



SUSQUEHANNA  
WALDORF  
SCHOOL



**ALL  
SCHOOL  
HANDBOOK**

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These policies and procedures are subject to change as may be determined to be in the best interests of the school or the students by the Leadership Council and/or the Board of Trustees.

*Last Updated 10/18*

# Welcome to the Susquehanna Waldorf School

The Susquehanna Waldorf School follows the philosophy and method of Waldorf education, an educational movement developed by Austrian philosopher and educator, Dr. Rudolf Steiner. Since 1987 the Susquehanna Waldorf School has grown to provide classes for children from infancy through grade eight. The school is a Full Member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and of the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS). Our Early Childhood program is also recognized as a Full Member of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN) and the International Association of Waldorf Kindergartens.

## Our Mission Statement

**Mission:** The Susquehanna Waldorf School inspires resilience and compassion in our students, awakens their capacities for innovative learning, and prepares them to engage with purpose in the world.

**Vision:** The Susquehanna Waldorf School educates children out of a strong anthroposophical understanding of the developing child, so that they may go forth with resilience, compassion, purpose and capacities for innovative thinking.

## History of the School

The Susquehanna Waldorf School began as a parent initiative in 1987 with nine Pre-Kindergarten students. The school has an even longer history, however. From 1970-1973, the Lancaster Society of Friends ran a kindergarten using Waldorf pedagogy. Between 1976 and 1978, the Friends organized a second, parent-run kindergarten. After this second venture closed in 1978, the Lancaster Waldorf School Association became a legally incorporated entity. Its organizers intended to establish and operate an independent private school upon the principles of the Religious Society of Friends and using Waldorf pedagogical methods. The school opened in 1979 as the Lancaster Waldorf School, with five preschoolers. It grew to include twenty children in kindergarten through fourth grade, but closed its doors in 1984, due to financial difficulties and meager enrollment. A parent body continued to meet regularly to celebrate festivals and organize fundraisers.

In the early spring of 1987, a group of parents interested in Waldorf education met at the Lancaster Friends Meetinghouse. After several planning meetings, mounting enthusiasm, and a growing understanding of Waldorf pedagogy, the group decided to open a preschool that fall. One of the parents, Linda (Heywood-Getz) Koppenhaver, supported with the mentoring of experienced Waldorf teacher Dorothea Williams, taught the first class. Dr. and Mrs. Hal Williams gave the initiative loving support and guidance. Dr. Williams, an anthroposophical doctor, helped to choose the school's current name and served on SWS's first Board of Directors.

Enrollment doubled in the second year with an additional kindergarten, taught by Boel Neville, an experienced Waldorf teacher and participant in Waldorf initiatives. With Board President Thomas Getz, Ph.D., and others, Boel helped the school to re-incorporate, to become established as a non-profit organization, and to join the Federation of Waldorf Schools.

The Lancaster Friends Meetinghouse had provided a warm and congenial atmosphere within which the school had begun to flourish. In the third year, in the late summer of 1989, with enrollments exceeding available space, the school relocated to its present home in Marietta, not far from Lancaster and closer to the homes of students from York County. The new home, a turn-of-the-century (1899) school building that had served the town of Marietta for generations as a public school, once again had children entering its arched doorway and enlivening the classrooms. The Marietta Trust, a group of local citizens, had purchased the building when it closed as a school, to preserve and use it as a community gathering place. SWS leased space in the building, sharing occupancy with various other organizations until December 2002 when the school purchased the building and began to occupy all the available space.

Throughout the school's first seven years in the new location, more grades were added, and the faculty grew and developed into a decision-making body. The parents organized into an energetic and active Parents Association, and the Board worked with both faculty and the parents to help develop and stabilize the school's three pillars of leadership: faculty, parents, and Board.

In 2011, significant changes were made to the governance structure of the school. A Management Team was formed to oversee the day-to-day administration of the school, replacing the Council of Teachers and the Central Communication Committee. The school's by-laws and governance documents underwent significant revision.

***Some historical highlights:***

- 1987           Preschool founded at Lancaster Friends Meeting
- 1989           Moved to Marietta; First grade offered for the first time; many other firsts
- 1990           Pennsylvania Department of Education approved SWS application for licensure as a private academic school; second grade added
- 1991           School store opened; third grade added
- 1992-93       Over 100 children enrolled; fourth grade added.
- 1994           Specialty subject classes included French, German, handwork, music, woodworking, and games; fifth grade added
- 1995           First sixth grade class graduated
- 1996           Tenth Annual Winter Fair
- 1997           SWS Tenth Anniversary celebration; Care Group established
- 1998           Council of Teachers founded; first Eurythmy block; Leo Klein as mentor
- 1999           Seventh grade added; Parent-Child classes begin; Admissions consultant; Mandate system implemented
- 2000           Admissions Coordinator and Business Manager hired; office moved downstairs; first Development Committee
- 2001           Eighth grade added and first eighth grade class graduated
- 2002-03       First Development Coordinator
- 2003           Building purchased; First AWSNA accreditation
- 2004           First Shepherds' Play performed
- 2005-06       New logo & brand refresh
- 2007           First Middle School Support Teacher; Endowment began
- 2008-09       Lancaster City Parent/Child satellite

<i>2010-11</i>	Governance and By-laws revision; Leadership council founded; PA renamed as Parent Guild; middle-school clubs formed
<i>2011-12</i>	Celebration of Twenty-Fifth Year
<i>2013</i>	Purchased a school van
<i>2014</i>	Hired a Director of Admissions and Marketing
<i>2016</i>	Celebrated 30th Anniversary
<i>2017</i>	Expanded Early Childhood Program by adding a third Mixed Age Kindergarten Implemented a full time Eurythmy program
<i>2018</i>	Created SWS' first School Administrator position, and hired an Administrator Added a Nursery Program (Stepping Stone) Launched a new website and created updated marketing materials
<i>2020-21</i>	Prevailed through the pandemic
<i>2021</i>	Celebrated our 35th year; accredited by Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools

## Governance and Organization Structure

The leadership of Susquehanna Waldorf School is shared among the members of the Board of Trustees, the Parent Guild and the Leadership Council. These groups work through collaborative decision-making and consensus. Parent input on important school issues has a formal channel in the Parent Guild Representative on the Board. Input from parents is sought and encouraged.

### The Board of Trustees

The responsibility of the Board of Trustees is the long-term fiscal and legal sustainability of the school. The Board keeps the bigger picture alive. Its focus on the mission and vision of the school and its study of Steiner's indications for Waldorf education and the Threefold Social Order allow it to undertake strategic planning and to measure the work of the school against its desired ends. The Board of Trustees holds regular monthly meetings to discuss the school's legal and fiscal health and to further strategic planning. **Each meeting begins with an open session, during which all members of the SWS community are invited to participate. Board meetings are on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 pm in the Music room.**

### Parent Guild

The Parent Guild is the collective parent body of the Susquehanna Waldorf School. As a community-building organization, its mission is to promote parental participation in the life of the school. The Parent Guild supports the school, fosters communication, and builds community through actively participating in planning social fundraisers such as the Winter Faire and the Auction/Gala. All parents of currently enrolled students are members of the Parent Guild. Every class in the school should have one class representative active in the Parent Guild, which meets on the third Sunday of the month at 10 am.

## **The Leadership Council**

The Leadership Council carries the administrative and managerial leadership of the school and is responsible for decision-making and oversight in all matters concerning day-to-day administrative and pedagogical life. The Leadership Council membership consists of Pedagogical Co-Chairs and Department Chairs. The Leadership Council meets weekly and with the faculty during the after-school College meetings. **If parents have a question or concern about any aspect of the school, they are invited to first contact the Leadership Council at [LC@susquehanna.org](mailto:LC@susquehanna.org).**

## **Administrative Staff**

Our school has an Admissions Coordinator who leads our work in admissions, enrollment and outreach. Our Business Manager is responsible for financial and contractual agreements. The Marketing and Development Director leads our marketing, communications, and development. The Administrative Coordinator is responsible for coordinating record-keeping and school communications. Our Receptionist staffs our front desk, helps with parents' questions/concerns, and assists students with minor first aid needs.

## **Business and Financial Management**

The fiscal responsibility of the Susquehanna Waldorf School lies with the Board of Trustees. All financial matters of the school are overseen by the Treasurer of the Board, the Finance Committee, and the Business Manager. Financial recommendations are made by these bodies to the Board of Trustees.

The Treasurer of the Board has custody of the funds and securities of the school. The Treasurer must be a non-vested member of the Board and is nominated and elected to the officer position annually at the May meeting of the Board, or when the position is vacant. The Treasurer, in conjunction with the Business Manager, prepares and presents quarterly and annual reports to the Board of Trustees, including a balance sheet showing the assets and liabilities of the corporation (SWS) and a profit and loss statement showing the gross and net income and operating expenses of the school.

The Board Finance Committee (composed of the Treasurer, Business Manager, and a representative from the Board) is responsible for ensuring the financial health and stability of the school through sound policies and principles. The committee is responsible for initiating, implementing, and carrying through the annual budget process; managing operating expenses and seeking approval of any proposed expense budget variations from the Board, and for formulating investment policies.

## **Human Resources**

The Human Resource Committee (HRC) is composed of one Board member, the Business Manager, and a volunteer Human Resource professional. This committee oversees HR practices and policies for the school. The HRC makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees for policy change and adoption. The HRC executes hiring and terminations according to direction from either the Board of Trustees (for Administration) or the Leadership Council (for faculty).



The Board of Trustees is responsible for overseeing the Administrative staff, as well as overseeing the work of employees who maintain the school facilities. All faculty job descriptions and professional development are handled by the Leadership Council. Section Chairs assist in cases where applicants for a faculty position are sought, and qualified job candidates are taken by the Leadership Council through a process of paperwork submission, observation, interview, and demonstration. Input on candidates for teaching and staff positions is sought from the full faculty and staff.

The Leadership Council assists all members of the faculty and staff in professional development. The work of all teaching and administrative staff members is evaluated in regular cycles, both by in-house and outside observers.

## **Campus and Facilities**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the physical building and grounds of the school. The Business Manager oversees subcontracted service providers for the care and improvements of the school property and ensures that the interior spaces and outside areas, including the playground and parking lot, are in good operating order, are safe, and meet regulations.

We strive to support sustainable living whenever possible, including using green cleaning products and rendering services from local businesses whenever possible to support maintenance and repair projects.

## **Our Parents**

### **The Parent Pledge**

#### **I pledge to attend parent meetings and parent-teacher conferences.**

Attendance at parent meetings helps to ensure that the class community can be mutually supportive and understanding of the curriculum and its foundations. Parent-teacher conferences are the Waldorf equivalent of report cards and are of utmost importance in maintaining open communication about student progress and development.

#### **I pledge to support my child(ren)'s class/activities by actively supporting the Class Parent.**

All parents provide practical, emotional, and spiritual support for the teacher and the class as well. To help with the facilitation of classroom life, each class has one or more Class Parent(s) who take the lead in organizing parents, helping with class events, and, at times, helping with all-school events.

#### **I pledge to support the Parent Guild by staying informed/participating in Guild activities.**

Parents are essential to the vibrant life of the school. Healthy, successful Waldorf schools are created and sustained through the active involvement of parents. All parents at the Susquehanna Waldorf School, upon enrollment of their children, automatically become members of the Parent Guild. The Guild conducts one regular monthly meeting throughout the school year. Please see the school calendar for meeting dates.

### **I pledge to participate in SWS Festivals, Fundraisers, All-School meetings, and functions.**

Our Festivals are community events that enrich the curriculum, the community, and our daily lives. Our Fundraisers not only provide vital financial support for the school—they also provide an opportunity to meet many families and share in building a strong school community. The All-School meetings and functions are a time to gather with other parents to expand your understanding of both the curriculum and how the school is operating.

### **I Pledge to make an Annual Giving contribution.**

Tuition alone does not fully cover the cost of educating a child at SWS but rather represents the school's desire to make Waldorf education accessible to as broad a population as possible. It is expected that each family participates in our Annual Fund Drive to whatever extent is fiscally possible.

## **Class Parents**

The Class Parent works directly with the teacher in developing the class community. All aspects of Class Parents' work are under the direction of the class teacher. Class Parents frequently communicate with the class teacher and are knowledgeable about the school and its traditions. Class Parents attend the Parent Guild meetings and are representatives of their class.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences and Progress Reports**

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year for private and comprehensive discussion between parents and teachers concerning the progress and development of the child. These conferences are the Waldorf equivalent of report cards and are of utmost importance in maintaining open communication about each child's progress and development. Either the parent or teacher can request extra conferences.

Parents will also receive (via mail by the end of June) a thorough narrative account of their child's progress in each subject, written by their child's class teacher and each subject teacher. Our experience and conviction are that a written progress report gives a more accurate, complete, and useful measure of student achievement than does a letter grade. These reports are for parents only. Parts of these reports may be shared or summarized with children in Grades 6, 7, and 8.

## **Transcripts**

All requests for transcripts or evaluations of any kind will go directly to the school office via the Front Desk Staff. The evaluations and recommendations will be given to the proper teachers to fill out and return to the Front Desk Staff. We attempt to send out all transcripts, evaluations, or recommendation forms within two weeks of the request and document all that we have mailed. All financial obligations must be current for student records to be sent, as is stated in the Enrollment Agreement (contract).

# **Publications, Notifications, and Policies**

## **The Heartbeat**

The Heartbeat is our monthly newsletter sent out the first Thursday of the month. The Heartbeat contains blog posts, articles of interest, and updates by the Leadership Council, faculty and staff, Board, and Parent Guild. All community members interested in receiving the Heartbeat should make sure the school has their current email address.

## **The Weekly Bulletin**

The Weekly Bulletin is emailed weekly. This communication is sent to parents/caregivers, grandparents, staff, and the board of trustees to communicate important information about the school. New parents and caregivers will automatically be added to the email list. The weekly bulletin includes a Community Corner the first week of the month, which includes an opportunity for our community members to share and/or advertise something with our community. If you're interested in this, please submit your ad to [courtney.kokus@susquehanna.org](mailto:courtney.kokus@susquehanna.org) the last week of the month.

## **Notification System**

OneCallNow is a school-wide notification system that delivers messages via phone, email, and text. You may be informed of weather-related delays or closings, meeting/assembly times, or special school events by the OneCallNow system. Most urgent notices will be delivered by phone with email and text notification added. Less urgent notices will be delivered by email and/or text. To activate OneCallNow text messaging, text: #SWS1 to 22300

## **Community Calendar**

To ensure that all members of our community are up-to-date on events and opportunities, the Leadership Council oversees a full-school calendar which is available on our [website](#). While the calendar can be printed from the site, it is updated often, and reminders about calendar and scheduling updates will be announced in the Weekly Bulletin and The Heartbeat.

## **SWS All School Handbook**

Our school handbook offers a comprehensive view of the school's identity, policies, and procedures. The handbook is posted on our [website](#) (under Resources at the bottom of the Parents page).

## **School Directory**

The school directory contains the class list and alphabetical entry of each family. It also lists the Faculty, Administrative Staff, members of the Board of Trustees, members of the Parent Guild steering committee, and all Class Parents. The directory is not to be used as a mailing or telephone list for

non-school purposes. The school directory is issued and sent home with each student in October. Extra copies are available at the front desk.

## **Email Guidelines**

When emails or phone lists are being used for school-related information, please consider the following: Not every communication is appropriate for email. Email is neither private nor secure. Do not use email to discuss confidential or sensitive information. Group emails are to be used for all class communications, newsletter mailings, and committee work. School email addresses published in the school directory are not to be used as a mailing list for non-school purposes, which would include commercial endorsements and personal promotions.

## **Class Visits and Observations**

Teachers in Waldorf schools work in a unique way with classes as social groups. Due to the change in dynamics when adults enter to observe the class, it is not always possible for parents to participate in lessons. However, parents may visit their child's classes for observation by making prior arrangements with the teacher. Please respect the work of the class by knocking and awaiting an invitation to enter. We request visitors to arrive on time, being courteous to the class timeframes.

## **Alumni Visitation and Participation**

Families are invited to make arrangements with our Admissions Coordinator and the individual's former teacher for student visits. Requests should be made at least a week in advance of the proposed visit. When school is in session, or during drop-off or dismissal, alumni students must be accompanied by an adult when in the building or on school property. Part of an alumni student visit will often include a volunteer service element. These arrangements will be coordinated by the class teacher. All visitors to the school should check in at the front desk to sign in and receive a visitors badge before visiting classrooms or attending meetings during school hours.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

The Susquehanna Waldorf School follows a policy of nondiscrimination in all aspects of operation and does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability, age, or national or ethnic origin. All admissions and services are provided without regard to race, color, religion, sex, disability, age, or national or ethnic origin. Any complaints of discrimination may be filed with the Office for Civil Rights, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Bureau of Civil Rights Compliance, the Department of Public Welfare, and/or the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

## **Commitment to Multiculturalism**

The Susquehanna Waldorf School is committed to the ongoing process of creating, embracing, and supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community where students, families, faculty, and staff of

all races, ethnicities, cultural and religious heritages, socioeconomic backgrounds, geographic origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, and family structures feel respected, connected, and valued.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect Policy**

All employees of the Susquehanna Waldorf school are considered Mandated Reporters in the state of PA. Mandated Reporters are certain adults who are legally required to report suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of abuse. A written report regarding the suspected child abuse must be submitted by the employee to Child Protective Services (CPS) within 48 hours of the incident of suspicion.

## **The School Day**

**The school day begins at 8:15 a.m. for all ages.**

**The school day ends at 3 p.m. for kindergarten and at 3:15 p.m. for grades.**

Your child's teacher approaches the day with a reverent attitude and seeks to bring the children into this atmosphere. If a child is late, they miss the teacher's personal greeting and the daily verse. It is imperative that parents are on time so that all children are included and can make the transition into the school day. Tardiness also disrupts Circle and Main Lesson time.

**Student drop-off begins at 8 a.m.**

**Parents are not to leave their children in the school or on the playground unsupervised.**

**Children are dismissed between 3 and 3:15 p.m.**

Parents, please be prompt when picking up your child. Parents must inform the teachers and the Front Desk Staff, in writing, of any changes to persons who are authorized to pick up their children, as well as any other schedule changes such as early dismissal or absence due to vacation.

## **Absences and Late Arrivals**

Regular attendance is important for the academic and social life of the child. Parents should try to schedule appointments and vacations when school is not in session. Parents are encouraged to help their children understand the importance of punctuality and good attendance.

If you arrive late, do not interrupt class by walking in; please knock, and wait with your child in the hallway until the teacher finds an appropriate moment to invite your child into the classroom. The faculty recognizes that occasional delays are unavoidable. However, habitual tardiness is highly disruptive and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. **Seven accumulated tardies are considered a full day absence.**

Please call the school (and if necessary, leave a voice message) before 8:15 a.m. if your child will be absent or is arriving late. If a teacher indicates a child's absence and the parent has not notified the school of this absence, a call will be made to the parents to confirm the child's whereabouts. **If your child takes a bus**

**to and/or from school, please remember to notify the bus company when transportation is not required in such instances regarding illness, planned absences, and early dismissals.**

## **Attendance Requirements**

The State Board of Education requires that school-aged pupils enrolled in the schools of this district attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the state. The educational program offered at SWS requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation.

Therefore, if a child has three or more unexcused absences or is excessively absent (defined at 10% of the days in the term to date or 17 days per school year), a notification will be sent to the parents. After that notification, any absences will require a doctor's excuse and may result in suspension until a meeting with parents and the teacher is held to find a resolution for the situation. Outside tutoring may be requested at the parents' expense. Tutoring could be required to keep the student up-to-date with the curriculum. All absences require a written excuse and are determined to be excused or unexcused based on the following guidelines:

### *Excused Absences*

1. Illness
2. Death in immediate family
3. Impassable roads
4. Religious holiday
5. Any absence pre-approved with the class teacher

### *Unexcused Absences*

1. All reasons not listed as excused
2. No written excuse within five days after returning to school

SWS is required to report excessive absences to the student's home school district. Below are two excerpts from Compulsory School Attendance on the PA Dept. of Education website.

“Although a nonpublic school's attendance policy may differ from that of the student's resident school district, the nonpublic school's policy must provide for timely and accurate communication and collaboration with a student's resident school district so that powers and responsibilities are properly exercised under the authority granted to the district by the General Assembly.”

“Every principal or teacher in a public or nonpublic school, including a charter school or cyber charter school, and every private tutor is required to report at once to the superintendent, attendance officer, home and school visitor, or secretary of the board of school directors of the child's district of residence cases when a child of compulsory school age withdraws from school or has been absent three days, or their equivalent, without a lawful excuse, if the student is of compulsory school age.”

## **Timeliness and Pickups**

Kindergarten children will be dismissed at 3 p.m. Grades children will be dismissed between 3 and 3:15 p.m. in front of the school building. Please be prompt in picking up your grades child(ren) at 3:15 p.m. If you think you will be late, please call the office.

## **Contacting Your Class Teacher**

Your class teacher will be happy to discuss your questions or concerns. Hurried discussions at drop-off or pick-up times aren't satisfying for either the parent or teacher and may make the student uncomfortable. Please check with your child's teacher as to the times most convenient for school-related phone conversations. Any personal concerns that require a lengthy discussion can be addressed in a prearranged conference.

## **Getting to School**

Many of our students are driven to school individually; for some parents, carpooling may be an option to reduce their driving time. Limited busing is available for students (see below for more details). Some students may be able to walk to school.

### **Carpools**

Please give your child's teacher a written schedule of your carpool arrangements and note any changes in writing. We also need to have a note to the teacher or phone call to the office when someone other than regular drivers will be picking up your child.

### **Buses**

If your school district lies within ten miles of the Susquehanna Waldorf School, you may receive public school bussing for children who are at least 5 years of age by September 5th. For more information, contact the Front Desk Staff. Currently, the following schools provide bus transportation to the Susquehanna Waldorf School:

Donegal	Manheim Central
Hempfield	Elizabethtown
Eastern York	Penn Manor

Once bus arrangements are established, parents are required to notify the bus company directly and the receptionist ([receptionist@susquehanna.org](mailto:receptionist@susquehanna.org)) when their child will not be riding the bus due to illness, class field trips, other scheduled absences, etc. This communication is very important to the bus drivers. Please note, bus service will be cancelled for ALL riders on the days that the school hosts After School Hangs and afternoon festivals/events (ex. Michalemas, Holiday Assembly, May Day), unless reception is notified the week prior.

Bus services ask that your child(ren) be at the assigned bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled pickup time in the morning. Bus schedules are tight, and they ask all for their cooperation to help keep the buses on schedule. This is also important to our teachers so that children arrive before the school day begins.

Should a registered child need to get on or off at a different existing bus stop, permission notes will be required from the child's parent. These notes then need to be authorized by the Front Desk Staff, who will return the notes to the child to be given to the bus driver. Should an emergency arise during the day and your child needs to get off at a different bus stop within the route, please contact the Front Desk Staff to write the authorization note to the bus driver. Please note that buses will not transport non-registered students.

## **Walkers**

Students should cross at designated crosswalks. Crossing guards are not provided. Parents must supply a walk waiver for each student walking to or from the school.

## **Parking**

Please observe the "No Parking" signs in front of the school so that emergency vehicles have access. Please park in the school parking lot so that our resident neighbors have ample street parking. Use the spaces in the west lot adjacent to the school. Please do not park in the lot to the east of the school next to the Marietta Restoration Museum building. This lot is not available to the school. **Please observe our one-way traffic flow on Walnut Street.**

**When dropping off or picking up your child, be especially vigilant driving near the school. Please do not allow children to play in or around the parking lot or in front of the building during these hours.**

**Please do not leave your children unsupervised, and always remember to turn off your car ignition.**

## **Field Trips**

### **Day Trips**

As part of the Waldorf curriculum, teachers may take the children off the school grounds on walking trips in Marietta for educational and recreational opportunities such as: nature walks, geography lessons, botany lessons, playing ball, or enjoying the local playground. A walk waiver is required for teachers to take children on walking trips. Teachers may also arrange to take children away from Marietta on field trips. Notification of a field trip will come from the teacher. This notice will include information about fees and a permission slip. Field trip costs are not included in the tuition.

All school field trips are chosen based on curriculum and age appropriateness. Field trips are designed as pedagogical tools which support a specific learning experience for the students of any given grade;



therefore, siblings of various ages are not invited to join these trips, which are for enrolled SWS students only.

**Permission slips must be signed and returned before the trip if you want your child to participate. If a permission slip is not returned, the parent will be contacted to pick up their child before the trip commences.**

Teachers may ask for volunteer parent drivers to provide transportation. All volunteers will be required to provide copies of Child Abuse Clearances and Criminal Record Checks in addition to valid driver's license and insurance certificate, if driving. These will be kept on file in the office.

When a situation arises wherein SWS becomes aware of a member of our community having a criminal record, either through a criminal record check initiated by the school or by other means, actions to be undertaken by the Leadership Council can include but are not be limited to the following: Meeting with the parent for conversation, barring parent from chaperoning, from acting as driver on field trips, from being with the students or alone with the students, from volunteering at school events, or from being on the school property. All of the above are dependent upon the severity or length of time since criminal charges have been filed.

**State law requires that all children wear seat belts. We extend this requirement to all students while on any school-sponsored field trips.** Additionally, no student in grade four or below may ride in the front seat of a car with a passenger side airbag. Fifth and sixth grade students may only ride in the front seat with parent's permission. Pennsylvania Dept. of Motor Vehicles recommends all children ages 12 and under ride in the rear seat.

The use of alcohol and/or other recreational drugs is strictly prohibited on any school sponsored trip.

All school rules for appropriate behavior are in effect during field trips. Drivers/chaperones directed by the class teacher must be fully prepared to support and enforce school rules.

## **Overnight Trips**

School overnight trips are considered days away from school. They are intended to be educational, community building and an overall group and individual experience. The only excusable absence from these trips (wherein the student can still attend school but not the overnight trip) is a doctor's excuse to be provided to the class teacher. The exception is other excusable absences such as a death in the family, illness, etc.

## **Class Three Trip**

The Third Grade class has traditionally taken an overnight trip. The ideal overnight trip for the third grade is a farm trip during which time children work with a farmer tending to the daily chores of farm life. There are costs for this trip that are not covered by tuition.

## **Class Eight Trip**

It is the tradition of the Eighth Grade class to take one final memorable field trip celebrating their time spent together as a class. This special trip offers an opportunity to sum up and reinforce the pedagogy of the entire eight-year journey. Once the class teacher has established the format and choices for the class trip, parents and teacher together will decide upon the destination as well as the financial aspects of the trip and what fundraising activities would need to take place within the guidelines of the Development policy. Students may participate provided the family's financial account is in good standing.

## **Playground Rules**

Playground rules will be followed at all times, both during and after school hours.

- ❖ No climbing on or over the school playground fence.
- ❖ No pretend weapon play.
- ❖ No throwing of gravel, rocks, sand, snowballs, mulch, etc. on school grounds.
- ❖ Respectful language will be used at all times by students and adults on school grounds.
- ❖ No sitting in or jumping from the slide house windows.
- ❖ No more than three students can be in a tree at a time.
- ❖ Students are not allowed to climb to the top of a tree.
- ❖ Be respectful of nature, e.g., not breaking limbs, pulling of leaves, etc.
- ❖ Once outside for recess, students need to ask for teacher permission to re-enter the school.
- ❖ Students must get teacher permission to leave the playground area to retrieve a ball.
- ❖ Playing outside the playground fence in the reserved parking area is for grades four and up.
- ❖ Note that the school playground is closed for after school use until all Early Childhood children have been dismissed to parents or guardians.

## **Pets Policy**

For the safety of all our children and community members as well as of our facilities, please refrain from bringing pets inside our school building unless they are invited to a classroom visit which you have arranged with your child's teacher. All visiting pets on school grounds must be on a leash or in a cage, and owners are responsible for pet clean-up. Registered service animals are allowed in the school with their owner.

## **Early Childhood Programs**

In the Early Childhood programs at the Susquehanna Waldorf School, the seeds for love of work and learning are sown so they can grow with the child. The young child's school day contains a familiar rhythm that repeats each week as the seasons pass. Nature's cycles define the work as seasonal songs, verses, stories, and crafts fill the mornings.

In the preschool years, children learn primarily through their own need to be active and their uncanny ability to imitate all that surrounds them. Teachers bring activities and rhythm in an atmosphere of beauty, warmth and harmony to nourish their blossoming creative thinking upon which all future abstract thought will be built. Simple materials from nature provide the stimulus for creative play, which develops

imagination, concentration, coordination, language, and number skills that will be gently called forth in the elementary years.

## **Parent and Child Program**

The Parent and Child program offers an opportunity for parents with infants, toddlers, or young children to discover the world in a special setting with other families.

This program provides a supportive environment for parents to explore the joys and challenges of raising young children, and to learn simple crafts, stories, and songs. A snack is prepared and enjoyed by all. Through play and work, the children will have their first taste of being with others in a group. Parents are encouraged to attend any scheduled adult meetings for discussion about the children and the class; the parent and child attend the rest of the classes in the session together.

Please refer to the brochure and website for specific dates and times of classes. To enroll, please contact the Admissions Coordinator, [admissions@susquehanna.org](mailto:admissions@susquehanna.org) or visit [SWS Admissions](#).

## **Stepping Stone Nursery**

This Waldorf early childhood program offers toddlers (ages 2 & 3) a beautiful, peaceful, and nurturing environment to take their “first steps” into class on their own. Our home-like setting nourishes a child's senses, invites the forming of first friendships and the joy of being together, and fosters their imaginative play.

Special attention is given to support each child's physical, language, social-emotional and cognitive development and to grow their emerging skills. A strong daily rhythm is held, filled with singing, storytelling, baking, crafts, gardening, outdoor play and ample time to explore and play. At the heart of the Stepping Stone classroom is instilling a sense of wonder for nature, respect for one another, and awe for the living world around us.

## **Mixed-Age Kindergarten**

The Susquehanna Waldorf School offers 3 and 5 day mixed-age kindergarten programs designed for the young child who is 3 to 6 years of age.

**Morning Kindergarten: 8:15 a.m. to 12:00 noon**

**Full Day Kindergarten: 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m**

The Susquehanna Waldorf School requires 5 and 6-year-old children who will go to First Grade the following school year to attend 5 day kindergarten (at the latest by the January preceding September First Grade enrollment) to ensure stamina, strength, and social maturity.

## Afternoon Garden

Please note that the Afternoon Garden is not available as a stand-alone program. Afternoon Garden is the afternoon portion of our full-day kindergarten programs. Here all the full-day children come together for lunch, rest and play in support of the morning activities. Please send a nutritious lunch in a plain lunch box (no media pictures). Please do not send candy, desserts, or sugary snacks and drinks. Each child is provided with a mat, pillow, and blanket and is expected to rest quietly.

## Changing Early Childhood Programs During the School Year

As your child grows and matures during the year, you may wish to increase your child's hours in school. Space permitting and with the approval of your child's teacher, you may upgrade to an increased program length (for example, 3 day to 5 day or half day to full day).

Unless advised by the teacher to reduce your child's program length, you may not downgrade your early childhood program. Your financial responsibility remains at the contracted level for the school year.

## Allergies and Dietary Concerns

Our Early Childhood teachers strive to provide healthy and varied snacks for the children in our care. If your child has food allergies or specific dietary guidelines that you would like us to follow, please speak with your child's teacher. We will work with you to provide an appropriate snack, keeping in mind your child's needs and the needs of the group. In the event that your child suffers from severe allergies, please make sure to notify administration and class teachers of necessary physician-written care plans, along with all necessary medication (benadryl, epi pen, etc.)

## Additional School Programs

### Music Programs

Music, as with all academic subjects, is an integral part of our school's curriculum. Singing is generally practiced with both the class teacher and the music teacher throughout Grades 1 - 8. Other musical experiences are brought to the children at the developmentally appropriate times.

In **Grade 1**, the children begin to play the CHOROI interval flute, the pentatonic lyre, and chime bars as their first instruments. In **Grade 2**, they continue playing the pentatonic lyre, and chime bars, and are introduced to the CHOROI pentatonic flute. This study continues until the middle of **Grade 3**, when the music curriculum moves away from the pentatonic scale, and the children move on to a flute program, which includes playing the CHOROI diatonic flute, the soprano recorder, and the "harmony" recorders. This continues through Grade 8.

## **Stringed Instruments and Orchestra Program**

In the spring of Grade 2, the Orchestra teacher will give a demonstration to the children of the stringed instruments.

The Grade 3 year marks a year of transition for the child in music. As the curriculum moves away from the pentatonic scale, the children take up instruments which play in a diatonic mode. Along with the diatonic flute, which is introduced in class, the children begin their individual study of an orchestral stringed instrument. Mid-year of Grade 3, students will begin to take Group String Classes at school. After conversations with the Orchestra teacher, the class teacher, and the parents, a string instrument (violin, viola, cello or bass) will be chosen for each child. Parents will then be responsible for setting up instrument rental and buying lesson books, the cost of which is not included in tuition. The teachers will have instrument rental resources for parents.

Group String Classes will end mid-year of Grade 4. At this time Grade 4 will transition into "Intro to Orchestra" classes with the Orchestra teacher. By the end of that school year, Grade 4 students will begin private string lessons. Private lessons must be with a professional music teacher on a weekly basis and are required to continue through the end of Grade 8. Lessons may take place with one of the private music teachers after school at SWS or at other private lesson locations. The SWS instructors are approved by the Leadership Council. Payment arrangements, however, are to be made directly between the instructor and the parents. It is the parents' responsibility to notify the music teacher if their child will be absent from a lesson. Daily practice (20 minute minimum) is expected and may be viewed as music homework. The class teacher will follow up to make sure the children have begun taking lessons on a stringed instrument.

All students in Grades 4 - 8 will play twice weekly in Orchestra Class. Instruments and music must be at the school on Orchestra days. The orchestras will perform concerts during the year. Attendance at the dress rehearsals and performances is mandatory. If a string instrument is clearly not the best-suited instrument for the student, the student may choose a woodwind instrument in Grade 6 or a brass instrument in Grade 7 which the Orchestra teacher will help choose. A student must take private lessons on the new instrument for at least one year before playing the new instrument in the orchestra.

Some families may find the cost of instrument rental and music lessons difficult. Parents should discuss financial difficulties with the Business Manager, who can suggest alternatives.

If students are not meeting the music requirements by either failing to practice, not attending weekly lessons, or failing to have instruments and music at the school on the appropriate days, the parents will be contacted by the Orchestra teacher with support from the Class Teacher. The Orchestra teacher and/or private music instructor and parent will establish a goal to ensure the continuation of instrumental study by the student. If the goal is not met, the student will not be in compliance with the music requirement of the school. Continued noncompliance may result in dismissal from SWS.

## **Choral and Orchestral Performances**

Students perform throughout the school year in festivals, assemblies, special events, and concerts. If your child's class is scheduled to perform at an event, attendance is required of all students. Specific requirements will appear in the orchestra and chorus agreement that will be given to students in Grades 4 - 8 at the beginning of the school year.

### **Performance Attire**

To help elevate self-esteem and confidence while performing, students' attire will usually consist of the following: collared white shirt or white blouse, dark pants or long dark skirt, dark socks, dark shoes, no sneakers, ties optional. Any change in this dress code for a particular event will be communicated to the parents by the music department.

## **Care Group**

The school offers support lessons through the Care Group to strengthen developmental movement capacities. The class teacher will get permission from the parents to have a child in question observed and assessed by the Care Group. The findings will be discussed with the teacher, the parents, and the Care Group in a follow-up meeting. The teacher informs the parents what help the school can offer for support and what is available through outside agencies. If the parents decide to use the Care Group, a plan is created reflecting the child's specific needs. Support lessons will begin once or twice a week.

The Care Group offers support for the admissions process as well as for the maintenance of healthy social life in the classroom. A teacher may call for the support of the Care Group in helping to observe the social needs of the classroom. Classroom observation may lead to identifying issues within the classroom of individual students or between two or more students. This, in turn, may lead to creating a positive behavior support plan for the class as a whole or for an individual student. Parents will be notified if their child is involved.

The Care Group also offers support to the teacher and parents involved in the Child Study process. All children in the school are possible candidates for Child Study with prior parental approval. The selection of a particular child for study does not mean that the child is problematic, although children experiencing difficulties may be given priority. This confidential process involves a review at a Faculty meeting of the child's health and development designed to focus our thinking and generate support for the child. Developing a Child Study is a continuous process, and the collective insights of the entire Faculty are offered in an atmosphere of love and concern with the intention of deepening our understanding for each child.

## **Class Eight Graduation**

Each June, as we bid farewell to our graduating eighth graders, the faculty and staff take pleasure in preparing a meaningful ceremony for our students, families, and friends. We believe that Graduation is a formal occasion held in a quiet and respectful environment. Class Eight graduation typically falls on the weekend after the last day of school. The Eighth Grade teacher uses his/her discretion regarding the attire

and the location. Each student may participate and will receive a graduation certificate provided they have met classroom expectations and the family's financial account is in good standing.

## After School Clubs

There are two After School Clubs available to all students in Grades 5 - 8. There is a Basketball Club from November to January. Practices are twice a week, and several games are scheduled during the season. There is a Running Club in March and April. Practices are twice a week, and the students train for the Lancaster Race Against Racism at the end of April. Parents must turn in a signed permission form for their child to participate in each of these activities.

## Concerns and Conduct

### Illness or Injury

If a child develops a fever, is injured, or is too sick to participate in class, the parent or authorized person will be notified. All students must have an emergency form on file in the school office. In the event of an accident or illness, the school will follow the instructions provided by the parents. Current emergency phone numbers and instructions are imperative for your child's welfare. Your child will be taken to the school office and allowed to rest quietly until a parent or guardian arrives. Many of our staff and teachers are trained in First Aid and CPR.

Please be sure your child is well enough to participate in all activities before returning to school. **A child who has had a fever or vomited in the past 24 hours should be kept home to recuperate.** Remember to advise the office of any contagious or transmittable illnesses so that the teacher and parents of exposed children can be notified. The school reserves the right to suspend classes due to a high percentage of absenteeism.

Children taking prescription and over-the-counter medication during school hours must have written permission and original directions for dispensing on file; these are only to be dispensed by a member of the Administrative staff.

### Severe Allergy Concerns

In the event that your child suffers from severe allergies, please make sure to notify Administration and Class Teachers of necessary physician-written care plans, along with all necessary medication (benadryl, epi pen, etc.) Notification of a student's severe allergy will be clearly communicated to all of the student's teachers and the Administration. When appropriate, severe allergy notification will be clearly posted in the student's classroom, e.g. "Nut-Free Classroom."

## **Immunizations**

Susquehanna Waldorf School complies with Pennsylvania State Immunization Law for Kindergarten through Grade 8, and with DHS requirements for the Stepping Stone Program. This law mandates that all students be immunized before attending school. It also requires that schools submit immunization records to the state for tracking. The state also provides an opportunity for parents to control the immunization schedule and regime for their individual child.

Waldorf schools abide by state requirements as they pertain to immunization. We also concur that the decision to immunize is a personal one, and that it should be made by parents and their physicians. While the majority of our parents opt to immunize their children, there are some who opt not to immunize their children, or to exclude specific immunizations, or to immunize children on a slower schedule than the state code stipulates.

When students are partially immunized or are not immunized by the beginning of the school year, parents must provide an affidavit pursuant to Pennsylvania Code 23.83 (referenced above). Any students that are partially immunized are counted as non-compliant by the state, and therefore are reflected in the overall percentage of non-immunized students on state records. Waldorf schools do all they can to ensure the safety and health of the children in our schools. We encourage all parents to consult with their physician about their personal preferences regarding immunization.

In the event of an outbreak of communicable diseases, including but not limited to chicken pox, measles, mumps, or pertussis, children whose immunizations for such disease are not current may be excluded from the school and its activities for the duration of the outbreak. It is an acceptable excuse should a parent choose to keep their child at home when any infectious disease is active in the school community.

If for religious, medical, or philosophical reasons your child has not been immunized or has been partly immunized, an exemption form (available in the SWS Office) must be completed according to PA State regulations. Completed exemption forms will be placed in your child's health file in the SWS Office.

Every SWS student must have a current, dated, signed immunization record or immunization exemption form on file.

## **Visiting School Nurse**

A school nurse is provided through the Donegal School District to ensure compliance with our status as a PA state licensed private school. Through regular visits, she maintains students' health records, obtains immunization information, and ensures compliance with state laws. She conducts annual vision and hearing screenings, as well as height and weight charting for all children in Kindergarten and Grades 1 - 8. Physical exams are required for students entering Kindergarten and 6th grade. Dental exams are required for Kindergarten, 3rd and 7th grades. Notification of physical and dental exams will be sent home in advance so parents may have a personal physician complete the form or schedule an exam. The Donegal School Physician and Dentist also provide these exams at the Susquehanna Waldorf School, if desired, on scheduled dates. Please contact the school if you would like to request these exams for your child(ren).



## Head Lice Policy

The Susquehanna Waldorf School has adopted the following policy regarding head lice. Because we do not have a school nurse always on site, if a child is suspected to have head lice, the child will be sent home.

1. Once a case of lice is suspected, the child's parents will be notified immediately to pick the child up from school.
2. All siblings of suspected cases will also be inspected and may be sent home from school. Every effort will be made to remove affected students from the classroom until parents arrive.
3. The school will provide parents with links to educational materials.
4. The school has a "No Lice/No Nit Policy." Students will be readmitted to school only after all lice/nits are removed and a written approval from a doctor or licensed removal service is provided to the school.
5. The "No Lice/No Nit Policy" calls for:
  - a. The removal of all lice, eggs (nits), and egg cases following the application of a lice-killing product.
  - b. The exclusion of a child from school and school activities until such measures have been accomplished.
  - c. Community education to ensure that parents understand their responsibility under a "No Lice/No Nit Policy" which includes a notification to the school if their child has been infested with head lice.
6. A student's absence from school due to head lice is considered an excusable illness.
7. Parents will be notified by the class teacher if an infestation is reported in the class.
8. The school administration reserves the right to close the school.

## Emergency Procedures

### Inclement Weather

In addition to the OneCallNow notification system (which includes phone, email, and text), you may find weather-related information on the following media sources: WGAL (8), WHP CBS (21), WHTM ABC (27), WPMT FOX (43) and/or their websites. This information is subject to change. All Early Childhood classes follow the same schedule of closures and delays as the rest of the school. Parent-Child and Nursery will end at noon.

### Other Emergencies

If the school must close early due to power difficulties, threatening weather, or other unforeseen problems, notification will be posted on the same channels as inclement weather, and communication will be sent directly from the school by way of OneCallNow (which includes phone, email, and text). Any time you are uncomfortable with conditions, please feel free to contact the school and pick your child up early.

Emergency drills are conducted regularly as required by the state.

Student safety is a primary priority at SWS. We regularly conduct fire drills as required by the state. This allows students to become familiar with safely exiting the building in the event of an emergency. Other safety drills such as sheltering in place (weather or safety) or evacuating the building for non-fire emergencies have been practiced with the faculty and staff but will not be simulated with the students. In the event of an actual emergency or an event that requires evacuation (not a drill), parents will be notified of the nature of the emergency as soon as possible.

## **Conduct and Discipline**

Respectful behavior is expected of all students. A child who is disruptive not only affects their own school experience, but that of their classmates as well. Children are to respect their teachers, school staff, classmates, and all property.

### **Classroom Conduct and Expectations**

- ❖ Class starts on time; children are on time.
- ❖ Typically the Main Lesson Teacher shakes the hand, looks in the eyes of each student, and starts the day with a verse.
- ❖ Students are expected to follow the school dress code policy.
- ❖ No gum chewing is allowed on campus.
- ❖ No eating or drinking is allowed during class without specific teacher approval.
- ❖ Bathroom and water breaks are encouraged between classes during transitions.
- ❖ Students stay in their seats unless otherwise directed or given permission.
- ❖ Permission to speak and/or leave one's seat is given in response to a raised hand, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- ❖ Basic courtesy is always expected.
- ❖ At the beginning of a special subject, class students are standing quietly (in their classroom or outside the subject teacher's classroom) and are ready to greet the Special Subject Teacher. • Unrelated interruptions are discouraged.
- ❖ Students take responsibility for their own trash.
- ❖ Students help to clean the room daily.
- ❖ Typically the teacher shakes the hand of each student at the end of the day, as the students are dismissed.

Any of the following incidents may lead to disciplinary actions, including student suspension or dismissal:

- Fighting, bullying or any behavior that violates the person or possessions of another.
- Foul, rude, obscene language or gestures.
- Belittling or teasing.
- Pushing, pinching, or hitting.
- Littering.
- Possession of collectable items, toys or electronic equipment.
- Physical or verbal sexual harassment.
- Possession of knives or other weapons.
- Drugs and/or drug paraphernalia, alcohol, or tobacco.

Weapons, drugs and/or drug paraphernalia, alcohol or tobacco will be immediately confiscated and, along with the student, taken to the office.

Waldorf education uses the principle of imitation as one method of directing the behavior of children. If the children see teachers treating each other, the students, and all property with care and respect, then they are likely to follow suit.

However, at times, disciplinary actions may have to be taken at school. This can include the child's name on the chalkboard, elimination from an activity, removal from the group, or the assignment of special tasks such as writing an apology, work as retribution and/or the use of a pedagogical story. Corporal punishment or punishment which shames, demeans, or belittles the child is not used.

Teachers may have to call upon parents for support in their efforts to bring a disruptive child back into the class flow. Disruptive behavior that does not respond to either verbal correction or techniques such as those listed above will warrant a call from the teacher to the child's parents. Consequences for such behaviors include, but are not limited to, sitting out at recess or removal from after school sports activities. A faculty member may inform colleagues of these difficulties and request therapeutic recommendations from the Care Group or a Child Study (please see Care Group Program for more information on the Child Study).

Continuing disruptions may necessitate a suspension (1 to 3 days) from school and school activities. If a grades student is having continuous difficulties following the classroom rules, the following actions will be taken by the teacher and the school:

- ❖ The Leadership Council will be notified
- ❖ A Parent/Teacher conference will be held
- ❖ The Care Group and additional faculty will observe the student in classroom settings and give recommendations.
- ❖ A Positive Behavior Support Plan will be utilized, and the Leadership Council will monitor the progress of the plan
  - The Positive Behavior Support Plan will contain but will not be limited to:
    - A timeframe for improvements.
    - Specific goals for the student.
    - Acceptance of the Behavior Plan will be documented by signatures of parent, student (when appropriate), and teacher and submitted to the Leadership Council.
    - A review of the plan carried over into another school year

When unimproved, repeated behavior disrupts or affects the safety and wellbeing of the class, the Class Teacher along with input from the Care Group, Pedagogical Chair(s) and Subjects, may ask that a child no longer attend SWS. If the Class Teacher involved is the Pedagogical Chair, a faculty representative would step in this place to offer support. The Leadership Council makes and manages the final decision. If a child is disenrolled, the Admissions Coordinator will notify the family and the Board. The Class Teacher will notify Special Subject teachers.

Similarly, if the relationship between the parents of a student and the School becomes contentious or otherwise unsuccessful, the school reserves the right to terminate enrollment at any time. This decision would be made by the Leadership Council. In the event of disenrollment, the Leadership Council will inform the parents, the faculty and staff, and the Board of Trustees.

## Waldorf Home Life

### Television and Other Media

Television, video, radio and electronic games have many noticeable effects on children. This includes shortened attention span, reduced perseverance, less initiative, and less play. A child's imagination is the vehicle for learning and growth, and children need opportunities to develop this crucial capacity.

Television watching is in the domain of the family, and you must decide what role it will play in your children's lives. The faculty strongly prefers that children not watch television, movies, or play electronic games because it negatively affects the classroom environment. The process of weaning your children from these influences takes courage and creativity on the family's part. Your child's teacher can suggest a number of books on this topic. Other parents who have changed media habits are also a great resource and can be supportive with ideas and play dates.

### Electronic Devices & Cell Phones

A reminder to both parents and students: electronic devices (with the exception of cell phones) may not be brought to school. Cell phones may not be used during school hours. Any student will be given access to an office phone when needed. Cell phones on field trips will be left to the discretion of the Class Teacher or other accompanying teachers.

The use of these devices compromises the quality of children's experience of the Waldorf pedagogy, including the social realm, the reverent attitude with which we enter the school day, and the calmness needed to focus on their coming day's work.

### Rest and Sleep

Being in school is both exciting and tiring to the children. To ease your child's transition, we suggest you provide quiet time after lunch and use the time after dinner for calming activities leading into a bedtime routine.

We get our deepest and most restful sleep during the hours before midnight. Seven o'clock is certainly not too early for a three- to six-year-old child's bedtime. Older children also need their rest, and an eight o'clock bedtime with a book is a soothing way to settle in. How nice it is for the child to wake up by himself in the morning, rested and refreshed and ready for an active day in school. Your child's teacher or any faculty member will be happy to share some suggestions on bedtime routines.

## **Home Toys**

A child thrives in an environment of simplicity and beauty and absorbs the impressions around him. A few simple, natural playthings will help enliven the child's creative play. We prefer that toys such as stuffed toys and electronic games stay at home.

Children are always welcome to bring gifts from nature to school, and they can find a place on the nature table for all to enjoy until the child is ready to take it home again. Please check with the teacher if your child wants to bring in an animal.

## **Recess and Outdoor Time**

Recess is an important part of the rhythm of any Waldorf school. Children benefit from the balancing effect of lively outdoor play. Parents must send their children to school with clothing appropriate for any conditions likely to occur in a given season, as it is the practice in any Waldorf school to go outside for recess daily, even when conditions are less than ideal. In the case of heavy rain, a teacher may elect to keep his or her class indoors. In the event of dangerously cold weather, which the school defines as a temperature factor of 10 degrees Fahrenheit or colder, teachers will hold indoor recesses.

## **Food and Hot Lunch**

Please help your child start the day with a wholesome breakfast, and pack nutritious lunches and snacks. Please do not send soda and sweets.

At an additional cost, lunches are provided through class fundraising efforts on various days throughout the week. These lunch programs are announced on the website and in the Welcome Packets. Please refer to the Fundraising section for lunch fundraiser policy information.

Most of the food offered in our lunch fundraiser program comes from private homes that are not licensed or inspected. (The pizza lunch comes from a local restaurant.) According to the PA Department of Agriculture, SWS is exempt from licensure or inspection under the Retail Food Facility Safety Act. Because we are a private school (not a retail food facility), we receive no public monies for our lunch program and do not offer our program to the public. Even so, we strongly encourage everyone who is preparing and/or serving lunches to follow the Safe Food Handling and Preparation recommendations from the US Department Of Agriculture. Please be informed of these conditions as you plan your lunch choices. If you have questions, please check with your Class Parent or Class Teacher.

## **Student Dress Code Policy**

As a Waldorf School, we work hard to create a beautiful environment for our children. We teach them to put care into everything they do. The teachers set examples by putting care into their work, their classrooms, and their clothing. Within the Waldorf approach, the unfolding of the child's freedom and individuality is best demonstrated in the student's work and relations with their classmates. We encourage children to be cleanly and neatly dressed in sturdy play clothing in good repair. This allows them to

participate in all activities. We prefer simple clothing, with no characters, cartoons, advertising, sports allegiances, or inappropriate-for-school images. The child's school experience is affected by clothing—both as the wearer and the observer. We seek to create a mood of reverence, wonder, and beauty that can live in the child. The final decision as to what is or is not school appropriate in regards to apparel, hair, and accessories rests with their teachers.

Please send children to school with the proper outerwear and shoes for all types of weather. You may leave rain boots, snow pants, a jacket, and a complete extra set of clothing in the classroom. Please label your child's clothing so it can be easily identified.

The following guidelines will ensure that students are dressed in a way that is consistent with our school philosophy:

- ❖ Simple, functional clothing with no media characters or writing of any kind.
  - Nature-inspired images are acceptable.
- ❖ Small logos are allowed on clothing but must follow the thumb rule, meaning they are too large if they cannot be covered by the child's thumb.
  - The exception being the SWS logo, which is allowed.
- ❖ Clothing must completely cover the torso and undergarments. And at no time may any part of a student's buttocks be exposed.
- ❖ No strapless tops (i.e. tube tops).
- ❖ Shoes should be sturdy and appropriate to the activities of the day.
  - Backless shoes, such as flip-flops, or shoes with electric lights are not allowed.
  - Closed-toe shoes must be worn during Practical Arts classes.
  - Athletic shoes must be worn during Games classes.
  - Early Childhood requires inside shoes. Shoes should be simple, well-fitted (does not fall off of feet) with a leather or flexible rubber sole that is not slippery. No media or flashing lights. Shoes should be easy for your child to change into.
- ❖ Hair must be neat, clean, and out of the face, avoiding extremes that become distractions.
- ❖ Jewelry is acceptable as long as it does not interfere with activities.
- ❖ In grades six through eight, light use of make-up may be worn.
- ❖ Festive attire may be requested for assemblies, class trips, or other special occasions.
  - This consists of a dress shirt or blouse, dress slacks, skirt or dress, and dress shoes and socks, with an optional sweater, vest jacket, or blazer, especially during the cold season.

If a student's attire does not meet the guidelines, it may be necessary to ask a parent to bring a change of clothes to ensure classroom consistency in student expectations. If faculty or parents have any questions, it is best to inquire about these from a Leadership Council member.

The above guidelines are intended to provide a general overview and not all possible stipulations. The spirit of the dress code—neat, clean, and respectful of a positive learning environment—should inform your child's attire. If unsure of an outfit or item, please ask prior to a student wearing it to school. Your child's teacher will be happy to help.

# **Photos and Social Media Policy**

## **Photos**

As noted in the annual enrollment agreement, SWS policy prohibits photographing or recording school events by anyone other than designated persons. These occasions include, but are not limited to, The Rose Ceremony, School Assemblies, Festivals, Concerts, Advent Garden and Class Plays.

Picture taking often makes the children self-aware and compromises their capacity to fully engage in their experience. Consistent with many of the activities we do each day (painting, drawing nature walks, etc.), we aim to keep the students focused and mindfully present. This preserves the freedom of the imagination while fostering the discipline of the will forces. Taking pictures diminishes this experience for the children. It is also contrary to the reverent mood that is oftentimes created in these events.

We recognize that photographic records can be important to you. At each event, one photographer for each class is assigned discrete access for picture taking. We request that designated photographers refrain from flash photography during school festivals and events.

For the Rose Ceremony and our concerts, a designated photographer will take photographs which are then made available to you. (Please see your Class Parent). Your class teacher may arrange a “photo call” after a class play so that you have a chance to photograph your child and their classmates in costume.

We thank you for respectfully observing this policy. The parents sitting next to you in these events will also appreciate your cooperation.

## **Internet and Social Media**

The prevalence of internet access and social networking has presented new challenges to everyone. Many times both young people and adults do not consider the possible negative consequences of internet activity. Parents should be vigilant in understanding the issues and vulnerabilities of these activities.

The school controls how photographs are used in our own publications, both electronic and printed. However, we cannot govern others’ use of photos on social media and therefore we cannot take responsibility for their actions. We ask that all members of our community be sensitive to each other’s privacy in this matter. SWS reserves the right to post photographs with signed permission. SWS policy also prohibits posting negative commentary of any kind about anyone in the school community or photographs taken within the context of the school without the express permission of the individual.

Please think carefully about these policies and the reasons underlying them. Violation of these policies may result in being asked to leave the school.

## **Lost and Found**

Lost items can be claimed in the baskets under the bench off Williams Hall. Labeling possessions is a must to ensure against losing valuable items.

## **Fundraising**

Each year we work towards fulfilling our mission and enhancing our programs and facilities. We manage operations within our annual budget and actual resources. Tuition covers roughly 70% of our total costs, and the remaining 30% is generated from fundraising efforts of the entire school community and through charitable gifts.

Our fundraisers are required to meet certain criteria that align with our mission and school values derived from the tenets of Waldorf Education. Themes, advertising, posters, invitations and decorations must be congruent with these values. There is a faculty liaison available to offer input to the fundraising chairperson and team regarding these criteria.

Any designated contributions are accepted with respect to the donor wishes; however, SWS reserves the right to reallocate funds to general operating expenses when necessary. Monetary gifts specified as memorial gifts will be deposited into our endowment fund.

## **Development and Fundraising Principles & Policies**

The Susquehanna Waldorf School is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. All donations to the school are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. The school gratefully accepts gifts of cash and cash equivalents including stocks, securities, bonds, bequests and charitable trusts. Donations of tangible items and services (in-kind) are often needed and requested. Many businesses offer corporate matches for employees who donate to educational entities. We encourage families to take advantage of these kinds of programs if their employer is willing to match a financial donation to the school. Additionally, our nonprofit status qualifies SWS to receive United Way donations.

### **Annual Giving Campaign**

Annual Giving is our most significant fundraising event each year. Annual Giving presents an enriching opportunity for our community—parents, Board members, faculty, grandparents, alumni, etc.—to make a statement of trust in the mission and workings of our school via financial gifts. The return on this investment comes when we see our gifts at work to enliven, foster and expand Rudolf Steiner’s vision for how our developing children become whole moral beings.

Tuition alone does not fully cover the cost of educating a child at SWS but rather represents the school’s desire to make Waldorf education accessible to as broad a population as possible. It is expected that each family participates in Annual Giving to whatever extent is fiscally possible.



## **Extra Give**

The primary event for Annual Giving is our participation each November in Extra Give, Lancaster County's Largest Day of Giving. Visit [ExtraGive.org](http://ExtraGive.org) during this 24-hour giving event to make your donation to SWS, knowing that every dollar you donate will be stretched by the Lancaster County Community Foundation.

## **Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program**

The Susquehanna Waldorf School participates in the Pennsylvania EITC program as an approved scholarship organization. This program allocates millions of dollars each year in tax credits to encourage incorporated businesses to donate money to scholarship and educational improvement organizations for primary and secondary education. Scholarship organizations, SWS included, offer tuition assistance to improve educational opportunities for children.

When your own business or a business you know participates as an EITC donor, any contribution to the Susquehanna Waldorf School will help a child develop a lifelong love of learning through a Waldorf educational experience. Each year a business can receive up to a maximum of \$200,000 in state tax credits.

Since 2002, Susquehanna Waldorf School has received tax credit donations each year that help to provide scholarship aid to SWS students and SWS faculty members. Visit [EITC](#) for more information. Contact the Business Manager to see how you can participate.

## **Susquehanna Waldorf School Endowment Fund**

Through the philanthropic support of alumni parents Deb Mauro and the late Rich Mauro, an endowment fund was established in 2006 through the [York County Community Foundation](#) ; YCCF manages, administers and distributes funds accordingly. If you have any questions regarding this fund or have an interest in being a part of it, please contact the school.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

As with many public and private schools, much of the work done outside the classroom is done by volunteers. The Susquehanna Waldorf School relies on this same practice. Volunteering gives each of us a sense of community and purpose. Our school is sustained by a strong parent body that supports the teachers in their work and the school as a whole to provide a Waldorf education for our children.

Parents are the cornerstone of many of our fundraising events. They produce our major fundraiser, the Winter Fair, along with the Auction/Gala. Through these volunteer efforts, parents become involved in the school, meet other parents and families, and get a taste of the wonders of Waldorf education.

## School Fundraiser Policy

Once the fundraising calendar is set, no other fundraisers will be placed on the calendar unless requested by the Board and/or Finance Committee. All proposals must be submitted to the Leadership Council. This includes all on- and off-site class fundraisers.

## Lunch Fundraiser Policy

Most of the food offered in our lunch fundraiser program comes from private homes that are not licensed or inspected (The pizza lunch comes from a local restaurant). According to the PA Department of Agriculture, SWS is exempt from licensure or inspection under the Retail Food Facility Safety Act. Because we are a private school (not a retail food facility), we receive no public monies for and do not offer our program to the public. Even so, we strongly encourage everyone who is preparing and/or serving lunches to follow the [Safe Food Handling and Preparation](#) recommendations from the US Department Of Agriculture. Please be informed of these conditions as you plan your lunch choices. If you have questions, please check with your Class Parent or Class Teacher.

Grades Classes may choose to participate in a lunch fundraising program. Lunch fundraiser proposals are considered on a first come, first serve basis. Please use the fundraising form provided by the Business Manager; it must be submitted to the Leadership Council no later than July 1. Grade 8 has the first choice of the lunch fundraiser.

Grade 6 - 8 may opt for additional short-term fundraisers after review and approval by the Leadership Council.

### **In addition to the above information, lunch fundraisers:**

1. Must have a parent point person for contact.
2. May not give refunds (e.g. snow days, sick days).
3. Are advertised on the SWS website by July for Semester I; updated flyers for Session II are to be advertised by January.

Any labor involved (e.g. photocopying, sorting materials, etc.) is done by the class. Due to limited staffing, classes are unable to send any food items home.

All monies earned from fundraisers must be given to the Business Manager to be deposited in the class's account. As they are part of the larger community, each class is encouraged to contribute a percentage of class fundraisers to the school.

When we miss school due to cancellation and that day happens to be a lunch day, that lunch is not refunded either by cash refund or alternate day replacement. The monetary value of that missed lunch becomes a random benefit to the class whose day it was to serve lunch. The assumption is that the forfeit of the missed lunch is recognized as a contribution or gift to that particular class. This gesture returns a great deal of goodwill to our community.

# Finance

## Tuition

Each year, the Finance Committee issues the tuition for the coming school year to the Board for approval. The new tuition price for the subsequent year is announced in February of each year. Tuition is paid by automatic electronic debit (for those paying monthly over 12 months) or by check (for those paying in full or the 50/50 plan. Any delayed, late or returned funds will incur a late fee. Any balance past due 30 days will be charged interest.

If an account goes into arrears beyond 30 days, SWS may request disenrollment of the student(s) in that family. The student will be readmitted at the discretion of SWS and only after full payment has been made or other arrangement is accepted by the school.

## Financial Scholarship

We are committed to a Financial Scholarship Program that is both appropriately responsive to our community and true to the intentions of Waldorf Education. Our scholarship program is needs-based and made possible by our strong sense of fiscal responsibility. The work of this program is accomplished by the Financial Aid Committee and overseen by the Finance Committee. Committee membership consists of the Business Manager, a Board member and one volunteer endorsed by the Board of Trustees.

Please check with the Admissions Coordinator about your interest in the program. You can also find more information on the [Admissions](#) page of our school website.

# Admissions

The Susquehanna Waldorf School seeks to develop a culturally and economically diverse school community. SWS is a non-sectarian school and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, religion, national or ethnic origin in its admissions or educational policies. Waldorf Education is designed to meet the needs of children with a range of intellectual, emotional and physical needs. We are happy to meet with families to assess whether we are able to meet the needs of any child with special requirements.

## Admissions Process

1. Parent/guardian requests and receives the information packet.
2. Parent/child(ren) tour school.
3. Parent/guardian sends completed application and a one-time \$130 nonrefundable application fee to the school office.
4. The Admissions Committee will review the application and schedule a developmental movement assessment with the Education Support teacher.

5. Parent interview is scheduled with Admissions and the Class Teacher. Topics to include:
  - a. Arrival/Dismissal
  - b. Class meetings
  - c. Class Parent/Parent Guild
  - d. Communication processes
  - e. Daily schedule
  - f. Dress code
  - g. Support lessons
  - h. Festivals
  - i. Materials, etc. needed for visit
  - j. Media awareness
  - k. Orchestra expectations – new students in Grades 3 -5 are expected to take up a string instrument; for older students, instrument is dependent upon student’s interest/ability and the balance of the current orchestra. Private lesson teacher list is given to parents.
  - l. Snacks/Lunches
  - m. Tuition, program fees and Financial Aid program
6. Student will attend for a class visit lasting 3-5 days
7. Class Teacher, along with Admissions and Educational Support, will meet with parents/guardians to share an enrollment decision.
8. Welcome Packet is given, which includes emergency form, calendar, handbook, directory, state purchase form, medical and dental forms, lunch forms.
9. Admissions drafts a formal acceptance letter with a copy to the Business Manager.
10. The Business Manager issues a digital Enrollment contract to the parent/guardian.
11. Enrollment agreement is signed electronically by the parents/guardians and is recorded by the Business Manager.
12. A home visit is scheduled by the Class Teacher.

Questions about application process and status are directed to Admissions. Applications are valid for the current fiscal year and must be resubmitted each subsequent year. Questions about the enrollment contract are directed to the Business Manager.

## **Evaluation of New Students**

### **Early Childhood**

A child entering Stepping Stone must be at least 2 years of age by September 1st. Potty-training is not required. A child entering Kindergarten must be at least 3 years of age by September 1st. Children must be potty-trained.

Upon receipt of an application and fee, the potential student is invited to visit the class for 1 or possibly 2 days. During this visit, the teacher has the opportunity to observe the child’s interactions with the other children as well as the child’s behavior. The teacher then shares observations about the child with the parents either by phone or personal interview.

If the teacher has any questions about whether the school can meet the needs of the potential student, an observation or assessment can be requested of the Care Group. Based on all the above, the teacher makes the final acceptance decision as well as whether there needs to be other contingencies regarding the potential student's enrollment.

## **Grades 1 - 8**

Upon receipt of an enrollment application and fee, a "Request to Obtain Student Records" form is given to the parents to fill out and return to the Admissions office. After application review, the candidate may be invited to visit the class for 3 - 5 days. During the visit, the teacher observes the child's interactions with the other children, evaluates the child's abilities, watches for any outstanding disciplinary issues, and observes the child's self-composure.

The teacher and the Admissions Committee then share observations about the child with the parents. The sharing of information during this interview will include the teacher having read the student's school records and the application thoroughly. If there is any question about whether the school can meet the needs of the candidate, further Care Group observation or assessment may be requested by the teacher. The Admissions Committee makes the final acceptance decision and decides whether there will be any other contingencies regarding the candidate's enrollment. Acceptance decisions are based on the child's academic abilities, potential, past achievement, behavior, their "fit" with the class and the school, and a family's support of the school's philosophy.

The Admissions Coordinator sends a letter of acceptance and the Business Manager will send an Enrollment Contract to the family.

If necessary, we may have to work with the local school district to help assess a student. Home-schooled students may be requested to bring student assessment forms from their school district or letters of recommendation.

## **Summer Provisional**

If a child enrolls at SWS during the summer months, formal acceptance of that student occurs after the first full week of the following school year. Because a formal classroom visit could not be scheduled during the school year, the first full week of school will be considered the visitation week. If any reason for a student to be declined arises by the end of the visitation week, any tuition monies paid to that point will be refunded.

## **Full Enrollment Policy**

The College of Teachers, through the Leadership Council in consultation with the individual teacher, will qualify full enrollment on a case by case basis. Even if a class is considered full, Admissions will continue to recruit, offer visits and interviews with the teacher, and create a waiting list for the class.

## Continuing Enrollment Procedure

By March of every year, New Enrollment Contracts are sent to all SWS families. Instructions are included to log in to the Achieve Parent Portal to renew your enrollment online for the upcoming school year.

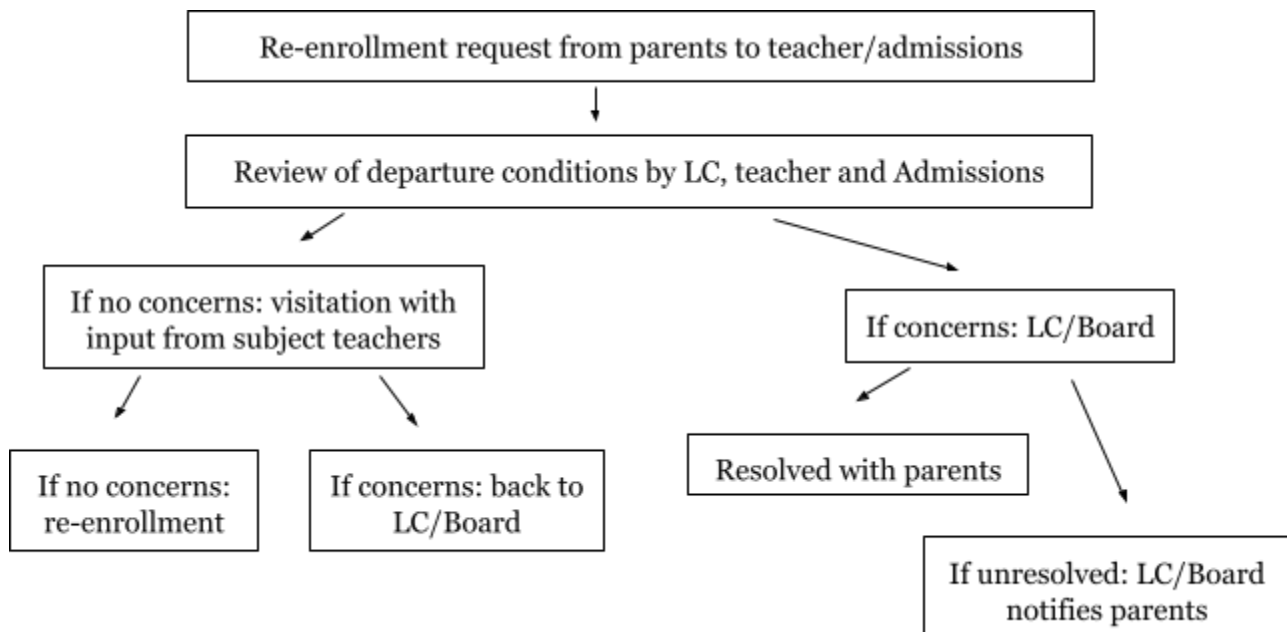
Completion is due by the third Monday of March. Timely completion is necessary and expected so that classroom assignments can be completed. **If contracts are not submitted by the third Monday of March, a new application fee (\$130.00) will be applied to the contract.**

The Board, Faculty and Administrative staff ask families to be punctual in completing this process as it is used to update student records for teachers to review and project class sizes each year. This will also ensure a place in the class for your child. Once the online continuing enrollment process is complete, a contract is issued. Questions regarding the contract should be directed to the Business Manager.

## Re-enrollment policy

When parents request re-enrollment for their child, the conditions of departure will be reviewed by the Leadership Council together with the grades or early childhood teacher and the Admissions Office. If there are no concerns, the Admissions Coordinator will schedule a 3 - 5 day visitation and collect input from the subject teachers during these days. If re-enrollment is not deemed to proceed, the LC or Board will inform the parents that their child cannot be admitted.

The re-enrollment process is illustrated in the flowchart below:



## First Grade Readiness

Kindergarten students may move on to grades if they are six years old by the spring preceding the September of first grade enrollment. We require a child to be enrolled in the 5 day, half day Kindergarten program (at the latest by January preceding September first grade enrollment) to ensure stamina, strength, and social maturity. The Care Group and Early Childhood teachers will assess all children who are potential first graders.

The steps the team takes are as follows:

1. The Care Group observes potential First Grade-ready children in Kindergarten.
2. The Care Group will assess any potential First Grader experiencing difficulties in Kindergarten or whose birthday is out of the window for first grade acceptance. The Educational Support person will notify parents, request permission, and secure assessment dates. Parents are invited to observe the assessment. There is no cost involved for this assessment.
3. After the assessment, the observations are taken back to the teachers to help create a support plan for the child or to accept a child into First Grade despite the birth date falling outside the spring time window. All plans and results will be brought back to the parents in written form and are open for discussion between the teacher and the parent.

A class study (of the potential rising First Graders) is presented to the Faculty by the Kindergarten teachers in the spring to help paint a picture of who this class may be as a whole. Several opportunities will be scheduled for the rising First Grade families to meet their new teacher and to get to know each other as a class. In addition, the First Grade teacher will schedule individual home visits during the summer months.

On the first day of school, the Rose Ceremony takes place to welcome the rising First Grade children to their teacher, to the grades, and to each other. Parents, particularly of the First Grade students, are encouraged to attend this ceremony, as it is a very special day for the entire school.

## Departure Policy

If at any point during the school year or during the summer a family makes the decision to disenroll, it is the responsibility of the parents to inform the class teacher(s) personally and to communicate in writing their intent to the Admissions or Business Office. The Admissions Coordinator will inform the Board and the Faculty of a student's disenrollment.

Financial Obligations at the time of disenrollment are as follows:

- ❖ If a student enrolls and then withdraws on or before Oct 31st of the enrolling school year (or by Jan 31st for a January enrollment), a \$750 contract cancellation fee will be assessed. SWS will refund or cancel any remaining tuition for the school year.
- ❖ If a student enrolls after Oct 31st (or after Jan 31st for a January enrollment), the full tuition payment will be due. No portion of tuition, paid or outstanding, will be refunded or canceled in the event of disenrollment.

- ❖ If a family relocates out of the area during the school year, the full tuition amount is still owed to the school.
- ❖ If SWS initiates the withdrawal of a student, the parents are only responsible for tuition cost for the time during which the child was enrolled.

Exit information is used for the purpose of improvement and understanding in our work directed by the Leadership Council and Board of Trustees. A questionnaire or exit interview is offered. Please contact Admissions.

These policies and procedures are subject to change as determined (by the Leadership Council or the Board of Trustees) to be in the best interests of the school or the students.

## **Association of Waldorf School (AWSNA)**

The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) supports educational research to further improve our schools with well-trained teachers, new curriculum development, educational publications, trained mentors, evaluators, and consultants. SWS is a member of the Mid-Atlantic Region of AWSNA. Original accreditation occurred in January of 2004. The school is currently in the re-accreditation cycle and will reach full accreditation status in the spring of 2023.



## Further Reading

***You Are Your Child's First Teacher*** by Rahima Baldwin

Discussion support for the child's development in the early years. This highly readable text offers a new way of seeing and understanding children and helps us answer issues about living in the modern world.

***The Children's Year*** by Stephanie Cooper

Rediscover the joy and satisfaction of making things children can play with and use in their daily life.

***Festivals, Family and Food*** by Diane Carey

Full of activities, food, songs, games, and celebrations.

***Lifeways: Working with Family Questions*** by Gudrun Davy

A book about family life and being a parent – about freedom and how tension between family life and personal fulfillment can be resolved.

***Who's Bringing Them Up? How to break the TV Habit*** by Martin Large

An examination of the effects of television on children and families. The book presents both gradual and drastic ways of cutting down on viewing.

***Rudolf Steiner in the Waldorf School*** by Rudolf Steiner

Informal lectures by Steiner from 1919 to 1924.

***Waldorf Schools Volume I: Kindergarten and the Early Grades and Waldorf Schools***

***Volume II: Upper Grades and High School ed.*** by Ruth Pusch

Collections of articles from the bulletin of North American Waldorf Schools on a wide variety of school topics.

***Understanding Waldorf Education Teaching from the Inside Out*** by Jack Petrash

A wonderfully informative book that will help parents/guardians come to a deeper appreciation of their child's education.

***Waldorf Education: A Family Guide*** by Pamela J. Fenner and Karen L. Rivers

Highly recommended for new parents. This compilation addresses questions and concerns of parents.

***Education Towards Freedom: Rudolf Steiner Education*** by F. Calgren, B. Masters, and A. Klingborg

A comprehensive introduction to Waldorf education includes many beautiful illustrations.

***School As a Journey*** by Torin Finser

An absorbing account of one teacher's journey with his class, written for both parents and teachers.

\*For expanded references, please visit the [Online Waldorf Library](#).