

# **Susquehanna Waldorf School**

## **All School Handbook**



*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.*

Updated 11/2021

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# 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 (SWS) has grown to provide classes for children from infancy through grade eight. In June 2021 SWS was accredited by both the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). 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 Kindertagesstätten.

## Our Mission Statement

*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.*

## Our Vision Statement

*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. With the mentoring support of experienced Waldorf teacher Dorothea Williams, Linda (Heywood-Getz) Koppenhaver taught the first class. Dr. Hal Williams, an anthroposophical doctor, helped choose the school's current name and served on the 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, PhD., and others,

Boel helped the school re-incorporate, become established as a non-profit organization, and join the Federation of Waldorf Schools.

The Lancaster Friends Meetinghouse had provided a warm 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 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, 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. The Management Team was formed to oversee the daily 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. In the fall of 2021, the school hired a Head of School to lead in a collaborative style with the Leadership Council and the Teachers' College, governed by the Board of Trustees. The Covid-19 pandemic provided enrollment and operation challenges but outdoor classrooms, ventilation in indoor classrooms, and mandatory protective face masks helped to keep the faculty and staff safe and the school open.

### **Some historical highlights:**

1987 Preschool founded at Lancaster Friends Meeting

1989 Moved to Marietta; First grade offered for the first time

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

1992-3 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 a mentor

1999 Seventh grade added; Parent-Child classes begin; Mandate system implemented

2000 Admissions Coordinator and Business Manager hired; first Development Committee

2001 Eighth grade added and first eighth-grade class graduated

2002-3 First Development Coordinator hired

2003 Building purchased; First AWSNA accreditation

2004 First Shepherds' Play performed

2005-6 New logo

2007 First Middle School Support Teacher; Endowment began

2008-9 Lancaster City Parent/Child satellite

2010-11 Leadership Council founded; Parent Association renamed as Parent Guild; middle-school clubs formed

2011-12 Celebration of Twenty-Fifth Year

2013 Purchased a school van

2014 Director of Admissions and Marketing hired

2016 Celebrated 30th Anniversary

2017 Expanded Early Childhood Program; Full-time Eurythmy program

2018 Created SWS' first School Administrator position and hired an Administrator; Added nursery program (Stepping Stones); Launched a new website and updated marketing materials

2021 Hired a new Head of School with extensive experience in the National Association of Independent School best practices; Accredited by PAIS and AWSNA.

## **Health and Safety Plan 2021-2022**

We at SWS are committed to caring for those around us, our families, loved ones, and the greater community. This school year, SWS will require masks indoors. Masks will be optional outdoors.

The SWS Task Force continues to monitor the CDC and PDE recommendations and guidelines. Our goal is to provide as much of a "normal" school year as possible. SWS administration will assist families or staff members seeking referrals to local Covid vaccination clinics and testing sites. We are strongly encouraging all those who can be vaccinated to do so.

The mitigation efforts include:

- **Masks required indoors**
- **Outdoor masking is at the discretion of each family**
- **Air filtration and ventilation in each classroom**
- **Spacing of 3 feet of distance, as feasible**
- **Reduced sharing of supplies**
- **Continued frequent hand washing**
- **Continued enhanced cleaning protocols**
- **Requiring students and staff to stay home when any symptoms are present**
- **Daily self-screening at home prior to arrival for everyone, children and adults alike**
- **Adherence to the CDC regulations and requirements for those with symptoms, positive test results, &/or COVID exposure.**
  - **Please see the CDC [guidelines](#) for more information.**

# Governance and Organization Structure

The leadership of our school is shared among the members of the Board of Trustees, the Head of School, and the Leadership Council.

## Decision-Making at SWS

Decisions are reached by consensus within all decision-making groups. Within the Leadership Council, and the Board, a quorum must be met to make a decision.

Parent input on important school issues has a formal channel in the Head of School and Leadership Council and is sought and encouraged.

## The Board of Trustees

The purpose of the Board of Trustees is governance of the school. The Board hires the Head of School to operate the school following a plan provided by the Board of Trustees. The responsibility of the Board is the long-term fiscal and legal sustainability of the school. The Board ensures that the school will be able to sustain itself in optimal fiscal condition, will be responsible stewards of the facilities and land, and will continue to provide Waldorf education into the future. 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. A key aspect of the Board's work is their preparation and approval of the school's annual budget, which is presented at an All-School Meeting. The Board conducts a self-evaluation of its work by the beginning of April of each year, at which time the Head of School and Leadership Council also reviews the Board's work and makes recommendations.

## The Head of School & Leadership Council

Day-to-day and long-term planning is the responsibility of the Head of School and Leadership Council. Their job is to help all faculty and staff members live up to the agreements, expectations, and aspirations we all have for ourselves and each other as professionals in our field.

The Head of School, along with 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 work of the Head of School and Leadership Council is informed by program results and feedback from all constituent groups.

The Leadership Council membership consists of faculty members and the Business Manager. These members are chosen by the full faculty and staff, and their work is reviewed annually by the Head of School.

The Leadership Council and the Head of School meet weekly as a unit, and with the faculty during weekly after-school College meetings. All members of the community are invited to share suggestions and concerns, the team will promptly respond directly to the matter or redirect the matter to its proper place.

## **Section Chairs**

The Section Chairs carry the management and visionary leadership of the sections of the school: Early Childhood, Grades, and Specialty Subjects. These Chairs proactively guide work in the section meetings to strengthen pedagogy within a healthy Waldorf school environment. The Chairs are chosen annually by their sections, receive delegated tasks from the Leadership Council, and keep LC informed of their activities and decisions.

## **Administrative Staff**

In addition to the Head of School, we have a Director of Admissions and Marketing who leads our work in outreach and marketing, admissions, and enrollment. Our Business Manager is responsible for financial and contractual agreements. The Marketing and Communications Associate assists Admissions & Marketing in marketing, communications, and social media outreach. Our Administrative Assistant staffs our front desk and coordinates record-keeping and school communications.

## **Business and Financial Management**

The ultimate responsibility of the financial state of the Susquehanna Waldorf School lies with the Board of Trustees. The Finance Committee, which is composed of the Board Treasurer, the Business Manager, the Head of School, and representatives from the Board, is responsible for ensuring the present and future 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, seeking approval of any proposed bottom line changes from the Board, and formulating investment policies.

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. In conjunction with the Business Manager, the Treasurer prepares and presents annual reports to the Board, 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.

## **Human Resources**

The Human Resource Committee is a joint committee of two members from the Board of Trustees and the Leadership Council and includes the Head of School. The Board is responsible for hiring the Head of School, Business Manager, and the Director of Admissions and Marketing and overseeing their work. The Board also oversees the work of employees who maintain the school facilities. All other human resource issues, including hiring, termination, job descriptions, and professional development, are handled by the Leadership Council and the Head of School. Input on teaching candidates 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 Facilities Committee members are responsible for building maintenance, improvements, and the surrounding grounds. They meet as needed to coordinate, oversee, and complete projects. The Committee keeps the interior spaces and outside areas, including the playground and parking lot, aesthetically pleasing and safe and within state regulations.

The Facilities Committee strives to support all aspects of sustainable living, including using green cleaning products and rendering services from local businesses whenever possible to support maintenance and repair projects. At this point, we continue employing a pest control company to limit the number of critters visiting our school.

The staff's commitment to sustainability keeps us recycling our paper and cardboard and ordering green office products.

# Our Parents

## The Parent Pledge

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

Attendance at parent meetings helps to ensure the class community and can be mutually supportive and understanding of the curriculum and its foundations. The conferences are the Waldorf equivalent to 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 in 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 Parents who take the lead to organize parents, to help with class events, and, at times, all-school events.

### **I pledge to support the Parent Guild by keeping informed about and 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 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 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

Class Parents work directly with the teacher in developing the class community. All aspects of Class Parent work is under the direction of the class teacher. Class Parents frequently communicate with the class teacher and are knowledgeable about the school and its traditions.

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

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year for private and comprehensive discussions between parents and teachers concerning the progress and development of the child. These conferences are the Waldorf equivalent to 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.

Attendance at Parent-Teacher Conferences by all Parents/Guardians of the child(ren) is strongly encouraged. Due to the sensitive nature of the conversations that may occur at Parent-Teacher Conferences, only those adults with legal custody of the child(ren) may attend those conferences unless mutually agreed to, in writing, by all adults with legal custody. Should questions or issues arise, SWS may request a copy of the Court document granting legal custody.

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 come directly to the school office for the attention of the Receptionist. The evaluations and recommendations will be given to the proper teachers to fill out and return to the Receptionist. 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**

Our school newsletter is emailed weekly, on Thursdays. The Heartbeat contains articles of interest and updates by the Head of School, 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.

Submissions to the Heartbeat may be sent to [erin.sweeney@susquehanna.org](mailto:erin.sweeney@susquehanna.org). We will accept classified ads, but no commercial or political endorsements or personal promotions.

### **OneCallNow**

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 notifications added. Less urgent notices will be delivered by email and/or text.

To activate the OneCallNow text messaging, text: ALERT 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 the calendar and scheduling updates will be announced in the Heartbeat.

## **SWS All School Handbook and Early Childhood Handbook**

Our school handbooks offer a comprehensive view of the school's identity, policies, and procedures. These handbooks are posted on our [website](#).

## **School Directory**

The school directory contains the class list and alphabetical entries of each family. It also lists the Faculty, Administrative Staff, and the Executive Committee members of the Board of Trustees. 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 sometime in the early fall. 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 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 uniquely 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 children'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 time frames.

## **Visitation and Participation of Non-Enrolled Students**

Families are invited to make arrangements with our Director of Admissions and Marketing and the individual's former teacher for student visits.

If former students (including alumni as well as students who have not graduated from SWS) would like to visit SWS during the school day, their families should request the teacher and the teacher will contact LC for consideration. 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, former students must be accompanied by an adult when in the building or on school property. This policy does not apply to visiting SWS graduates.

Often part of a visit will include a volunteer service element. These arrangements will be coordinated by the class teacher.

## **Nondiscrimination Policy**

The Susquehanna Waldorf School follows a policy of nondiscrimination in all aspects of operation and does not discriminate against any person based on 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 Diversity**

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**

An operator, faculty, or staff person who has reason to believe that a child enrolled in the facility has been abused is required to report suspected child abuse to Child Protective Services. A written report regarding the suspected child abuse shall be submitted by the operator, faculty, or staff person to CPS, within 48 hours.

# **The School Day**

The school day begins at 8:15 am and ends by 3:15 pm. 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. Parents must be 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 8:00 am.** Parents who need to drop their child off before 8 am. must utilize the Sunrise Program. **Parents are not to leave their children in the school or on the playground unsupervised.**

Grades students are dismissed at 3:15 pm. Parents, please be prompt when picking up your child. At 3:30 students not picked up will be taken to the Sunset Program and parents charged accordingly. Families who need childcare beyond normal dismissal time can enroll their children in the Sunset Program. (See the "Sunset Program" in the Extended Care section for details).

Parents should inform the teachers and the office, in writing, of any changes to persons who are authorized to pick up their children, as well as any other schedule changes.

## 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, please walk your child to the front desk or office to one of our administrative staff members. 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 email or call the front desk before 8:15 am. 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 illnesses, 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 under 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 the 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. For more information visit the PA Dept. of Education and [Compulsory School Attendance](#).

## **Timeliness and Pickups**

Grades children will be dismissed at 3:15 pm. in front of the school building. (For Kindergarten children, please refer to the Early Childhood handbook for arrival and dismissal policies.) Please be prompt in picking up your grades child(ren) at 3:15 pm., as it can be frightening or saddening to a child to feel forgotten, even for just 10 minutes. If you think you will be late, please call the office so that we can reassure your child that you are on your way. At 3:30 pm., your child will be placed in the Sunset Program according to the terms of the Emergency Situations section of the Extended Care Programs in this handbook. A second occurrence and all occurrences thereafter will each incur a \$25 fee.

## **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 may 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 car-pool 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 Ms. Erin. Currently, the following schools provide bus transportation to the Susquehanna Waldorf School:

Donegal  
Hempfield  
Eastern York

Manheim Central  
Elizabethtown  
Penn Manor

Once bus arrangements are established, parents are required to notify the bus company directly when their child will not be riding the bus; for example, due to illness, class field trips, or other scheduled absences, etc. This communication is very important to the bus drivers.

The bus services ask that your children be at the assigned bus stop 5 minutes ahead of the scheduled pick-up time in the morning. Their bus schedules are tight and they ask all for their cooperation to help keep the buses on schedule. This is important as well to our teachers so that the 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 Receptionist, 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 Receptionist to write the authorization note to the bus driver. Please note that busses will not transport non-registered students.

## Walkers

A [Walk-Waiver form](#) specific to walking home from SWS must be completed before a student may walk unaccompanied from school. **This is only available to families who live within a ½ mile radius of the school and the student is in grades 5-8.** Students must go directly to their approved destination and cross at designated crosswalks. Crossing guards are not provided.

## Parking

Please observe the “No Parking” signs in front of the school so that buses and 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.**

*Note:* 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 the 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.

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 a valid driver's license and insurance certificate, if driving. These will be kept on file in the office.

When a situation arises wherein the School 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, then actions to be undertaken by the Leadership Council can include but not be limited to: Meeting with the parent for conversation, barring parent from chaperoning, from acting as a driver on field trips, from being with the students or alone with the students, or volunteering at school events, or even to be barred from being on the school property; all depending on the severity or length of time since criminal charges had 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 their parent's permission. Pennsylvania Dept. of Motor Vehicles recommends all children ages 12 and under ride in the rear seat.*

*The effects of alcoholic beverages are of serious concern to many individuals and families. Therefore, their use on any school-sponsored trip is prohibited.*

*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**

Class 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 is a doctor's excuse to be provided to the Class Teacher and the Administrative Associate. If the doctor's excuse prevents a child from attending the overnight class trip, they will then attend school under the supervision of a teacher completing school assignments while the rest of the class is away. Teachers will inform parents of the arrangements and the costs.

### **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 teachers 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 in the trip provided the family's financial account is in good standing.

# Playground Usage, Rules, and Consequences

## Playground Use After School

The playground is open to families until 3:45 pm. At that time, we ask that the playground be cleared so that the Sunset program children can go outside to enjoy the playground until the program ends at 5:30 pm. With more pleasant temperatures, our playground becomes popular after dismissal time. It's a natural place for children to let out some playful after-school energy and for parents to relax and catch up with one another. All of this is very valuable to a healthy school community. However, the 3:45 pm closing time will make the playground available to the Sunset children, allowing us to respect the Sunset parent/school fee payment agreement. We do hope that families will continue to make daily use of the playground after school until 3:45.

## Playground Rules

- Anything a teacher says is to be obeyed immediately.
- No child may leave the school premises during school hours without a teacher or a parent.
- Climbing over the fences is not allowed.
- Once outside for recess, children need to ask for permission to enter the building.
- Throwing gravel, rocks, sand, snowballs, etc. is not allowed.
- No child may leave the playground area to retrieve a ball without a teacher's permission and supervision.
- Foul or abusive language will not be tolerated.
- Playing outside the fence is reserved for grades four and up.

## *Consequences*

When a rule is willfully broken on the playground, the child who broke the rule will be sent to sit down. A teacher will come to the child within 5 minutes to restate the situation, listen to the child, and confirm the bottom line. The class teacher may also choose to do some or all of the following:

1. Have a conversation with the child to understand what is going on and identify a plan to avoid a repeat of the behavior.
2. Call the child's parents.
3. Seek help from the Care Group committee or their colleagues.

## 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.

# Early Childhood Programs

In the Early Childhood programs at the Susquehanna Waldorf School, the seeds for a love of work and learning are sown and 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 early 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 material from nature provides 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](#) for specific dates and times of classes.

To enroll, please contact the Admissions Director, [Michelle.Wann@susquehanna.org](mailto:Michelle.Wann@susquehanna.org), or visit [SWS Admissions](#).

## Stepping Stones

This program offers toddlers a beautiful, peaceful, and nurturing home-like environment to take their "first steps" into class on their own. A strong daily rhythm is held, filled with artistic endeavors, music, baking, and outdoor time. Special attention is given to the development of socialization with their peers. Wonder, awe, and respect for nature, the world around us, and one another are central to the Stepping Stone classroom.

## Mixed-Age Kindergarten

The Susquehanna Waldorf School offers 3, 4, and 5-day mixed-age kindergarten programs for children aged 3 to 6 years. Parents may choose the days their children attend. However, we recommend that they be consecutive. Both half-day (8:15 a.m. to 12:00 noon) and full-day (8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.) programs are available.

The Susquehanna Waldorf School strongly recommends that children who will go to first grade the following school year attend 5-day kindergarten (at the latest by January of the preceding September First Grade enrollment) to ensure stamina, strength, and social maturity. Your child's individual needs will be assessed by their teacher.

## **Afternoon Garden**

Afternoon Garden in 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. Each child is provided with a mat, pillow, and blanket and is expected to rest quietly. This is followed by a time of outdoor play (weather permitting) providing the balance needed after a busy morning. Please note that the Afternoon Garden is not available as a stand-alone program. Speak to your teacher or Admissions for more details. Advance registration is required as Afternoon Garden is not a drop-in program.

## **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, 4 days to 5 days 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.

# **Additional School Programs**

## **Extended Care Programs**

### **Sunrise Program**

This program provides childcare for students enrolled in Kindergarten through 8th Grade, from 7-8a.m., all days school is in session. This program has 10 spaces available. A caregiver or parent must enter the Sunrise classroom space with the student and sign them in. An hourly fee applies, which is billed monthly.

### **Sunset Program & Policies**

This program provides childcare and activities for SWS students enrolled in full-day Kindergarten through 8th Grade from 3:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The program has 20 spaces available. Parents who need regular childcare should enroll their children in this program to ensure availability.

Daily registration takes place with the Administrative Assistant, Ms. Erin. Parents must email/call no later than 1:00 p.m. for same-day use. If the program is full, parents will be informed and will need to make other childcare arrangements. If there is space available, your child's name will be added to that day's roster. The

person picking up the child will check in with the Sunset staff to sign the child out and indicate the time of pick up. An hourly fee applies, which is billed monthly.

**Contact the Administrative Assistant to enroll in either Sunrise or Sunset or for further information. [receptionist@susquehanna.org](mailto:receptionist@susquehanna.org) or 717-426-4506**

## **Extenuating Circumstances**

If a child is not picked up by 5:30 p.m, the Sunset staff will call the parent/caregiver. If they are unable to reach them, a call will be made to the child's emergency contacts and request for them to pick up the child immediately.

We understand weather and traffic conditions can cause tardiness. Please have alternate care arrangements for these occasions and put them into place as soon as it becomes apparent that you will be arriving past 5:30 p.m.

Children in full-day Kindergarten or classes 1-8, who are still on-site after their 3:15 dismissal, will be placed in the Sunset program at 3:30. Children who miss their bus or who are waiting for a late carpool pick up will be placed in the Sunset program at 3:30. The child's name will be signed into the logbook. A member of the Administrative or Sunset staff will contact the parent or other authorized pick-up person to come for the child. Normal Sunset fees will apply.

Each family is allowed one emergency late pick up without a fee. The second will incur a **\$25 fee**. Our Sunset staff may have other obligations after working at the school.

## **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 developmentally appropriate times.

In **Class 1**, the children begin to play the CHOROI interval flute, the pentatonic lyre, and chime bars as their first instruments. In **Class 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 **Class 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 **Class 8**.

## **Stringed Instruments and Orchestra Program**

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

The **Class 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 that 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. All students at SWS are required to take string instrument lessons by January of their **Class 3** year. A list of string instructors with all pertinent information will be provided. Parents will be responsible for arranging lessons and instrument rental; the cost of which is not included in the tuition. The class teacher will follow up to make sure the children have begun taking lessons on a stringed instrument.

Private lessons must be with a professional music teacher on a weekly basis and are required to continue from January of **Class 3** through the end of **Class 8**. Lessons may take place with one of the private music teachers teaching at the school, either during the school day or outside of school hours. Several music instructors are available at SWS for lessons. These 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.

All students in **Classes 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 not the best-suited instrument for the student, the student may choose a woodwind instrument in **Class 6** or a brass instrument in **Class 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 non-compliance 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 student's class is scheduled to perform at an event, the student's attendance is required. Specific requirements will appear in the orchestra and chorus agreement that will be given to students in Classes 4 through 8 at the beginning of the school year.

## **Performance Attire**

To help elevate self-esteem and confidence while performing, the students' attire will usually consist of the following: a white dress shirt or blouse, black dress slacks, skirt, or dress, and black dress shoes and socks, with an optional sweater, vest jacket, or blazer, especially during the cold season. No sneakers. 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 for children with developmental and/or emotional challenges. 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 children with extra needs 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 for a fee and are billed in September and January.

The Care Group offers support for the admissions process as well as for the maintenance of a 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. The classroom observation may lead to identifying issues within the classroom between students or individual students themselves. This, in turn, may lead to creating an improvement plan for the class as a whole or 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 of 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 falls on the weekend after the last day of school. The Eighth Grade teacher uses their discretion regarding the attire and the location. Each student may participate and will receive a graduation certificate provided the family's financial account is in good standing.

## **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, original directions for dispensing on file, and only dispensed by a member of the Administrative staff.

# Immunizations

Susquehanna Waldorf School complies with Pennsylvania State Immunization Law for grades kindergarten through eighth. 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 children.

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 choose to immunize their children, some opt not to immunize their children, or exclude specific immunizations, or 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 according 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 chickenpox, 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 office) must be completed, according to PA State regulations. The completed exemption form will then be placed in your child's health file in the SWS office.

Every 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. They conduct annual vision and hearing screenings, as well as the height and weight charting for all children in kindergarten and the grades. 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 notified, scheduled dates.

# Head Lice Policy

The Susquehanna Waldorf School has adopted the following policy. Because we do not have a school nurse, 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. All siblings of suspected cases will also be inspected and may
2. 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 links to educational materials to parents.
4. The school has a "No Lice/No Nit Policy". Students will be readmitted to school only after all lice/nits are removed and written approval from a doctor or licensed removal service is received.
5. A "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.

### Other Emergencies

The Susquehanna Waldorf School lies outside the Three Mile Island 10-mile evacuation circle. If an emergency concerning Three Mile Island were to occur, children who live within the 10-mile radius will be kept at school until a parent or authorized person picks up the child. An emergency operations plan is available in the office.

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 pick your child up early.

Emergency drills are conducted regularly as required by the state.

# Conduct and Discipline

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

## Classroom Conduct and Expectations

- Class starts on time; children are on time.
- The main lesson teacher shakes the hand and looks into the eyes of each student.
  - The day begins with a verse.
- Students are expected to follow the student 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 during recess time.
- 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.
- The class is to stand quietly (in their classroom or outside the subject teacher's classroom) and be ready to greet the special subjects teacher and engage in the lesson.
- Unrelated interruptions are discouraged.
- Students take responsibility for their trash.
- Students help to clean the room daily.
- 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 collectible 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 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, removal from after-school sports activities, and after-school detentions. 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 Behavior Improvement Plan will be utilized, and LC will monitor the progress of the plan
  - The Behavior Plan will contain but will not be limited to:
    - A time frame for improvements
    - Specific goals for the student
    - Acceptance of the Behavior Plan will be documented by the signatures of a parent, student, are and teacher, and submitted to LC.
    - A review of the plan carried over into another school year

\*At some point in this process, a Child Study may be conducted if agreed upon by all parties.

When unimproved, repeated behavior disrupts or affects the safety and well-being of the class, the Class Teacher along with input from the Care Group, Pedagogical Chair(s), and Special Subject teachers, may ask that a child no longer attend the school. If the Class Teacher involved is the Pedagogical Chair(s), a faculty representative would step in this place to offer support. The Leadership Council would receive an update on how the process has been followed.

If a child is disenrolled, the Head of School will notify the family and the Board. The Class Teacher will notify the Special Subject teachers.

## **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 several books on this topic. Other parents who have changed media habits are also a great resource and can be supportive with ideas and playdates.

## **Electronic Devices & Cell Phones**

A reminder to 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.

During the hours before midnight, we get our deepest and most restful sleep. 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 themselves 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 them. 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 the 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 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 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 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, for the wearer and the observers as well. 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 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 is the SWS logo, which is allowed.
- Clothing must cover the torso and underwear.
- 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 and athletic shoes must be worn during Games classes.
- 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 white dress shirt or blouse, black dress slacks, skirt or dress, and black dress shoes and socks, with an optional sweater, vest jacket, or blazer, especially during the colder seasons. No sneakers.

If a faculty or staff member finds a student's attire, hair, or accessorizing is counter to any of the above, that person may speak to the child's teacher or Leadership Council if necessary. LC may approach the child's parent for further discussion. It is within the Leadership Council and faculty's purview to make decisions around the appropriateness of a child's appearance at school. The Leadership Council asks the parents to support the dress code. If you have any questions regarding the dress code or are unsure about your child's attire, feel free to talk to your child's teacher or an LC member.

## **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 which 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 professional photographer will take photographs which are then made available to you. (Please see your Class Parent). Your class teacher may arrange a "photocall" after a class play so that you have a chance to photograph your child and their classmates in their costumes.

We thank you for respectfully observing this policy. The parents sitting next to you at 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 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 Williams Hall. Labeling possessions is a must to ensure against losing valuable items.

## **Fundraising**

Each year we work towards fulfilling our mission as well as enhancing programs and facilities. We manage operations within our annual budget and actual resources. Tuition covers roughly 85% of our total costs and the remaining 15% is generated from fundraising efforts of the entire school community and through charitable gifts.

Our Fundraisers are required to meet certain criteria that align each effort 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's 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**

The Annual Campaign is our most significant fundraising effort of the year, which differs from our other fundraising efforts in a very important way.

The Annual Giving Campaign presents an enriching opportunity for our community—parents, Board Members, faculty, grandparents, alumni, etc.—to make a statement of trust in the mission and works of our school through our 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 our annual fund drive to whatever extent is fiscally possible.

SWS participates in charitable shopping programs such as [Stauffers of Kissel Hill](#), [AmazonSmile](#), and [Boxtops for Education](#). Be sure to designate SWS as your preferred nonprofit!

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

The Susquehanna Waldorf School participates in the Pennsylvania EITC program as an approved scholarship organization. This program provides an opportunity for qualifying families to redirect their state tax payment to the SWS student scholarship fund. The scholarship fund then creates more opportunities for SWS to expand the diversity of our school population and enhance the environment for all SWS students.

Since 2002, Susquehanna Waldorf School has received tax credit donations each year which help to provide scholarship aid to SWS students. Contact the Head of School and visit [EITC](#) for more information.

## **Extraordinary Give**

SWS participates each November in the Extraordinary Give, Lancaster County’s Largest Day of Giving. During this 24-hours of giving event, visit [ExtraGive.org](#) to make your donation to SWS knowing that every dollar you donate will be stretched by the Lancaster County Community Foundation.

## **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](#) who manages, administers, and distributes the 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 a sense of meaning. Our school is sustained by a strong parent body; one that supports their 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 Faire, 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.

## **Class and 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](#) 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 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 and it must be submitted to the Leadership Council no later than July 1. Class 8 has the first choice of lunch fundraiser.

Class 6 through 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 (i.e. snow days, sick days);
3. Forms for Semester I are to be prepared by July and then are advertised on the website. Updated flyers for Session II are to be ready by January.
4. Any labor involved (i.e. copying, etc.) is done by the class.
5. 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 just happens, then, to be 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 to the Board for approval, the tuition for the coming school year. The final figure is presented at the All-School meeting.

The monthly plan is paid by electronic draft over 12 months. Any delayed, late or returned funds subject the account to 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 dis enrollment 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 another arrangement is accepted by the school.

## Financial Scholarship

We are committed to a Financial Scholarship Program that is both appropriately responsive to our community while remaining true to the intentions of Waldorf Education. Our program attempts to work out of the original impulse of Waldorf Education and in service to the tenets of the Threefold Social Order.

Our Scholarship program is needs-based and made possible by our strong sense of fiscal responsibility. The work of this program is accomplished by a committee led by the Board Treasurer and composed of the Board Executive Committee and Business Manager.

More information about the program can be found on the [Admissions page](#) of our school website.

# Admissions

The SWS seeks to develop a culturally and economically diverse school community. SWS is a non-sectarian school and does not discriminate based on race, color, gender, handicap, 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) visit school.
3. Parent/guardian sends completed application and a one-time \$125 nonrefundable application fee to the school office.
4. A 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 the visit
  - j. Media awareness
  - k. Orchestra expectations – new students in classes 3 through 5 are expected to take up a string instrument; older students-instrument dependent upon student’s interest and ability, and balance of orchestra. A private lesson teacher list is given to parents.
  - l. Snacks/Lunches
  - m. Tuition, program fees, and Financial Aid program
5. Class Teachers, along with Admissions and Educational Support, meet with parents/guardians.
  6. Welcome Packet is given which includes emergency form, calendar, handbook, directory, state purchase form, medical and dental forms, lunch forms.
  7. Admissions drafts a formal acceptance letter with a copy to the Business Manager.
  8. Enrollment contract is sent to parent/guardian.
  9. Enrollment agreement is returned with signatures of parents/guardians. The Business Manager signs the agreement.
  10. A home visit is scheduled by the Class Teacher.

Questions about the 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**

### **Kindergarten**

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 up to three 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 by a 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 need to be other contingencies regarding the potential student’s enrollment.

### **Classes 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. The teacher, parents, and Admissions meet before the child’s visit. The candidate is invited to visit the class for three to five 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, then, shares observations about the child with the parents. The sharing of information during this interview will include the teacher reading 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 teacher makes the final acceptance decision and 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.

After the teacher notifies the Admissions Office of an acceptance, the Director of Admissions and Marketing sends a letter of acceptance and the Business Manager will send an Enrollment Agreement (contract) to the family.

If necessary, we may have to work with the local school district to help assess a student. Homeschooled students may be requested to bring student assessment forms from their school district.

## **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. By the end of the visitation week, if there is any reason for a student to be declined any tuition monies paid to that point are 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, continuing enrollment information is 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 approximately two to three weeks later.

We 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 assure 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 Head of School and Leadership Council together with the class teacher and the Admissions Office. If there are no

concerns the teacher will schedule a 3-5 day visitation and collect input from the subject teachers during these days and re-enrollment proceeds, if not, the Head of School will inform the parents that their child cannot be admitted.

## **First Grade Readiness**

Kindergarten students may move on to grades if they are six years old by July 1st preceding the September enrollment. We also strongly recommend a child to be enrolled in the five-day half-day Kindergarten program (at the latest by January of the preceding September first grade enrollment) to ensure stamina strength and social maturity. The Care Group along with the 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 in 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 July 1st 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 welcoming the rising First Grade children to their teacher, to the grades, and 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 the summer, a family decides to dis-enroll it is the responsibility of the parents to inform the class teacher(s) personally and to communicate in writing their intent to the Head of School and the Business office.

The Head of School will inform the Board and the Faculty of a student's dis-enrollment.

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

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 Head of School, Leadership Council, or the Board of Trustees.

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

The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) is a non-profit membership organization of independent Waldorf schools and institutes in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. AWSNA's mission is to support schools through collaborative regional work, professional and resource development, accreditation, community outreach, and advocacy. SWS is a full member of the Mid-Atlantic Region of AWSNA and is accredited by AWSNA and by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools (PAIS).