

Our Mission Statement

"Tacoma Waldorf School inspires an engagement
with learning that fosters understanding,
a respect for the intrinsic values of our fellow human beings,
and a reverence for the natural world.

As children's capacities to feel compassionately
and to think clearly and creatively are awakened,
they are empowered to act with initiative and courage
to meet the challenges of humanity."

Disclaimer: The Parent Handbook does not constitute an express or implied contract with the student and the school may revise the handbook at any time with or without notice.

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School Hours and Policies

Parents play an important role in the opening and closing of the school day. It is vital that the child arrive at school in time to participate in the opening activities, and that the class is not disturbed at the end of the day during closing exercises.

School hours are:

September-June	Kindergarten AM	8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
September-June	Kindergarten PM	1p.m. – 3:30 or 5:30 p.m.
September-December	Grade 1	8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
January-June	Grade 1	8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
September-June	Grade 2, 3 & 4	8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

The School Office is located at the Mason Methodist site-2710 N. Madison. Office hours vary throughout the year and will be posted on the office door.

Parents are responsible for their children before and after school, and must supervise their children in the play area. Please do not allow your children to play in the parking lot. Early drop offs or late pick-ups are possible if arranged ahead of time with the teacher. Parents should arrange to have their child picked up no later than 15 minutes past dismissal. Any child that is not picked up past the 15 minutes grace period will be placed in Aftercare at the parent's expense and charged the minimum one hour rate.

Students' cell phones may be brought to school with teacher's permission. They must be in **off** mode during school hours, 8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m. and left in the child's cubby. Cell phones brought into the classroom may be confiscated and will be turned into the office for the parent to pick-up at day's end.

Attendance and Punctuality

The rhythm of daily, weekly and seasonal cycles is important to the well being of the child. Experiences that are missed cannot easily be made up. If specific circumstances make a long absence necessary, it is essential to consult with the teacher as early as possible.

We expect that parents will help maintain their child's punctual and regular attendance at school. From the model we provide, children learn reliability and respect for others. From regular attendance and punctuality, they experience the strengthening of will that comes with consistent effort. Parents should inform the teacher of any circumstances in the home that might affect a child's attendance.

In the grades, timeliness is of great importance. We have a rhythm and a flow to our day that needs to be respected for the sake of the whole. The morning circle work and main lesson blocks should not be interrupted. So, if your child is late, they may be asked to wait outside of the classroom until invited in at an appropriate transition time.

All children need to be signed out at the end of the school day.

Emergency Calls

In case of emergency, please call the school office. If you cannot reach anyone, please call the Mason Methodist Church Administrator, Sharon, to get a message to your child's teacher.

Office number 253-383-8711
Mason Methodist Church Administrator 253-272-1381

In case of a large state disaster causing no phone service, please contact Eugene Waldorf School at 1-541-683-6951.

Clothing

In Waldorf education, being out-of-doors is important in all kinds of weather. Please choose clothing that is appropriate for the school day. If a child is not dressed to enjoy the weather, he/she will not be able to establish a true relationship with nature. Your child will need:

Warm, waterproof jacket
Waterproof pants
Waterproof gloves
Warm hat, mittens/gloves
Warm, waterproof boots
Extra change of clothes, including extra socks and undergarments
Slippers

We recommend wool or cotton socks, as they are more comfortable than synthetics.

Clothing with cartoon or media images are not appropriate for school wear and will be put aside and returned to parent.

Playground clothing requirements vary depending on weather and age of children. Please ensure your child(ren) are dressed accordingly. Below is a guideline.

- Hot weather: one layer & shade hat
- Warm weather: two layers (t-shirt & shirt)
- Cool weather (55 degrees or below): three layers (t-shirt, shirt and sweater, sweatshirt or coat)
- Cold weather (45 degrees or below): three layers and warm coat, fastened closed, and warm hat or hood for kindergarten through fourth grade children
- Rainy weather - *kindergarten*: full raingear, including jacket, pants, head protection and boots
- Rainy weather - *grades*: raingear including jacket, head protection and boots. Rain pants may be used when the weather is particularly inclement.
- Umbrellas: may be used by adults only

- Shoes: All children are to wear closed toe shoes (no flip-flops). Appropriate weather shoes are required (rain boots, snow boots, tennis shoes, etc.)

Snow Days

Tacoma Waldorf School (TWS) follows the Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) decisions of school closures or late arrivals. You may go to www.schoolreport.org website under “School Closure Information”, call 253-571-1000, watch TV channels 4, 5, 7 & 13 or listen to the radio – 710 AM, 1000 AM or 97.3 FM. No Aftercare is available during school closures.

TPS closed	TWS closed
TPS 1 hour late arrival	TWS 1 hour late arrival, Kindergarten & Grades
TPS 2 hour late arrival	TWS 2 hour late arrival, Kindergarten & Grades

Health Issues

We must comply with the Pierce County Health Department. Please keep your child(ren) home if s/he has any of the following symptoms. If a symptom occurs during school hours, a parent or guardian will be asked to come pick up the sick child.

- Diarrhea – three or more watery stools in a 24-hour period, especially if the child looks or acts ill;
- Vomiting – on two or more occasions within the past 24 hours. Projectile vomiting requires that your child be picked up immediately;
- Fever – of 101 degrees or higher, or has had one in the last 24 hours;
- Eye discharge or pink eye;
- Child unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, difficult to wake, confused, or irritable;
- Lice or nits (eggs) – child may not return until free of infestation for 72 hours;
- Communicable disease- reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, fever
- Impetigo
- Chicken pox
- Pinworms
- A constant cough
- Heavy Nasal discharge

If your child reports that he/she is ill while in our care at school, he/she will be given a soft and quiet place to rest. The teacher or aftercare director will make a note of the time of day, child’s temperature, general color, and any other signs of illness. If deemed necessary, the parent or other permitted person will be called to pick up the child.

Health records will be secured in each child’s file. We are required by law to have written permission to give any medication to your child including sunscreen and lip balm. Any prescription and over-the-counter medications must be kept in its original

container with the child's name on it and clear instructions for use. All medications will be stored in a safe, locked container. Non-refrigerated medication will be stored in the classroom cupboard in a medication container out of the reach of children. Any unused or empty containers will be sent home with the parent.

Please be advised that we are required by law to report serious injuries to the Department of Health or any appearance of suspected child abuse. We will follow guidelines on any of these issues.

Your child's health is important to us all. Each morning we will pay special attention to how your child is doing. We are unable to care for sick children, and if your child develops symptoms of illness during the day, we will isolate your child, as best we may, and contact you immediately.

If your child develops a communicable disease, please notify us at once. We will alert other families to take proper care. If a child shows any communicable disease symptom during school we will contact his/her parents. The teacher will contact parents if in his/her opinion the child is unable to participate fully in the normal day, whether due to illness, fatigue, or unusual distress. Children in kindergarten should be kept home if they are not completely well and rested. Remember, it is vital to eat a healthy, protein based breakfast before coming to school.

Parent Supervision

- Please make certain that your child is closely supervised on school grounds, especially in the parking lots
- Parents of early childhood through grade one are expected to escort their child(ren) to the door of the classroom making certain that the classroom teacher or assistant is aware of their arrival
- Grades two and above may be dropped off at the door of their classroom's building
- Please drop off and pick-up your children promptly from school. Please note school hours and aftercare policy for late pick-ups.
- Parents are responsible for their children at all school sponsored events, ie festivals, picnics, etc. If the parent cannot attend, the teacher will remain responsible.

Financial Matters

Our school is a non-profit organization. All gifts and donations to the school are tax-deductible (tuition is not). Our expenses, including teacher salaries and daily operational

costs, are not covered by tuition alone. Our financial health also depends on fundraising activities, gifts, and grants.

Sibling Discount

Families with two or more children enrolled in the school are eligible for tuition discounts. The oldest child must pay full tuition, the second child receives a 15% discount, third and subsequent children receive a 30% discount per child.

Tuition

Smart Tuition Management (ST) handles all tuition payments for our school. All families are required to sign-up for their services, no matter which payment option is selected. ST gives our families simpler ways of making payments, ensures consistent and timely tuition income, and alleviates our business office/bookkeeper from invoicing and collection.

There are **3 payment plans**:

Plan 1: Pre-pay (5% tuition discount) - entire contracted tuition amount, supply and any other fees are paid by August 1st. Please note, discount is taken off tuition only.

Plan 2: 10 or 12 equal monthly payments automatically withdrawn from your checking or savings account on the 5th or 20th of each month.

Plan 3: 10 or 12 equal monthly payments invoiced to you each month.

If you have further questions, please see the FAQ's section below.

FAQ's - Smart Tuition Management Payment Plan

Q. Is it possible to make changes to the payment plan once it is established?

A. Yes. The system is designed to be very flexible. If you need to make a change to your account (i.e. payment amount, payment due date, address, financial institution information, etc.), simply contact Smart Tuition directly, go on-line to their website or contact the Office Manager or Bookkeeper for assistance.

Sometimes unforeseen circumstances do occur, such as the loss of income due to a change in job, divorce, death, etc. that affect a family's ability to make their payments. If this situation occurs, please contact the Office Manager or Bookkeeper immediately to determine what adjustments can be made so that you may continue to make your tuition payments.

Q. What happens if I miss a payment?

A. Only a small percentage of those who pay through the tuition management program ever miss a payment. However, if you do miss a payment, you will receive an email or phone call with instructions on how the missed payment will be handled.

- For payments deducted electronically: In the event a payment is returned (NSF), a \$25 late payment fee will automatically be assessed to your account on behalf of the school. Smart Tuition will assess a \$30 follow-up fee. Smart Tuition will attempt to contact you and set-up a payment.
- For payments set up to be invoiced: In the event a payment is not made, a \$25 late fee will be assessed to your account on behalf of the school. Smart Tuition will assess a \$30 follow-up fee. Smart Tuition will attempt to contact you and set-up a payment.

Q. Can I monitor my account activity with the Tuition Management Company?

A. Yes. You may check balances, tuition paid, print reports and payments scheduled by connecting to www.smarttuition.com on the Internet, or you may call their number directly.

Withdrawal

It should be noted that unexpected withdrawal of a student creates a financial hardship for the School and can potentially compromise our ability to meet our financial obligations.

References:

Enrollment Contract & TAP Agreement (if applicable)

Definitions:

School – Tacoma Waldorf School

Withdrawal – Removing of a student by the family from the school within the school calendar year.

Provision Period – There is a 45 calendar-day provisional period for new children in the School. Withdrawals during this time can take place if the teacher or parent(s) feel it is in the best interest of the child or class. If the child is withdrawn by the parent(s) or at the request of the teacher during this provisional period, the tuition and supply fee will be pro-rated for the time the child attended school. Application, Equipment/Capital Asset and Enrollment Fees are not refundable. The provisional period applies to new families only.

Circumstances – The situation(s) which create a need for the child(ren) to be withdrawn from the school.

Procedures

Upon the withdrawal of a student from school, when such withdrawal is the choice of the family, a letter explaining the circumstances for which the withdrawal is occurring will be given to the Board 30 days prior to the withdrawal date.

The Board will review said letter in context with this policy and the enrollment contract and determine if the circumstances explained fall within the exemptions listed below.

The Board will return written response to the withdrawing family within 30 days of receipt of the withdrawal letter. Reference to the withdrawal section of the Enrollment Contract will be noted in this response and a payment plan for any funds due to the school or to be returned to the family will be outlined. If the withdrawing family is unable to meet this suggested payment plan they will work with the school to determine a plan that works for both parties.

An exit interview will be conducted with the withdrawing family and at least two school representatives. It is the intent of the exit interview to help bring closure on the relationship between the school and the withdrawing family and make sure that any questions or concerns are answered as best as possible.

Exemptions

Exemptions are to be handled on an individual basis. Examples of situations that would be exempt are: medical emergencies that require relocation, job transfers or employment opportunities requiring relocation, health issues affecting income, sudden loss of income or other situations that affect a family's ability to meet their commitment that are out of their immediate control. All issues which will be considered are generally unforeseen and life changing in nature

Enrollment Contract Withdrawal Agreement

Signing of the Enrollment Contract is a commitment to half of the annual tuition for the upcoming school year. Families terminating their contract before half of the annual tuition is paid will be held responsible for payment of half the annual tuition (except if done within the provisional period by a new family). Withdrawals beyond that point will be required to give 30 days written notice and the final month the child(ren) attended school will be pro-rated. If the tuition and supply fees were paid in full using the pre-pay option, tuition and supply fee refund will be pro-rated based upon the time the child(ren) attended school. Application, Equipment/Capital Asset and Enrollment Fees are not refundable. In the absence of 30 days written notice, one month's tuition and supply will be billed to the family. If the pre-pay option was chosen, the equivalent of one month's tuition and supply will be retained and the balance of the unused tuition will be refunded. Application, Equipment/Capital Asset and Enrollment Fees are not refundable.

Code of Conduct

We operate under three guiding principles of cooperation, honesty and respect.

- Use kind words
- Offer helping hands
- Be careful and safe with our bodies
- Include everyone
- Forgive mistakes and start over

Respect

All children and adults benefit from a healthy self-awareness, interest and concern for fellow human beings, and a respect for the world.

Sticks

- No stick play (unless a specific use has been approved by a faculty member)
- No throwing rocks, sticks, snowballs, dirt clods, etc. (except towards specific approved targets by faculty member)

Food

Children are not allowed to have food and beverages on the playground (unless part of a supervised picnic).

Extraordinary Parental Conduct

Being a part of the Tacoma Waldorf School community is a privilege and requires a commitment from everyone to the furtherance of the School's mission. If a parent or guardian's conduct interferes with the full development of a student's intellectual, emotional, spiritual and/or physical formation, it is deemed detrimental to the furtherance of the School's mission and therefore is unacceptable.

Parents are responsible for getting their child(ren) to school prior to the beginning of the school day and for keeping absences to a minimum. Parents are also responsible for representing Tacoma Waldorf School in the greater community. Any representation found to be detrimental to the school is grounds for disciplinary action.

Parental cooperation is essential for the welfare of students. If, in the opinion of the administration, parent behavior seriously interferes with the teaching/learning process, the school may require parents to withdraw their children and sever the relationship with the school.

Philosophy of Discipline

Our philosophy of discipline is rooted in a recognition of and respect for that which is unique and highest in each individual human being. As a community, parents and teachers endeavor to create a nurturing environment, which will help each person, both child and adult, to evoke the good, true and beautiful qualities in themselves and the world around them. In order to nurture new steps in growth, our school must be a place where all feel that safety, security and protection, both physical and emotional, are assured.

Tacoma Waldorf School is committed to working in a compassionate way, helping children develop problem-solving skills through cooperation, honesty and respect. We strive to foster acceptance, tolerance and inclusion in the classroom and on the playground. We recognize that it is our own actions that will be modeled by the students as we try to create a healthy and safe school culture where students feel comfortable speaking to adults if they feel victimized.

Before age 7, discipline is managed through the teacher's good example for imitation, through strong rhythms that help habit replace force, and through creating an environment, which invites healthy play and prevents problems. From ages 7 through 14, the teacher acknowledges the need for the adult to be the authority, setting clear rules which are fairly enforced, as well as having lessons which speak to the student's hearts and budding morality.

Each teacher has a unique method and style of discipline that works within our school rules, code of conduct and the following policies and Disciplinary Guidelines

Grades Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

Behaviors warranting disciplinary action may include but are not limited to: harassment, intimidation and bullying, disruption of learning environment or other campus activities, ethics and honesty (i.e. cheating, plagiarism, forgery, stealing, etc.), truancy/absences/tardiness/late arrivals, alcohol, illegal drugs and/or tobacco use, conduct which is disorderly, lewd, indecent, obscene, verbally abusive or which carries a threat or perception of a threat of bodily harm, sexual/relational misconduct, damage to school property, intentionally inciting others to engage in any unlawful or damaging activity, etc.

Tacoma Waldorf School retains the discretion to determine what constitutes a violation of the code of conduct and retains the ability to make disciplinary decisions on a case-by-case basis. Prior to making a disciplinary decision, the school will notify the accused student of the essential facts related to the allegations. The student shall be given the opportunity to tell his or her story. The behavior and attitudes of the student and parents will be considered when assessing discipline. Consequences may include but are not limited to suspension or expulsion. Opportunity for re-enrollment may be affected by the behavior and attitudes of the student and parents. The school reserves the right to make this determination on an individualized basis. The student and parents of the student may appeal to the Lead Faculty and then the Board of Trustees.

The school shall retain the discretion to generally communicate the circumstances surrounding discipline to other students and families as it sees appropriate. The school also retains the discretion to report behavior to other teachers, administrators and governmental authorities as it sees appropriate.

Kindergarten Discipline

The ultimate purpose of discipline is to help children unfold their capacity for self-discipline or that which comes from within rather than imposed from the outside. It is essential to recognize that children are born with an instinctive love and respect for parents and teachers, a desire to please and a longing for the good. They are sometimes, however, simply unable to control their own physical-emotional natures. It is vitally important that they are met with the right attitude during these challenging times – one of true acceptance and compassionate understanding of their current situation. As the young child learns through imitation, the inner discipline developed by the teacher as well as the capacity of establishing clear, appropriate and consistent boundaries has everything to do with effective discipline. Moralizing and reasoning have no value here. It is truly “who we are” not what we say that matters.

It is the task of the teacher to guide the will of the child into a right relationship with authority and social responsibility. In the Kindergarten, the teacher attempts to redirect inappropriate behaviors through gentle reminders, the utilization of rich imaginations and engaging the child in purposeful work. Through their deeds the child is able to redeem or make right any wrongdoing. For example, a tower that has been carelessly

knocked over is rebuilt or an injury that has been inflicted is tended with salve, band-aid and a tissue to wipe away tears, etc. Therapeutic stories can be very helpful in bringing a child to recognize their own behavioral dynamics, the effects those behaviors have on others and alternative approaches to getting their needs met in socially appropriate ways.

It is sometimes necessary in working with difficult or disruptive behaviors to remove the child from the stimulation of the larger group. In this case, the teacher or assistant will accompany the child and offer one-on-one support in regaining centeredness. If a child's behavior becomes unmanageable and seriously compromises the experience and/or safety of others in the group, the child's parents may be asked to take him/her home. In severe cases, a child may be asked to remain home until teachers and parents can create a specific plan of support. It may be determined in this process, or if the plan of support proves ineffectual in creating positive change, that the child's needs are unable to be met within the structure of and through the available resources at the Tacoma Waldorf School.

Referring Students to Specialists

When academic or behavioral needs are not being met in the classroom, faculty may refer students to remedial, therapeutic and/or medical specialist to investigate further and support the student's needs. The school's ability to meet these needs may depend on outside support and said support could be mandated by the Faculty and supported by the family.

Student Withdrawal Financial Implications

If a student is withdrawn from the Tacoma Waldorf School for any reason, they will undergo a tuition review to settle contractual obligations. Please reference "Withdrawal" section for details.

Student Withdrawal Pedagogical Processes

Ideally the parent will inform the teacher first. The teacher should remind the parents of their contractual tuition obligations and that the school requires 30 days advance written notice (see Withdrawal Section for complete details). The teacher should inform the office staff and plan for appropriate closure. Exit interviews are conducted by appropriate faculty, staff and/or the Board.

Student Dismissal

Dismissal of a student may occur as a result of a discipline issue (see Disciplinary Guidelines above). In considering the dismissal of a student for reasons other than discipline or breach of tuition contract, the following steps will be taken:

- Discussion and recommendation is made by the Faculty
- A child study occurs if necessary
- Teacher will meet with the parents, possibly accompanied by the Faculty Chair, to discuss recommendations
- Board of Trustees makes the final decision and informs the appropriate people
- Opportunity to appeal by the Board of Trustees

Tacoma Waldorf School reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time for any reason.

Safety and Emergency Policies & Procedures

Fire

Fire drills will be practiced on a monthly basis. We also encourage families to talk with their children about fire safety and prevention.

Earthquake or Other Large-Scale Emergency

Earthquake drills will be practiced on a quarterly basis. In case of an earthquake or other large-scale emergency, the children will be evacuated to the parking lot. Parents and emergency contacts will be notified by the classroom teacher as soon as they are able. Children will then be available for emergency pick-up in the parking lot. Please be sure to make contact with your teacher before taking your child. Teachers will stay with children until everyone is returned to their safe and proper place. If state phone service is out, please contact Eugene Waldorf School at 1-541-683-6951.

Visitor Policy

All student or adult visitors need to be reported to the school office. This greatly assists the office in handling phone calls and site emergencies.

Tracking and Supporting Student's Progress

Evaluation

Traditional numerical or letter grades are not a part of the regular evaluation of the grade school students in a Waldorf school. Instead, candid conversations between the

teacher and parent are used to bring to light the development and growth of the student. Formal parent-teacher conferences are scheduled annually. Year-end reports are prepared by the class teacher for each grade school child. In addition to sharing what the child has experienced through the course of the year, the report discusses the child's development in many areas and may suggest areas in which the child is in need of special attention.

Child Study

Child study takes place in the faculty meeting. Through this work, the faculty tries to come to a deeper understanding of the questions each child presents in his or her individual way. Also, by experiencing the child study process together, each teacher becomes better able to learn what is needed from each of his or her students. The results of such a study are quite often profound and a collective "holding" of the child by the faculty provides a unique and powerful means of nurturing the child.

*From out of
the Spiritual World
This child has come to us
We are to solve
his or her riddle
Day by day, hour by hour*

Tutoring and Therapeutic Help

While more and more children in our time need some special consideration, Tacoma Waldorf School has limited resources. The burden will fall primarily on the parent to pay for curative or tutorial work. Some of these activities may be arranged to take place during the school day. If outside resources are solicited and used by parents, it is important that the class teacher stay informed and participate as appropriate.

Organizational and Community Life

The healing social life is found when, in the mirror of each human soul, the whole community finds its reflection-and when in the community the virtue of each one is living.

-Rudolf Steiner

The Foundation of School Organization

The successful functioning of the school depends upon the cooperative efforts of the adults who work together to create and sustain the school: the faculty and staff who work here and the parents who entrust their children to the school. To implement the school's mission, we have organized ourselves into individual roles with responsibilities for certain tasks and functions, governance groups empowered to make particular decisions, and committees who bring light, attention, and energy to certain aspects of the school's work. The Board of Trustees is our legal/financial accountable governing body. The Executive Council governs the day to day administrative work. Committees are run by faculty, staff, and parents. Within this larger system of participation however, faculty are entrusted with making decisions that directly affect the quality of education—

hiring teachers and determining curriculum, for example—and faculty and staff together make many of the day-to-day operating decisions. This section describes some of the roles and responsibilities and provides an outline of how we are organized.

Parent Participation

In addition to how we organize ourselves, the successful operation of the school relies largely on the time and energy given by parent volunteers. There is need for parent volunteers on both an individual class level and school-wide level.

For instance, in supporting your class teacher, both in-school and out-of-school time is needed. Assisting in specialty classes, special classroom cleaning, doing laundry, sewing and making costumes are some of the kinds of help that are needed. Playground, garden and site beautification are also important parent supported tasks affecting the quality of the classroom life. Announcement of classroom projects needing parent participation takes place at class meetings and by class phone trees. Contact your class teacher or class coordinator for more information. (Class coordinators' job duties are described later in this chapter).

Festivals and fundraising events are two other areas that need a lot of parent involvement, not only for the success of the event, but to strengthen the community of the school. These are wonderful opportunities to get to know other Waldorf families and enjoy the camaraderie of working together for a common purpose. If you are interested in working on a special event watch for announcements in flyers or newsletters or contact the Committee Liaison.

Parent participation is also needed on the Board of Trustees and various school committees. Committee work involves diverse activities and requires a variety of skills. Most meetings are open to all. Attending a meeting as an observer is a good way to familiarize yourself with what the group does and what is needed that you might be able to offer. Meetings are scheduled by the individual committee members. Please see the section on Committees under Organizational Structure to get a better understanding of what committees the school currently has.

Organizational Structure

The goals and objectives (the mission) of Tacoma Waldorf School are accomplished through the coordinated efforts of the Faculty, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and Committees. Each of these bodies meets regularly to discuss issues and decide on policy within their given realm. These bodies are supported in their tasks by various workgroups which work under the auspices of each body.

Faculty

The Faculty, consisting of kindergarten teachers, assistants, and grades teachers, are responsible for administering the pedagogical affairs of the school. This group meets each Thursday afternoon for artistic work and study to deepen their understanding of Waldorf pedagogy and to develop their capacities for perceiving the individual children.

This meeting is also used to discuss and decide on festivals, special events, and pertinent business matters. The Faculty Chair convenes this weekly faculty meeting and acts as the faculty representative to the wider community and other Waldorf schools.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees consists of three to nine members and is ideally composed of Faculty, parents, and community members. The term of office is usually two years and Board members serve in this capacity on a volunteer basis. The operations of the Board are governed by the school's official by-laws.

The Board is responsible for providing financial stability and physical well-being of the School and to protect its legal interests. Decisions support the tenants of Waldorf education and its underlying philosophy. The Board shall provide leadership in developing and carrying out the long-term vision and mission of the school and to provide and manage the school's building and grounds, working collaboratively with its teachers, staff and parents.

Board meetings are scheduled by the Board members and will be available on the school's calendar. Due to confidential matters, a portion of the meeting is closed and the remainder is open for the school community to attend. The Board generally meets one time a month, unless items of an urgent nature arise whereas another meeting is required. The Board currently has open positions. Interested parents and community members may contact the Board for more information on attending or becoming a Board Member.

Parents should feel free to contact any Board member to discuss suggestions, perceived problems relating to issues of Board responsibility, and further clarification on Board business. Minutes of recent Board meetings are posted in a binder in the School Office.

Executive Council

The Executive Council consists of the office manager, grade and early childhood leads. This group maintains weekly meetings and helps administrate the day to day operations of the school.

Office Staff

The school office is the domain of the Office Manager. The function is to lend organizational support to all members of the school community and provide a centralized point of contact for the school. Through the school Business Office, parents are provided with a communication channel to the Faculty, Board of Trustees, and committees. The office staff is responsible for generating and distributing written communication, managing enrollment and student records, disseminating information on events, and supporting volunteer efforts.

Parent Classroom Representative

Each class has a parent who volunteers at the beginning of the school year to be a class representative. This person is responsible to help the class teacher organize parent volunteers for various class events and needs.

Expectations for Parent Classroom Representatives are as follows:

- Develop a classroom phone tree
- Initiate the phone tree as needed or asked for by classroom teacher or staff
- Coordinate bi-weekly clean-up schedule for classrooms and hallways
- Create a general classroom clean-up guideline, ask your teacher for specific clean-up needs and articulate to the appropriate family
- Make reminder phone calls and follow-up with families and teacher
- Contact appropriate committee chairs for specific classroom or play yard needs
- Coordinate and help parents create earthquake preparedness kits for each child in your class and organize a safe and accessible place to keep them

Committees

Development: The Development Committee researches fundraising opportunities and facilitates grant writing. This committee performs steps necessary to meet the long-term vision of fiscal development for the school.

Outreach: The Outreach Committee implements outreach strategies to aid in increasing enrollment and public awareness of Tacoma Waldorf School and Waldorf education.

Responsibilities include:

- Assist and or create public relations.
- Aid in the facilitation of Open Houses and other events, on and off site.
- Conduct regular Outreach committee meetings.
- Assist with building relationships in the greater Tacoma community.
- Seek opportunities to distribute school materials and share experiences with others!

Site Beautification: The site committee is responsible for the care of the school building, grounds and equipment. In order to maintain the aesthetic quality of our school, the site committee organizes work and maintenance parties while keeping in mind the future needs of the school.

Parent Association: The Parent Association (PA) is an organized group of the parent body that strives to support the school, the teachers and each other. We are all members of the PA by virtue of having a child enrolled in the school. The PA Steering Committee guides the Parent Association. The Steering Committee is comprised of the Parent Association Co-Chairs, the Social Events Coordinators, Parent Education

Coordinators, and Volunteer Coordinators. These roles are filled by process of community nomination and are a commitment of at least one year.

The PA meetings are a great place to find out about upcoming events in the school, ask questions, and get to know each other. A report of the PA steering committee work, as well as a report from each of the other school committees is given at every PA meeting. This is helpful in maintaining good communication and awareness in the community. Meetings can also be a place to find out where help is needed, if you have time to invest, on a short or longer-term basis.

Communication

Effective communication among all of us is another important element in the successful functioning of the school. Described at the end of this section are the primary means of written and in-person communication forms and forums we use. In addition to these, one-on-one communication is vital. We urge you to keep in touch with your child's teacher on a regular basis. If you have questions, concerns or issues about other things, we urge you to communicate as directly as possible. The office staff is also available to direct you to the person or persons with whom you should speak.

How we work together to manage and run the school is another way we teach our children values and ways of being what we believe are important in our modern world. We continually seek the organizational forms and processes that are effective and feel *right* for our school. This is not an easy task; in fact, it is one requiring constant diligence and wakefulness, but one which provides opportunity for growth in all of us.

Concerns

The Board, the Faculty and the Staff have worked together and separately to clarify the appropriate channels for resolving concerns. This work is on-going.

If you have a concern please utilize the following constructive avenues towards resolution:

- 1) First work on the question within yourself if possible, to see if you can come to terms with it without carrying any further. This would be an appropriate time for you to consider what is your true question or complaint.
- 2) For questions that need further resolution, the next step is to speak directly to the person involved. To speak directly in this way can be difficult, but it is absolutely necessary if we are to be a healthy community. It is not appropriate to discuss your concerns with others in the community *before* you speak directly with that person.

For instance, if you have a concern about your child or a situation in the classroom, it is very important that you discuss your concerns directly with the child's teacher. Our teachers are dedicated to working in partnership with parents to do what is best for each child; they appreciate your involvement.

Communication challenges are the norm in human relations but if we bring our concerns and questions directly to the person involved before the issue has a chance to grow unwieldy it will make resolution easier and will promote growth for everyone involved.

- 3) If, after direct communication, you feel the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved you are welcome to approach someone who is in a position of responsibility in that sphere of the school for assistance in resolving the matter.

For instance, in the case of difficulty resolving an issue with a teacher, it would be appropriate to speak next to the Faculty Chair.

At times it may be appropriate to reach out to someone who seems to have a concern and help them in determining the appropriate channels through which to seek resolution. The responsibility rests with all of us to support the healthy functioning of this vital part of community life and to ensure that differences between people are addressed face to face between those people. If someone begins discussing a concern with you, ask them if they have approached the person directly and if they are familiar with the three steps for resolving conflicts in our school community. It will benefit all of us to follow the steps in this process.

If you have a long-held concern about a certain aspect of the school, consider joining the group or committee that guides that aspect of the school. Plugging your experiences, perspectives and interest into the structures that exist in the school organization is an excellent way to help us evolve towards an ever more healthy and strong school.

Parent Resources

Library

The library is in the process of being developed. Policies and procedures will be forthcoming. Faculty is the lead on the development. Parent resource books are available in the office.

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin Boards are located outside both of the Kindergartens and outside each of the classrooms. Here you may find updates for the Committees, upcoming events and general information.

Mail Boxes

School mail is a very important means of communication within the school. It includes newsletters, letters from teachers, notices of upcoming events, and other important documents. Parents are encouraged to check their boxes/student's cubbies regularly.

Newsletters and Calendars

A school calendar can be located by visiting our website and clicking on our Google school calendar. The Google calendar contains information about the day-to-day plans and needs of specific classes and school wide events. The calendar is updated weekly, so please check it for updates and changes.

The school newsletter is emailed out monthly. If you prefer a hardcopy, please request one at the school office. If you are not receiving them, please check with the office to ensure we have the correct email address for you. The newsletter contains educational and inspirational articles, committee updates, community news, seasonal information, festival and fundraising information.

School Directory

The school phone directory lists the names and contact phone numbers of all families, faculty and staff. Updates will be published as needed. The school directory should be exclusively used for school directed communication only and not for solicitation purposes.

Telephone Tree

Each class has a phone tree which is created at the beginning of the year. It is used to disseminate class information and school wide information. The parent classroom representative initiates the phone tree usually by direction from the classroom teacher or staff.

Class Site Care Program

The site care program consists of the cleaning of classrooms and gardening. The classroom schedule is set-up by the Parent Classroom Representative. Each family is required to participate in this program. Parents will be responsible for their designated week, if you have a conflict with a date, please make arrangements with another family or ask for assistance in covering designated dates.

Parent Meetings

Parent meetings are planned in an effort to connect the Waldorf curriculum to the home life. These meetings give parents an opportunity to further educate themselves about classroom rhythm. They also provide a forum for asking questions and voicing concerns. Attendance at parent meetings is an essential component of parental involvement.

Reverence, Ritual and Rhythm

Reverence, ritual, and rhythm are the 3 R's of Waldorf education. Anthroposophy teaches us that when experienced in childhood they create the potential for responsible freedom in adulthood.

At present, our culture does not seem to place much value on these qualities. Sensationalism, sensory stimulation, advertising, and competitiveness are but a few contemporary trends that undermine our capacity for reverence. Furthermore, rather than valuing ritual and rhythm our culture seems often to associate them with deadening "routine," and avoids "falling into a rut" by cultivating unstructured, spontaneous living. The harm to children, who need the security of limits and orderly rhythms, can be great.

Your child's teacher goes to great lengths to create lessons and festivals that purposefully nurture feelings of reverence. Reducing distractions for your child(ren) gives them the space to experience reverence and will support the work of your child's teacher. We believe that reverent, wonder-filled occasions help children grow into adults who find meaning in their lives, who love and respect other people, the earth, and themselves.

Many Waldorf parents find that the emphasis on reverence, ritual and rhythm is one of the ways Waldorf education directly impacts the quality of their own lives. In the speed and "busy-ness" of our contemporary world, it often helps to be reminded of more enduring values. Establishing an environment in which each day is rhythmically ordered and the year is marked at special moments with rituals and celebrations, helps create, for our children a secure foundation from which to grow.

Yearly Rhythm and the Festivals

One of the ways in which a Waldorf school is different from other forms of education can be perceived through the ways the school brings the celebration of festivals to life during the course of the year. Most Waldorf schools celebrate the seasonal festivals whose origins are so intertwined in the rhythm of the year. The joy of the harvest, the seed of new growth, the coming of light, the renewal of life; all are revered and celebrated in the great religions; all are part of the life in Waldorf schools. As we celebrate the passage of the seasons through art, music and story, we deepen our connection to the working rhythms of nature. By sharing this natural rhythm of the earth with each other in the classroom and in the school festivals, we deepen our relationships and create community.

Harvest Festival-Michaelmas

In the autumn, at harvest season, we celebrate Michaelmas. In the Celtic tradition, Michael (mi-KAH-el) represents the unconquered hero, fighting against evil and the powers of darkness. He is a model for valor and courage. Dragons, iron and the color red predominate. We celebrate with an array of harvest fruits and dragon bread, and the telling of legends and myths.

Gentle Hallow's Eve

The annual Gentle Hallow's Eve, in late October, is a child centered event for the whole family. Gentle Hallow's Eve has become a favorite event for many TWS families. It's a successful Outreach event that attracts families from outside our community who are looking for a safe, non-scary Halloween experience for their children. Everyone is invited to wear their Halloween costumes with the request that scary costumes remain at home. Families can experience an enchanting puppet play, participate in Fairy Tale Land, and be captivated by fireside stories. This event is made all the more magical by taking place outside with the beauty of white twinkling lights and glass lanterns to help light our way. Warm soup, hot apple cider and seasonal treats are sold to help ward off the cold. Children are always thrilled to brave a visit to the Pocket Witch and earn a small prize.

The success of this unique event lies with the volunteers who come together as a creative community.

Lantern Walk-Martinmas

In early November, a Lantern Walk, commemorating St. Martin, is held for the children. The children make their own lanterns and gather their parents and teachers then walk through the streets, singing with glimmering lanterns held high, to carry light into the approaching darkness of winter. This festival is still celebrated in some German villages.

Advent

Children, parents and teachers share this observance as we together usher in the season of Advent. This celebration is a "journey towards winter's light" where each child is led through the evergreen spiral on the floor. This observance, encompassing all faiths, lives in the children as a quiet reverent experience of light in winter. Advent in the classroom is a time of preparation for the season return of the sun at Winter Solstice. We bring light and warmth to winter days, most often symbolized in the form of the candlelit Advent wreath and special Advent songs and stories, all carrying the image of light in winter.

Saint Nicholas Day

Singing songs of Saint Nicholas, the children polish their boots and shoes and leave them outside their classroom door. Before school has ended, they find tangerines, gold coins and other small treats and a trail of gold glitter.

Winter Faire

The annual Winter Faire, in early December, is one of the highlights of the year for the school community. The array of music, crafts, and magical scenes makes this an extraordinary event for children and parents alike. During the late fall, workshops, which are open to all, are held to prepare for special crafts inspired by the Waldorf pedagogy.

Friendships are made, new skills are discovered and the social life of the school community is fostered.

Responsibility for this major event is carried by the parent body. There is always plenty of work and much need for anyone interested in becoming a part of this wonderful preparation. It has become a tradition that, with the large numbers of helpers needed on the day of the Faire, every family offers the services of one of its members, if only for a few hours.

In addition to its valuable strengthening of the social fabric of the school community, the Winter Faire is of equal value in its financial contribution to the school. For all those visitors who make the Faire a regular occasion, it seems to be a way of experiencing a little of that human warmth and artistic quality that makes the winter holidays such a special time at our school.

Candlemas

February 2nd is Candlemas, marking the time of the year when the season changes from darkness to light. This is a celebration of candles; traditionally they were made on the winter solstice. We celebrate by rolling beeswax candles during the school day.

May Day

May Day is an ancient festival welcoming spring. The tree of life was part of this celebration. We raise a may pole, bedecked with fresh flowers and ribbons. The children wear floral wreaths and celebrate the arrival of spring with dancing and singing, Celtic music and picnicking.

In an effort to answer some of the questions about the issue of religion in Waldorf Schools we have included the following article. It was first published in Main lesson: Journal of the Marin Waldorf School.

The Role of Religion in the Waldorf School

by Karen Rivers

The word “religion” is derived from the Latin word “re-lig-io” which means to reunite. It is an expression of the universal human quest for meaning, for our source and our destiny. Throughout human history, people from all cultures have asked “Who am I?” “What am I doing here?” “What does it mean to be human?”

Throughout the world we share questions about creation, good and evil, and what exists beyond the starry cosmos and unknown dark matter. These soul questions live deeply within all humanity. Through different periods of history, great men and women have shed light on these universal questions. They have offered their wisdom to help each individual answer them, to reunite with the cosmic origin and the oneness of all existence.

In our school, we seek to imbue all our lessons with questions of universal implication. We seek to explore mythology, literature, history, science and art in a way that evokes discussions or pondering about these universal questions. We wish our students to live in an atmosphere that is permeated with (not devoid of) the quest for self-knowledge for the exploration of life's deepest mysteries.

Do we teach religion?

The Waldorf curriculum is designed to create the appropriate relationship between a child and these immense questions. Through art, a child builds a relationship with beauty, and in studying science, one seeks an understanding of truth. Out of beauty and truth, one develops a sense of morality and reverence for life which leads to profound questions of existence.

Through the study of history our students journey through ancient civilizations, studying the Old Testament, Norse Mythology, Ancient India, Persia, Sumeria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. They enter the Middle Ages and Renaissance with burning questions of morality which grow out of their earlier exploration. By the time students reach eighth grade, they have lived with many noble images, many fallen heroes and many searching questions about the nature of human kind and our universe. These questions of great magnitude fill a child with the desire to explore the outer and inner realms of his/her life.

In Waldorf schools throughout the world, we aim to celebrate the cycles of life, to address the essence of these soul questions as they speak to us through nature in the rhythm of the year and the festivals that have evolved through time. We all long to feel the joy and meaning of life through the recognition and celebration of cornerstone events. The seasons mark the turning points of the year and each season has festivals celebrated differently around the world which express the inner wisdom of its nature. Because we live in a primarily Judeo-Christian culture, we emphasize those festivals at our school. Waldorf schools in Israel feature Jewish festivals; Waldorf schools in Japan feature Buddhist festivals; in India, Hindu festivals.

We receive many questions as to whether we are a Christian school. We are a school seeking to re-unite children with the universal knowledge of self through the study of art and science. We celebrate Christian festivals as well as others. Underlying all of this, Waldorf schools are founded on the philosophy of anthroposophy, the wisdom of humanity. Anthroposophy, offered to us by Rudolf Steiner, explores the evolution of human consciousness. Each historic epoch offers a significant contribution to the journey of humanity from ancient times to the unknown future. Each prophet carried a message for his time and we seek to understand our age through the looking glass of the past. Neither Anthroposophy nor religion are taught in our school. They are a foundation under the building which supports and defines the structure.

We seek to educate our students in love and immerse them in the world of great literature, art and science. We strive to awaken within them the longing to "Know Thyself." We wish to send them forth into the world in freedom to explore and discover their own beliefs and destinies in the service of humankind. On this journey, each one

finds meaning, joy and reverence for life, creating a new union with his or her spiritual essence.

History of Waldorf Education and Tacoma Waldorf School

Waldorf schools grew out of the philosophy of Anthroposophy (anthropos - human and sophia - wisdom) which was developed by Rudolf Steiner. Born in 1861 to Austrian parents, he was an international figure in his day. Scientist, educator, and artist, Steiner's interest spawned movements of renewal in education, medicine, science, agriculture, religion, arts, and human consciousness. The first Waldorf School was founded by Steiner in 1924 in Stuttgart, Germany, when Emil Molt, a wealthy industrialist and owner of the Waldorf-Astoria Cigarette Factory, asked him to help create a school for the families of his workers.

In 1990, after the close of the Morning Star Waldorf School in Gig Harbor, Ruth Peterson and Maureen Conlen opened up New Star Rising, a Waldorf preschool. As they were growing they moved into a space at the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and adopted the name Tacoma Waldorf Kinderhaus. The school mainly stayed with a preschool and kindergarten program, with one class being taken to the 5th grade with Miss Maureen and one taken to the 3rd grade by Miss Ruscin. So many wonderful families and volunteers have made this school what it is today. With a growing need from our community to have a K-8 Waldorf school, the name was changed to Tacoma Waldorf School to accommodate this new vision.

What is Waldorf Education?

“Life as a whole is a unity, and we must not only consider the child, but the whole of life; we must look at the whole human being.”

—Rudolf Steiner

Waldorf education is a means to awaken what lives in the child. The goal of Waldorf education lies in helping an individual “become” a full human being.

Waldorf education works in a rhythmic way, each subject introduced with the natural rhythm of the seasons, the day and the child's developmental needs.

Learning in the Waldorf school is not static. The curriculum changes annually as it strives to reflect a balance of head, heart and hands - not through rote lessons or textbooks, grades or quizzes, but through a teaching enlivened by the arts. The uniqueness of Waldorf education lies in how we teach. The approach is oral and dramatic, creating in the child an experience of subject matter. For example, by writing and illustrating their own books, students digest what they receive, thus arriving at the concept.

For Waldorf Schools, there are two main principles, education and information. The word “educate” comes from the Latin “educate,” meaning “to lead outward.” The word “inform” comes from the Latin “in formare,” indicating a form-giving process. Thus

Waldorf education signifies an effort to bring to healthy manifestation what already exists in the growing child, to bring forth the content of the child's personality. Information denotes an attempt to provide a form or structure for that personality by molding it according to logical and natural laws.

Thinking, feeling, doing - these are the three steps of true learning, in harmony with a child's nature. This is the heart of Waldorf education. In every lesson, at every turn throughout the school day, the curriculum is dedicated to nourishing the inner life of the child strengthening his or her body, intellect and natural feelings of awe and reverence.

"Infants and young children are entirely given over to their physical surroundings; they absorb the world primarily through their senses and respond in the most active mode of knowing: imitation." Those concerned with the young child – parents, care givers, early childhood and kindergarten teachers – have a responsibility to create an environment that is worthy of the child's unquestioning imitation. The environment should offer the child plenty of opportunities for meaningful imitation and for creative play. This supports the child's primary activity of these early years: the development of the physical organism. Drawing the child's energies away from this fundamental task to meet premature intellectual demands robs the child of the health and vitality he or she will need for later life. In the end, it weakens the very powers of judgment and practical intelligence the teacher wants to encourage.

Class Teacher

The foundation of Waldorf curriculum has been brought to life by dedicated teachers for over 75 years, providing an experience in the classroom unique in elementary and high school education.

The teacher's role extends beyond the classroom, beyond helping to create positive relationships with and among the children. Since the work of Waldorf education includes nurturing the growth and development of all, teachers are also responsible for healthy relationships with colleagues and parents.

An important aspect of Waldorf education is the emphasis on the relationships among teachers, children, and parents through the years. We believe the growth of trust and understanding is nurtured by the stability of staying with the same teacher and classmates. For this reason, the kindergartens are composed of children from ages four to six and a child may be with the same teacher and group of children for two or three years before moving on to the first grade. In the grade school, the teacher, if possible, continues with the class for the full eight years. A single year is just the time it takes a teacher to really get to know a class and for the children to come to know and trust their teacher.

For children, the grade school years are an evolution of consciousness in much the same way that human consciousness has unfolded through the ages. The curriculum is designed to support this growth of consciousness. For teachers, moving through the eight years is a path of inner development as they experience the changing forces of

the children; for the children are always calling the teacher to adjust inwardly to meet and understand them.

At the advent of puberty, the ego comes to a new experience of personal freedom - and education at this period must open and channel, not stop up, the new energies. In high school the class teacher is replaced by subject teachers who are able to meet each student's need for competence, for authority vested in skill. High school teachers direct their teaching increasingly toward reasoned insight, intellectual understanding, and a philosophical conception of the whole world. What was experienced pictorially in the elementary years, in a more artistic way, now has to be reviewed, analyzed, and tested in the light of the newly emerging power of personal, logical understanding.

The Elementary School Curriculum

The Waldorf curriculum is designed to work in rhythm with the natural stages of children's development. Since stages are reflective of the stages in the development of human civilization itself, the great stories of varied human cultures—from fairy tales and fables to the Old Testament stories, from Nordic and African stories to Hawaiian and Greek myths—are the cornerstone of the curriculum. Not only the subject matter, but the way it is approached and the assignments and activities asked of the children are specifically suited to the development of certain faculties and capacities at particular ages.

Kindergarten

“If a child has been able in his play to give us his whole being to the world around him, he will be able in the serious tasks of later life to devote himself with confidence and power to the service of the world.”

—Rudolf Steiner

In the Preschool and Kindergarten years great emphasis is placed on the development of a strong and deeply rooted creative capacity. The overall environment, the unique play materials, and the chosen activities all contribute to fostering the child's natural powers of wonder and fantasy. For instance, the play materials are chosen so as to allow the greatest amount of the child's own imagination to come into play. The more possible uses for a toy, the better. When the child is required to really “clothe” his play materials with his own powers of imagination, the truly living forces within him become activated.

Another important aspect in the development of a strong imaginative life is the use of Fairy Tales. The art of storytelling is really alive in the kindergarten as the Fairy Tales are told, rather than read, by the teacher. The child's imagination is active because the pictures need to be created inwardly as the story unfolds. The young child experiences the world more pictorially than the logical mind of the adult, and Fairy Tales provide inner nourishment because they contain archetypal truths about the world in picture form.

Small children are beings of will and imitation, identifying themselves with each gesture, intonation, mood, and thought in their environment, and making these their own in the free activity of creative, imaginative play. It is the kindergarten teachers' task to create an environment worthy of a small child's unquestioning imitation and to educate the child's unconscious through warmth, clarity, rhythm, and harmony of the world s/he creates and with which the child so actively identifies.

Given the right environment and encouragement, the young child exhibits a fountain of creativity never again to be equaled in the course of his/her life. Deepening this capacity prepares the proper ground for a truly alive and mobile thinking to emerge.

Grade School

"The true aim of education is to awaken real powers of perception and judgment in relation to life and living. For only such awakening can lead to true freedom."

–Rudolf Steiner

The grade school curriculum in the Waldorf schools is amazingly rich and intricately coordinated with a deep understanding of the developing child. What follows is a look at some of the main topics that are covered in each year as well as some detail about the insights underlying the curriculum. There are, of course, many more philosophical underpinnings of the curriculum than can be set forth in this handbook; this list is only meant as a taste of what goes on in the curriculum, not as a comprehensive outline. Attending parent meetings is a wonderful opportunity to find out more about the specific curriculum that is being presented to your child.

The first grade year begins with the discovery that behind all forms lie two basic principles: the straight and curved line. The children find these shapes in their own bodies, in the classroom and in the world beyond. The straight and curved line are then practiced through walking, drawing in the air and the sand, on the blackboard and finally on paper. These form drawings train motor skills, awaken the children's powers of observation and provide a foundation for the introduction of the alphabet.

Through fairy tales and stories, the children are introduced to each letter of the alphabet. Instead of abstract symbols, the letters become actual characters with whom the children have a real relationship. "S" may be a fairy tale snake sinuously slithering through the grass on some secret errand; the "W" may be hiding in the blackboard drawing of waves.

In a similar way, the children first experience the qualities of numbers before learning addition or subtraction. Counting is introduced through clapping, rhythmic movement and the use of stones, acorns, and other natural objects. Only after considerable practical experience in adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing are the written symbols for these operations introduced.

Foreign languages, knitting and the playing of the recorder are also introduced in first grade.

In the second grade, children are told many fables, as well as Native American stories of animals, and the stories of saints, heroes and heroines including the story of the King of Ireland's Son. They work on writing by copying these stories in their main lesson books. There is continued work in arithmetic including the memorization of the times tables 1 - 12 and the lower case letters are introduced. Reading is taught through the process of writing. The children hear a story, copy it into their main lesson books and then practice reading what they have written. Grammar is introduced by acting out stories in which the children can experience the contrast between 'doing' words, 'naming' words, and 'describing' words. Towards the end of the second grade year, the children are given 'easy reader' books to read.

The third grade is often called a turning point of childhood. Nine year olds feel themselves growing apart from the world, becoming separated and independent and beginning to question all that we had previously taken for granted. This questioning is accompanied by a serious stream of interest in everything practical such as 'How is a house built' and 'Where does my food come from?'. In the third grade, children study Old Testament stories to learn about people's first struggles to live on the earth, to make shelters and to work the land. They study house building, naturally learning weight and measures, and learn about gardening, farming and cooking. These acquired skills are translated into their handwork as they make a "house for their heads" in creating knitted hats. There is much counting and measuring when adding patterns to their handwork.

The fourth grade.....

Art and Special Subjects in Waldorf Schools

The arts are integrated into the entire academic curriculum, including mathematics and the sciences. Through the arts, imagination and creative powers awaken, bringing vitality and wholeness to learning.

Precisely because the arts are present throughout Waldorf education, they are not listed as separate subjects in the curriculum summary. However, music, speech, drama, painting, form drawing, modeling, crafts and games are all included in the subjects taught at the Tacoma Waldorf School.

Handwork

Knitting and other handwork projects play an important role in the development of fine motor skills, inner calm, and intellectual clarity. Author and handwork teacher Rachel Magrisso from the Green Mountain Waldorf school in Vermont explains it this way:

"Handwork is the time for the children to be still within themselves. It is suggested for parents, too. It helps the children in their thinking, in the ability to make judgments—is every stitch even, clear, consistent, and of the right tension? They work at finding an evenness and clarity of stitches, and getting the feel of it.

When they are doing handwork there is harmony—the room settles down to a hum...”

The specific handwork taught in Waldorf schools also “grows with the growing child.” In the first grade, the curriculum calls for learning the basic knit stitch and creating a practical and useful project in a warm textile such as wool. In second and third grades, this is continued with crochet, which adds new movements and requires more focus on each row and stitch. Around age nine or ten the children undergo a change of consciousness: they are individuals within themselves, no longer as open. The hats that the third graders knit to cover their heads represent this developmental milestone. Also the third grader is experiencing the beginning of critical thinking, and in the knitting of the hats, they are introduced to small patterns, thus engaging their new thinking skills. The cross-stitch taught in fourth grade reflects this more elaborate stage in their development.

Handwork offers many opportunities for reinforcing math skills in practical, challenging, and enjoyable ways. But author and Waldorf teacher Eugene Schwartz points out an even more valuable result:

“We cannot underestimate the self-esteem and joy that arises in the child as the result of having made something practical and beautiful—something which has arisen as the result of a skill that has been learned. In an age when children are often passive consumers, who, as Oscar Wilde once said ‘know the price of everything and the value of nothing,’ learning to knit can be a powerful way of bringing meaning into a child’s life.”

Movement Education and Games

Movement Education and Games in the Waldorf curriculum springs from the same understanding of a child’s development that underlies the academic curriculum in a Waldorf school. This deeper understanding of a child’s development is taken into account in the activities that are chosen, the shapes that are used in the group games, and the emphasis of the class (for instance whether games are played with an emphasis on fun or with an emphasis on playing by the rules).

In a culture where organized team sports hold such high status, children can sometimes think of movement only in these terms. The Movement Education curriculum tries to give the children basic coordination and movement skills that will help them when they decide to play organized sports. Depending on the grade, the children will play games or perform relay races that serve to develop a skill that is also required for a conventional sport such as basketball. String games, jump rope and a balloon relay are all activities that develop skills that can be used in many different sports.

Not only does a movement class provide the opportunity for the children to play games and have fun, it also works with their social interaction by teaching them to play with each other before they play against each other, to acknowledge each other, to play safely, and to gain an appreciation for all kinds of movement.

Foreign Languages

The golden window for learning foreign languages is still open in the early grades, when children have a direct access to the genius of the language without relying on intellect. Through recitation, singing, gestures, and games, the children learn the language with feelings. Children's flexible speech organ assists development of their mental flexibility and openness to different ways of thinking. Spanish and Japanese are taught in the grades.

Class Plays

Class plays which begin with the wonderful Fairy Tale Puppet Plays in the kindergarten are a very integral part of the Waldorf curriculum. The plays are unique for each class yet share distinct and common threads of pedagogy (educational philosophy), community building, curriculum enhancement and enlivenment.

Why then has the artistic element such a special effect on the development of the will? Because, in the first place, practice depends on repetition; but secondly because what a child acquires artistically gives him fresh joy each time. The artistic is enjoyed every time, not only on the first occasion. Art has something in its nature which does not stir a person once but gives fresh joy repeatedly. Hence it is that what we have to do in education is intimately bound up with the artistic element.

-Rudolf Steiner

Waldorf in the Home

Because Waldorf education is an impulse toward wholeness, it does not end in the classroom. Leaving school and coming home is the closing of a circle for the child. Home is the beginning and the ending of the circle of the child's day.

The world of home is, of necessity, different from the world of school. At home, the telephone rings, neighbor children come over to play, other adults are met - life goes on at a broader and more diverse level. If the family tries to live as if there is no connection between school and home, the child is likely to become confused. If the family pretends that the school and home are the same, the special gifts that come from each are denied. What seems best is for the family to provide a consistency of values and a continuity of ideals, blending the life of the family with what the child brings home from school.

Parents can create rhythm consistent with the values of the Waldorf classroom in many ways. Offering a simple grace of thanks and sharing an evening meal together each night unites a family at day's end. If there is time to play, the child can have some quiet time ending with the child putting toys away. This gives a sense of order and completion to the days' activities. To prepare the child for bed, a warm bath, warm bed, a poem or prayer, give a sense of peace leading into sleep. Above all, the parent who, by example, shows reverence for the earth, respect for self and others, and follows healthy rhythms of his or her own gives a precious treasure to the child.

Nutrition, toys and television are influences in a child's life in which home/school cooperation is especially significant.

Nutrition

A young child's food should be a source of enjoyment as well as nourishing. Natural and whole foods are greatly encouraged. The basis for well-being is laid during the child's early years and adults are responsible for nurturing this well-being.

Kindergarten snack time is a part of the school's curriculum and rhythm. It is a time of gathering and of gratitude, as well as a time of bodily nurture. Snacks are served mid-morning and will include natural juices, tea, whole grains, breads, fresh raw and cooked fruit and vegetables. Often the snack is prepared by the children.

Birthdays are special occasions celebrated at the school in a special way. Please consult with your child's teacher ahead of time for further information regarding classroom celebrations of birthdays.

Grades children bring their own snack and lunch. We encourage you to provide healthy snacks. Please include fruits and vegetables and do not include candy or sweets. The children will be provided with water or tea.

Toys

The child at play is projecting fantasy and imagination into the toy. The toy is nothing more than an extension of the child himself. The ideal toy is one which imposes the least possible limitation on the child's freedom to play imaginatively. In addition, a good toy will satisfy the sense of touch. Natural materials, such as ones used in the classrooms, seem best suited for this. Limiting the number of toys can be a help in creating a sense of order and appreciation.

Most children love to share with the classmates things that they have found or been given. However, bringing toys from home can create situations involving possessiveness, competition, and other difficulties. It is very appropriate for the children to bring and share beautiful or interesting things they have found in nature, or perhaps something handmade at home, but please, *no commercial or mechanical toys*. Parents can be of great help in supporting this kind of sharing. If you have any doubts about a specific item, call the teacher first.

Electronic Media

Childhood is time for learning through activity, for experiencing the wonders of nature, of growing socially, for playing creatively and imaginatively, for singing, talking, running, laughing and even quarreling and crying. The natural activities of childhood allow little time for television. Indeed, watching television has negative effects upon the child that are beyond the time spent in front of the television set. Television influences the way a child plays in class, and in some cases, renders the child unable to play well.

Eliminating most TV watching will have a positive effect on children's development. We ask that children come to school free of paraphernalia and clothing of television and other commercialized "heroes".

The faculty of Tacoma Waldorf School supports the policy of no television, movies or computers for the young children in our school. Please support your faculty's efforts to teach by protecting your children from all electronic media during the school week. It is our concern that television will undermine your child's abilities.

Tacoma Waldorf School Aftercare Program

Our Aftercare program, Games and Movement, serves the grades students. If you are interested in an extended day for a kindergarten child, please contact a kindergarten teacher as there is an afternoon Waldorf program. The grades Aftercare program is established to serve the families of the school's students. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, or disability.

Hours of Operation

After school program (p.m. only) 2:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

We ask that all families needing aftercare please sign up at least 24 hours in advance if possible. We understand that last minute needs for aftercare do arise, in this case, please contact the school office as soon as possible. The day rate will be charged for no shows. Parents will be given 15 minutes grace (until 5:45) for late pick up due to emergencies. However, if tardiness is chronic, parents will be charged \$15 for each 15 minutes after 5:30 p.m.

Emergency Closure

When the school is closed due to inclement weather, the childcare will be closed as well.

Enrollment and Admission

To enroll your child(ren) in the program, ALL forms MUST be turned in prior to your child attending the After School Program.

1. Signed Schedule and Fee Agreement
2. Signed Medication/Treatment Authorization Form (this form is required if the childcare staff will be administering medication to the child)

A short biography of your child(ren) and his/her/their background(s) is optional (but helpful to the Childcare Director).

Aftercare Continued..

Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

Drop off and pick up your child(ren) at the back door. Sign your child(ren) in and out on the sheet provided at the classroom door. It is required that you sign with your “full legal signature” and you may be asked for your identification.

Lunch and Snack

We ask that parents provide their child(ren) with a healthy snack each day, restricting sweets and processed foods. A lunch will also be required for full day attendance when school is not in session. Please **DO NOT BRING** any item containing **PEANUTS or Peanut Oils**. Eating a nutritious lunch is very important for the child’s growing body and their many needs for development. Lunch should meet the daily nutritional requirements from the different food groups. Durable lunch containers work best and last longest. (Also, lunch holders that display pictures of cartoon and other media characters are distracting.) Please, do not send perishables for afternoon snack since lunches are not refrigerated.

Field Trips

On occasion, the Childcare Director may take the children off the premises to the nearby park (walking distance) or for another fun adventure. If a field trip that requires driving is planned, parents will be notified in advance and asked to fill out a field trip form. For these field trips, parents may also be asked to volunteer to drive. The Emergency Information form provides for authorization by parents for field trips.

Behavior Management

Our primary goal is to instill friendship and respect among the children. We ask that each child respect one another, the classroom toys, and the environment. If undesirable behavior occurs, a gentle warning is given. The child will be informed to sit for one minute. The Grades children will be asked, “Do you know why I told you to sit down?” For those that do not understand, a brief explanation is given. If the problem doesn’t subside, we will notify the child’s parents and discuss what can be done.

Payment

Payment is made directly to the school. Each month your hours/days will be calculated and turned over to the bookkeeper. You will receive an invoice via email around the 10th of the following month.

Aftercare Continued...

School Vacations, Breaks, and Holidays

Childcare will be offered weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Childcare is available on a first come first serve basis. Look for the sign up sheet on the bulletin board outside of the Aftercare Program approximately two weeks before each closure.

Meals

10:00 AM	snack
12:30 PM	lunch
3:00 PM or after rest	snack

Please be sure to send the appropriate snacks/lunch for the time your child(ren) will be enrolled. **Cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance.**

Faculty In-Service Days, Parent Teacher Conference Days

Unless otherwise notified, afternoon childcare will be offered on faculty in-service days and parent teacher conference days on a limited basis. Please sign up in advance. There will be a special sign up sheet posted on the bulletin board several weeks in advance of these days. Sign up for your childcare with the time your child will be arriving and leaving each day. The Childcare Director will arrive at work each day dependent on the time childcare is requested. **Cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance.**

Meals eaten in the Aftercare Program

Meals that you provide for your child(ren) should be nutritionally balanced.

Appendix

Recommended Reading

Here is a list of books that go into further detail about Waldorf education. Check with the office or your teacher prior to ordering on your own as we may already have it or can get it through the school.

Family Life

Festivals, Family and Food, Diana Carey & Judy Large, Hawthorn Press (1982)

Parents as People: The Family as Creative Process, Franklin G. Kane, Aurora Publishing (1987)

To Dance with God: Family Ritual & Community Celebration, Gertrude Mueller Nelson, Paulist Press (1986)

Lifeways: Working with Family Questions, Gudrun davy & bons Voors, Hawthorne Press (1983)

Early Childhood

You are Your Child's First Teacher, Rahima Baldwin, Celestial Arts (1989)

The Way of a Child, A.C. Harwood, Rudolf Steiner Press (1965)

The Education of the Child, Rudolf Steiner Press (1965)

Brothers & Sisters: The Order of Birth in the Family, Karl Konig, Floris Books (1984)

Grade School Age

The Kingdom of Childhood, Rudolf Steiner, Rudolf Steiner Press (1919 – 1924)

Rudolf Steiner Education, L. Francis Edmunds, Rudolf Steiner Press (1987)

Toward Wholeness: Rudolf Steiner Education in America, M.C. Richards

Blessings

In our Early Childhood Program we try to foster a sense of reverence and gratitude. Our blessings allow children to breathe and be thankful for their food.

(Autumn)

For the golden corn and the apples on the trees,
For the sweet yellow butter and the honey from the bees,
For fruits and nuts and berries we gather on our way,
We praise our loving Mother Earth and thank her every day.

(Winter)

For the dark earth that cradles the seed,
For the sun that brings forth new life,
For the stars that form the flowers,
For the peace that comes in the night,
We thank thee.

(Spring)

For the flowers that bloom about our feet,
For tender grass so fresh and sweet,
For song of bird and hum of bee,
For all that we hear and see, we thank thee.

Praise and thanksgiving
Let everyone sing
Unto our Mother
For every good thing.

Praise and thanksgiving
Let everyone sing
Unto our Father
For every good thing.

(All through the Year)

Earth who gives to us this food
Sun who makes it bright and good
Sun above and Earth below
Our loving thanks to you we show.

Quick Reference Page

If you have questions concerning.....	Speak to.....
Curriculum, discipline, homework, progress reports, class books, academic standards, class parties, class trips, class meetings, or a school festival.....	Your Class Teacher
If you have questions concerning.....	Speak to.....
Volunteering.....	The Office Manager
If you have questions concerning.....	Speak to.....
School site and operations, policies and procedures...	The Office Manager
If you have questions concerning.....	Speak to.....
Financial matters including tuition and the tuition adjustment program	The Bookkeeper
If you have questions concerning.....	Speak to.....
Admissions and withdrawal	The Office Manager
If you have questions concerning.....	Speak to.....
Disputes, or question concerning a dispute or other unresolved issues with a teacher	The Faculty Chair
If you have questions concerning.....	Speak to.....
Disputes, or questions concerning a dispute or other unresolved issues with a staff member	A Board Member
If you have questions concerning.....	Speak to.....
General information about events, the calendar or any other question that you don't know who to ask.....	The Office Manager