from impacted student(s) until deemed appropriate.
3. If re-entry to the classroom is not possible, parents/guardians will be notified and **required** to pick up their child.
4. If the behavior continues, a student support meeting will be scheduled and a plan of action will be coordinated by the Academic Director and other adults to create a clearer picture of what is triggering the behavior and the best course of action to support the student within the classroom. *In some cases, it will be required that the student remain at home until a plan of action is developed.*

PLEASE NOTE: If there is shown to be a documented pattern of any of these levels of behavior, parents will be **required** to attend a student support meeting with the classroom teacher, guidance counselor, Academic Director, and any other appropriate teachers/administrators.

GRADES 6-8 BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS AND RESPONSES

Middle School students are the leaders of our school, and we expect that they would conduct themselves in a manner worthy of emulation by their peers and younger students alike. The following behaviors are intended as examples. Other behaviors not listed may incur the same responses.

Level 1

Behavior Examples: Calling out, off-task behavior, unprepared with classroom materials, dress code infractions.

Level 1 Responses:

When a **Level 1** incident occurs, teachers will use a variety of methods to encourage students in appropriate behavior. Strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Redirection to a more positive behavior
- Meaningful work
- Alternative seating in the classroom
- Taking a movement break
- Supervised removal from class for a short period
- Conversation with the student and/or the student's parents
- Artistic exercises/stories

Level 2

Behavior Examples: Disregarding established classroom agreements, inappropriate responses to teachers when given directions, exclusive behavior (ex. seeking to leave others out of social interactions), disruptive behavior, teasing or taunting other students or teachers, unauthorized cell phone or smart watch possession or use during the school day.

Level 2 Responses:

When a **Level 2** incident occurs, teachers will use a variety of methods to encourage students in appropriate behavior using **Level 1** strategies. Responses may include:

- Parent phone call
- Reflection Room
- Meaningful work
- Student observation by an administrator or SSG member

PLEASE NOTE: Repeated **Level 1** behaviors may incur a **Level 2** response.

Level 3

Behavior Examples: Overstepping physical boundaries, escalated behaviors, verbal and physical aggression, bullying/cyberbullying, cheating/plagiarism, elopement on campus, verbal or physical threats, unsafe behaviors, sexual advances, minor vandalism or destroying property, theft, dishonesty, inappropriate use of school or personal electronic devices, racism/bias incidents.

Level 3 Responses:

These behaviors will be referred to an administrator for determination of appropriate disciplinary measures. Parents will be notified as soon as possible. Responses may include but are not limited to:

- Incident Report
- Parent conference
- Reflection Room
- Early dismissal during the school day AND the student may be required to remain home until a meeting is scheduled with parents to discuss a plan of action and re-entry terms.
- Suspension

Level 4

Behavior Examples: Elopement off campus, bringing weapons or illegal substances to school, extreme threats against the campus or individuals, intentional injury, sexual assault, major vandalism or major destruction of property.

Level 4 Responses:

These behaviors will be immediately handled by the Academic Director and/or Head of School. Students may be suspended from school until appropriate action has been decided.

Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Suspension
- Expulsion

PLEASE NOTE: When a student's behavior seriously impacts the safety of themselves or others, such as verbal or physical aggression, bodily injury, or unsafe behavior, the student will be:

- Removed from the classroom to process their behavior and gain strategies for repair.
- Separated from impacted student(s) until deemed appropriate.
- If re-entry to the classroom is not possible, parents/guardians will be notified and **required** to pick up their child.
- If the behavior continues, a student support meeting will be scheduled and a plan of action will be coordinated by the Academic Director and other adults to create a clearer picture of what is triggering the behavior and the best course of action to support the student within the classroom. *In some cases, it will be required that the student remain at home until a plan of action is developed.*

PLEASE NOTE: If there is shown to be a documented pattern of any of these levels of behavior, parents will be **required** to attend a student support meeting with the classroom teacher, guidance counselor, Academic Director, and any other appropriate teachers/administrators.

MIDDLE SCHOOL HONOR CODE

- At the Waldorf School of Baltimore, students are expected to be honest and respectful in their interactions and relationships with peers and teachers. By middle school, students are expected to understand what constitutes unacceptable behavior and refrain from acts of bias or harassment.

- Middle school students are expected to be able to walk between classes independently and must inform and request permission of the teacher if their location needs to be changed unexpectedly.
- Middle school students are expected to adhere to the Acceptable Technology Use policy both on and off campus.
- All of a student's work is expected to be their own, except when otherwise directed (for example, group homework projects). Parent or guardian signatures on student work must be genuine.

Children's Garden Additional Details

CUBBY SUPPLIES

- We ask that on the first day of school you bring two full changes of clothes for your child's cubby.
- If your child is staying a full day, they will also need a nap role or a small sheet and pillow (not full-sized, please) and a small blanket to rest on. Please do not send large sleeping bags.
- Please follow the same guidelines for nap supplies as for clothing—no media-related pictures or logos.
- Full-day children have lunch in the Children's Garden classrooms, followed by rest time. The Children's Garden faculty will provide a list of supplies that are needed from home for full-day children.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

- An individual home or school visit is helpful in establishing a relationship between your child and the teacher and easing the transition into the first days of school.
- This also provides an opportunity for parents to ask questions.
- A teacher will visit with all students who are new to the class, this is generally your child's Lead Teacher.

BRINGING THINGS FROM HOME

It is natural for children to wish to show friends things that are precious to them. This can be encouraged when friends visit at home. We have found, however, that bringing toys, books, or electronic devices to school from home can create situations involving possessiveness, competition, anxiety, lost items, and other difficulties. We ask that home toys stay at home.

CELL PHONE AND MOBILE DEVICE USE POLICY

- Waldorf School of Baltimore is a cellphone-free zone in classrooms and common areas.

- If you need to use your cellphone, please do so outside or ask Reception for an appropriate location.
- Children may not use cell phones at school at any time. (Please see the section on “Bringing Things from Home.”)

FESTIVALS

In the Children’s Garden, we present seasonal pictures through our celebrations. We create an experience of these seasonal changes through our stories, circle time, and craft projects. These are brought to fruition by our festivals—the Autumn Festival, the Lantern Walk, the Winter Garden, and the Spring Festival, as well as other school-wide festivals. Further information will be provided by your teacher.

Our teachers also welcome families to bring traditions and festivals from their own experience to the class. This is an important opportunity for our community to be part of the classroom experience and to bring the rich diversity of life to the children within our school. Teachers work with the parents to bring festivals in an age-appropriate way. Some school festivals and assemblies are appropriate for all ages and all school families are welcome to attend. Details are announced in the *Waldorf Weekly*.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special events in the Children’s Garden. The parents of the birthday child are invited to come to school for the celebration. While Children’s Garden or younger siblings are warmly invited, Elementary age siblings should remain with their class. Each class has its own way of celebrating that is consistent with the developmental needs of the children. The teacher will contact you several weeks before your child’s celebration to make arrangements. Each class makes arrangements to celebrate summer birthdays during the school year.

PLAYDATES

Play dates provide opportunities for children and parents to make connections and build community. Being sensitive to each other’s needs and traditions is an important part of educating children, and time at others’ homes can offer a chance for families to accommodate different choices. Food, and when and whether to introduce media and screen time, are just two important topics to discuss between parents who arrange play dates.

- Legal constraints prohibit the use of indoor school facilities for informal playgroups. Children may play outdoors in the schoolyard under adult supervision when school classes or the Forest Explorers Aftercare Program are not using the space.
- A written note must come to school with your child if a person other than one previously authorized will pick up your child.
- If this is a first school experience, some children will be very tired at the beginning of the school year and need to refresh with time alone at home. Please consider refraining from arranging play dates and social outings for the first month of school. Often, after a couple of months of school, children are ready to go home with new friends.

SCREEN TIME AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Early childhood is a time for learning through doing. It is for experiencing the wonders of nature, social growth, creative play, and developing imagination. Experience and recent research have shown that children with less exposure to electronic media during their free time are more successful in school and are better able to imagine, create, and focus during their early years. The aim in reducing children's media exposure is to encourage and provide them with opportunities to develop a lively interest in peers, family members, and their immediate environment – thereby improving interpersonal communication and fostering a deeper connection to the world around them.

We ask that no media or electronic devices be used during the school week, especially before school and before bedtime. Limiting or eliminating these electronic devices can greatly support a young child's development. Articles and research about this topic are available in the Children's Garden.

We recognize the difficulties many parents encounter in minimizing their children's exposure to electronic media and offer support in developing alternative activities. We urge parents to follow the developmental guidelines for media use, available as an addendum to the Handbook.

Grades (1-8) Additional Details

HOMEWORK

Homework is regularly assigned in grades 5-8. Small amounts of homework are often assigned in grades 3-4 to prepare students for this expectation. Please note that all assignments are important; practicing an instrument is as important as doing a math or language assignment.

Homework is generally assigned in such a way that students can accomplish it on their own. Class teachers and subject teachers work to coordinate assignments so that work is spread out over the week. As a general guideline, teachers calculate that up to about fifteen minutes times the number of the grade is an appropriate amount of time for a student to spend per day on homework; thus, a fifth grader could have up to seventy-five minutes of homework on some days in addition to their musical instrument practice. If you feel that your child is spending too much or too little time on homework or if you have any questions concerning homework, please contact your child's teacher. The goals of homework are to:

- Reinforce concepts and practice skills.
- Build organization and self-discipline.
- Encourage creativity and reflection.
- Bring learning into the home and daily life.

Teachers offer several types of support to students and parents in the realm of homework, which include but are not limited to:

- Providing planners and time to write down assignments for students in grades 4-8.
- Giving class time to begin assignments as appropriate.

- Requiring parent/guardian initials on assignments or in the student planner for the purpose of home-school communication and accountability.
- Providing academic support during Middle School Homework Club, which is held during the school day.

Parents can support their children's completion of assignments by:

- Providing a quiet, distraction-free homework space
- Encouraging a positive attitude toward learning and responsibility

We take homework seriously and understand it to be an important part of the educational process. Students who do not complete homework assignments are required to attend Homework Club. Homework Club is held during lunch recess from 12:35 p.m.-12:55 p.m. each day for middle school students and is supervised by a teacher. Students are required to arrive on time, bring all necessary work and materials, and work quietly. At the teacher's discretion, students may go to Homework Club to make up missed assignments or complete unfinished work.

A teacher may choose to excuse a student from Homework Club under valid extenuating circumstances. In this case, the student is expected to complete and submit the assignment according to the teacher's instructions. If a student is consistently unable to complete homework assignments, teachers will notify families with the goal of working together to support the student's homework habit development.

FESTIVALS & CELEBRATIONS

Waldorf education highly values the celebration of festivals. Every season offers its mysteries and magic, and each festival celebrates a different season as a living calendar. This is in harmony with nature and reinforces our rhythmic relationship with the natural world. It also gives us an opportunity to connect with the universal human tradition of gathering to celebrate in community. We are fortunate to have a diverse population whose members celebrate many festivals. Parents are encouraged to work with teachers to develop age-appropriate activities to share their traditions in the classrooms.

LOST & FOUND

- Lost & Found items are collected near the stairwell on the garage level. Items found in Forest Explorers Aftercare are stored outdoors in bins next to the Cherry Tree Play Yard.
- Items not claimed are donated to charity. Please check it regularly!

BIRTHDAYS

- Birthdays may be celebrated in all grades. Discuss with the Class Teacher how your child's birthday may be celebrated.
- Children's Garden has planned birthday celebrations for each student. While Children's Garden or younger siblings are warmly invited, Elementary age siblings should remain with their class.

Consider celebrating a birthday by having your child donate a book in their name to our library! Our Librarian will be happy to guide you as you add to the collection.

FORMER STUDENTS VISITING

We welcome visits to the school by former students at the discretion of the Academic Director who will facilitate the visit with the faculty.

- Visits must be arranged in advance.
- The Alum or for a minor the parent must stop at the front desk and fill out a Visitor Emergency Contact Form, available on the school website and at the reception desk.
- Parents will be called and asked to pick up their child if behavior is disruptive.

DAY AND OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIPS – STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

- Fully complete Medication Administration Authorization Forms. See *WSB Safe and Sound section—Student Health Policies* section for details.
- School behavior and discipline policies are in effect during field trips

Overnight field trips start in 3rd grade and are an important and required part of the curriculum. In addition to the complete Medication and Administration Authorization Forms, parents are required to fill out and return Permission Forms by the deadline which is in advance of the trip. No child may participate without a signed permission slip.

CHAPERONE GUIDELINES FOR ALL FIELD TRIPS

Teachers may approach parents to chaperone on day and/or overnight field trips. Our chaperone policies reflect our primary concern of safeguarding the children. Background checks for parent chaperones are required.

Chaperones should know and abide by the following expectations:

- The teacher needs to know where everyone is at all times. Chaperones must check with the teacher(s) if a group plans to leave the designated area for any reason.
- Chaperones will follow the schedule and duties for the activities as outlined by the teacher.
- Any concerns or suggestions must be voiced privately to the class teacher during field trips. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on any WSB field trip.
- No firearms or weapons are allowed on field trips or at any WSB activity on or off campus.
- Confidentiality is required for any student medical or behavioral issues. Check with the Class Teacher if in doubt.
- Please respect the authority of group leaders by not “fringe talking;” if adults are speaking to one another at the edges of the group, children may be distracted and unable to focus on the leader.
- Help the group move at a reasonable pace. Encourage the students to stay together and keep them from lagging behind or shooting ahead.
- Ensure that the students do not litter, only handle what is allowed, and do not take anything from the area being visited. When we leave, any place should be cleaner than when we arrived. We support the “Leave no Trace” philosophy on all our camping trips.
- The class must remain together as a large group or in assigned smaller groups.
- Do not stop to buy treats such as drinks or ice cream for your group.
- On all overnight field trips and some day trips adult chaperones must successfully complete a background check. Contact the Head of School for more details.

TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS

School bus or public transport are used as transportation for field trips. Parents driving students is permissible, providing certain criteria are met. See the Head of School or Finance Director.

Under most circumstances school employees may not transport students in their own vehicles. Employees who attend a trip in their capacity as a parent may transport their own child only, they may not transport another student. Vehicles owned by an employee may not be used to transport students on a school-sponsored event.

We appreciate your willingness to help as a chaperone. By chaperoning you are modeling for the children how parents support the teacher and class. You are also helping enrich the curriculum. Your help often makes field trips possible.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Our computer resources and student's personal technology may not be used to access and/or publish defamatory, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, identity biased, bullying, racially offensive, or illegal material. Students who knowingly bring such materials into the school community will be dealt with according to the school's discipline policies. These expectations extend to social networking sites, or wherever the school community or its name is invoked. While we address such misuses and abuses in our community, we strongly recommend that parents discuss appropriate computer usage with their student(s).

Additional School Programs

AFTERSCHOOL SPORTS PROGRAM

- The AfterSchool Sports program offers seasonal sports: soccer, basketball, circus arts, and track & field; and may include other activities.
- The program runs Monday through Thursday, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Students may be enrolled in Forest Explorers Aftercare for extended supervision. Parents must make contact with the supervising adult when picking up their children.
- After School Sports is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders. 5th Graders may also join, at the discretion of the Athletics Coordinator.
- Registration is required for each session, and fees vary accordingly.
- We participate in the annual Basketball Tournament held each winter at the Green Meadow Waldorf School, Chestnut Ridge, NY.

Registration for sports programs is emailed to parents, and links made available in the *Waldorf Weekly*.

FOREST EXPLORERS AFTERCARE PROGRAM

- The school offers an Aftercare program for children enrolled in Preschool through Grade 8. If a child is not potty-trained, a conversation must be had with the Academic Director before enrolling.

- Families register and pay for aftercare online through PCR.

The Waldorf School of Baltimore recognizes that today's children benefit from spending quality time in natural environments. The Forest Explorers Aftercare Program is designed to provide a safe space for children to cultivate a deep bond with the natural world. Children enrolled in the program spend most of their time in the forest surrounding our school. Free play, gardening, and some guided exploration of the forest are key aspects of the program. We spend time outside every day, rain, snow, or shine.

The Forest Explorers Aftercare Program:

- Provides a safe, caring, and engaging environment for children needing after school care;
- Provides a secure, comfortable transition from the regular school day to aftercare;
- Supports children in becoming confident and comfortable in the natural environment;
- Provides opportunities for children to develop a deeper understanding of their relationship with the environment through nature play, crafts, and exploration;
- Provides an opportunity for mixed age groups to interact, learn, and play together.

Hours of Operation:

- The program starts on the first day of school and ends on the penultimate day of the year; there is no Forest Explorers Aftercare Program on the final day of school.
- Aftercare is provided from 3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. on school days, after which time tiered late fees are charged.

Our Philosophy

At the Waldorf School of Baltimore, we believe in protecting and preserving the *real-time, relational*, and *embodied* nature of childhood. Our media guidelines grow out of this commitment and support families in making thoughtful, developmentally-appropriate choices that align with the needs of the growing child and the values of our school community.

Waldorf education is rooted in a deep understanding of child development. Children learn primarily through imitation, movement, play, and direct human connection. We seek to nurture imagination, sensory integration, and the development of foundational capacities for life-long learning. Screen-based media can interfere with this natural developmental process. Therefore, our media guidelines reflect both our pedagogical commitment and our care for the healthy growth of the young child.

We are committed to nurturing a real-world, play-based childhood rooted in the kinds of human relationships and social interactions that support healthy development. In our classrooms and outdoor spaces, children engage with others in ways that are *embodied*—using their whole selves to communicate, becoming attuned to the gestures, expressions, and rhythms of those around them. These interactions are *synchronous*, happening in real time, with subtle cues guiding natural turn-taking and shared attention. Communication is typically *one-to-one* or *one-to-a-few*, allowing children to be fully present in each moment of connection. And these interactions occur within a stable, nurturing *community*—one with a high bar for entry and exit—where children, teachers, and families invest in long-term relationships and work to repair and grow through conflict.

In contrast, today's phone- and internet-based, virtual childhood—common only in recent decades—reflects very different qualities. It is *disembodied*, with little or no physical presence, and sometimes involves artificial intelligences as communication partners. It is largely *asynchronous*, happening through text messages, posts, or comments that remove the immediacy and nuance of face-to-face exchange. Much of this communication is *broadcast-oriented*, involving one-to-many interactions across large and transient audiences, often with multiple conversations unfolding at once. These virtual communities typically have a low bar for entry and exit, making it easy to block, ignore, or disconnect when challenges arise—contributing to relationships that are often short-lived and easily discarded.

As educators, we see the direct result of over exposure to screens in the high incidences of anxiety and depression in teens and even younger children. We are not doing our children any favors by giving them free reign of screen time, and in fact, statistics show more and more that it is causing harm.

Our Request to Families

To support your child's development and to create a shared culture of childhood in our community, we ask that families commit to the following principles:

1. Honor the Child's Right to Direct Experience

- Children thrive on real-world, sensory-rich experiences. Media often replaces direct experience with secondhand impressions.
- We encourage outdoor time, imaginative play, handcrafts, domestic activities, and relationship-based learning instead of screen-based content.

2. Minimize Screen Exposure

- For children under 7 years old, we strongly recommend eliminating or intentionally and strongly limiting screen exposure, including television, streaming content, video games, smartphones, and tablets.
- For elementary and middle school students, we strongly recommend limited and guided usage of screens and restrictions on social media and algorithm-driven content.

3. Model Mindful Media Habits

- Children imitate adult behavior. Please be mindful of phone and screen use in your child's presence—especially during meals, bedtime routines, and moments of connection.
- Unless attending to a critical need, please keep phones away in the school building and on campus to allow for full presence and community connection.

4. Maintain a Media-Free Morning and Evening Rhythm

- Establish predictable, screen-free morning routines that help your child enter the day calmly and confidently.
- End the day with connection, warmth, stories, and quiet. Screens in the evening can interfere with healthy sleep and emotional regulation.

5. Observe Screen-Free School Events

- School events, festivals, and classroom gatherings are intended to be screen-free for children and adults alike.
- Please do not take photos or videos during school activities unless explicitly invited to do by school staff or teachers.

6. Communicate Openly with Teachers

- If your family is navigating challenges related to media use, we encourage open, non-judgmental dialogue with your child's teacher. We ask that you consider seriously any feedback from your child's teacher about issues your child's media exposure is bringing to the class community. We understand that each family's context is unique, and we are here to support you, as well as create experiences for all of the children that reflect our pedagogy and philosophy.

How To Begin the Return to a "Play-Based" Childhood

Children's Garden

- **Give children far more time playing with other children.** This play should ideally be outdoors, in mixed age groups, with little or no adult supervision (which is the way most parents grew up, at least through the 1980s).

Elementary/Middle Grades

- **Look for more ways to embed children in stable real-world communities.** Online networks are not nearly as binding or satisfying.
- **Don't give a smartphone as the first phone.** Give a phone or watch that is specialized for communication, not for internet-based apps.
- **Don't give a smartphone until high school (roughly age 14).** This is much easier to do, *if* many of your child's friends' parents are doing the same thing.

High School

- **Delay participating in algorithm-driven content and opening of accounts on nearly all social media platforms until at least the beginning of high school (roughly age 16).** This will become easier to do if we can support legislators who are trying to raise the age of "internet adulthood" from today's 13 (with no verification) to 16 (with mandatory age verification).

Conclusion

By upholding mindful media habits at home and at school and by actively encouraging tactile, real-world social experiences, we help create a haven for children—a space where imagination grows, where relationships are central, and where the foundation for healthy learning and living is laid. Our aim to slowly and intentionally introduce media and technology to be used as a resource and a tool within a larger context of human communication paves the way for a healthy relationship to media and technology in the future.

We appreciate your partnership in this essential aspect of Waldorf education.

With warmth and gratitude,

The Faculty and Staff of Waldorf School of Baltimore

Resources

The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness by Jonathan Haidt, © 2024 was greatly referenced for this document

<https://www.anxiousgeneration.com/>

[Let Grow organization](#)

[Defending the Early Years' Young Children in the Digital Age: A Parents' Guide](#)

Diana Graber, founder of our middle school's Cyber Civics curriculum.

[NIH: Effects of Excessive Screen Time on Child Development: An Updated Review and Strategies for Management](#)

[Polestar Parenting](#)

[Screenstrong](#), a family and school advocacy organization, shares tools for limiting technology and offers outlines for a slow-tech approach at home.

[Simplicity Parenting podcast with Kim John Payne: Screen Time Creep](#)

[WaitUntil8th](#)