



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2024-2025

Madison Waldorf School, 6510 Schroeder Road, Madison, WI 53711

Phone: (608) 270-9005

Fax: (608) 270-9337

www.madisonwaldorf.org

MADISON WALDORF SCHOOL

Our Values

Truth, Beauty, Goodness

Madison Waldorf School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, sexual preference, gender, or gender identity to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sexual preference, gender or gender identity in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Welcome

*"Receive the children in reverence, educate them in love, and send them forth in freedom."
-Rudolf Steiner*

Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year at Madison Waldorf School!

We look forward to working in partnership with you on behalf of your children. Strong parent-teacher partnerships are essential to students' educational success and to the ongoing vitality of our school community. The successful educational experience for our students is greatly enhanced when home life and school life work in a harmonious fashion to provide a solid base from which they can venture into the world. With the goal of understanding the child's experience, either at school (for the parents) or at home (for the teacher), regular communication is essential.

By contributing to the healthy functioning of our school, whether through volunteer time, specific skills, or imagination, our parent body can support our school with its cooperative effort. Parent involvement in our school is important because we are building a community and demonstrating this community-building spirit to our children. The value of our community-at-large is the sum total of all its parts. So, we welcome you and encourage you to become a valuable integral part of our school and truly experience Waldorf education at its finest!

Thank you,

Madison Waldorf School Faculty & Staff

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Part 1: Overview

A Brief Overview of Waldorf Education

Over one hundred years ago, on September 19, 1919, the first independent Waldorf School (*Die Freie Waldorfschule*) opened its doors. Waldorf Education has its roots in the spiritual-scientific research of the Austrian scientist and thinker Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925). According to Steiner's philosophy, the human being is a threefold being of spirit, soul, and body whose capacities unfold in three developmental stages on the path to adulthood: early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence.

In April of 1919, Rudolf Steiner visited the Waldorf Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, Germany. The German nation, defeated in war, was teetering on the brink of economic, social, and political chaos. Steiner spoke to the workers about the need for social renewal and for a new way of organizing society and its political and cultural life.

Emil Molt, the owner of the factory, asked Steiner if he would establish and lead a school for the children of the company's employees. Steiner agreed but set four conditions, each of which went against common practice of the day: 1) that the school be open to all children; 2) that it be coeducational; 3) that it be a unified twelve-year school; and 4) that the teachers, those individuals actually in contact with the children, have primary control of the school, with minimum interference from the state or from economic sources. Steiner's conditions were radical for the day, but Molt gladly agreed to them.

Today, there are more than 1,100 Waldorf schools in 66 countries, and 1,900 Waldorf kindergartens in more than 70 countries, plus Waldorf associations and teacher-training centers for Waldorf educators and Waldorf teachers around the world. Waldorf education is the fastest-growing independent educational movement in the world. In North America, Waldorf Education has been available since 1928, and there are now more than 160 schools and 14 teacher training centers. These schools exist in large cities and small towns, suburbs and rural enclaves. No two schools are identical; each is administratively independent. Nevertheless, a visitor would recognize many characteristics common to them all.

At every level, Waldorf Education seeks to build community. In the classroom, it accomplishes this by replacing competition with collaboration, by setting the stage for deep and lasting relationships among students and between students and their teachers. Community is also built through school festivals, which are often shared with friends from outside the immediate school family, as well as through parent participation in school committees, in the classroom, within the Parent Circle, and even at the Board level. Evening classes, lectures and study groups, as well as crafting circles and parent educational evenings, draw eager adult learners from every sector, thus widening the embrace of Waldorf education.

Waldorf Principles

There are a number of principles behind Waldorf education that may be new to you. This is an extensive topic that is explained in more detail throughout this handbook, but we'd like to give you a running start with a very brief introduction.

Our classes and activities are structured specifically around healthy childhood development and learning. There are many ways this manifests itself in the daily life of the school and classroom. For example, in our Early Childhood classes, children play with open-ended toys to foster their creativity. The class schedule allows room to breathe, and we create structure with daily, weekly and monthly rhythms. Movement, self-guided study and outdoor exploration are incorporated into our lessons – in all seasons! In grade school and middle school, this same care is taken to provide 'the right lesson at the right time.'

A Different School Culture

Some aspects of Waldorf education may be different from what you experienced growing up, or different from what you see in other schools or what your child experienced in other schools. Electronic devices are used in a limited and conscious way as appropriate (e.g. no one-to-one laptops/ipads for early childhood and grade school children's school use, no use of videos, smartboards, or unsupervised internet). In terms of media images, we specifically ask that your kindergarten children not wear images like logos or characters on their clothing. We also have a philosophy of not taking pictures or video of children during school performances, to allow them to be in the moment without expectations from the outside. These policies do not stem from a desire to be restrictive or overly protective, but rather are seen as a way to allow children's imagination to flourish and let their lessons be more thoughtful.

Community

Community is a major aspect of Madison Waldorf School. There are many ways to connect with other parents, deepen your relationships, and even provide extra support to the school. We celebrate a number of festivals throughout the year, which are shared traditions for both children and parents. Join the monthly Parent Coffees, connect with what's going on, and volunteer to help plan events or improve the school grounds. You will find warm and welcoming families connected to all areas of our community.

More...

The rest of this *Handbook* will go into more depth on everything mentioned so far. In addition, we host ongoing parent education nights throughout the year as well.

If you are new to the Madison Waldorf School, welcome! We believe your children will thrive here, and we hope you will grow in connection to the school community.

Contact Information

Address

Madison Waldorf School
6510 Schroeder Road
Madison, WI 53711

Phone 608-270-9005
Fax 608-270-9337
Website www.madisonwaldorf.org

Hours

Early Childhood	8:20-12:30pm	
Early Childhood, Extended Care	8:20-3:20pm	(Thursdays, 8:30-2:00pm)
Grades School	8:30am-3:30pm	(Thursdays, 8:30-2:00pm)

Administration Team

Administrator	Christina Nelson-Johnson	admin@madisonwaldorf.org
Enrollment Director	Yohanna Castro	enrollment@madisonwaldorf.org
Bookkeeper	Kara Melka	business@madisonwaldorf.org
Office Assistant	Jen Hamad	office@madisonwaldorf.org

Faculty

Playgroup	Lauren Frunza	lfrunza@madisonwaldorf.org
Pre-School (Moonbirds)	Carla Franco	cfranco@madisonwaldorf.org
Kindergarten (Sugar Maples)	Itzel Butcher	ibutcher@madisonwaldorf.org
Grade 1 Main Lesson Teacher	Marcela Kyngesburye	mmarcela@madisonwaldorf.org
Grade 1/2 Class Teacher	Sophie Scully	sscully@madisonwaldorf.org
Grade 3/4 Class Teacher	Ray Eckenstein	reckenstein@madisonwaldorf.org
Grade 5/6 Class Teacher	Sarah Meyers	smeyers@madisonwaldorf.org
Grade 7/8 Class Teacher	Allison Wall	awall@madisonwaldorf.org

Specialty Teachers

German	Jo Drury	jdrury@madisonwaldorf.org
Spanish	Mercedes Gallagher	m.gallagher@madisonwaldorf.org
Handwork	Heidi Ganshaw	hganshaw@madisonwaldorf.org
Strings	Effaeye Aawenyn	effaeye@madisonwaldorf.org
Band	Arlene Kennedy	aemccallum@gmail.com
Movement/Woodworking	Seth Steinhauer	ssteinhauer@madisonwaldorf.org

Assistants

Sugar Maples Assistants
Moonbirds Assistants
Grades Assistants

Juan Martinez
Sam Peterson
Aleksandra Martinka

Reading Specialist

Janice Schreiber-Poznik

Pedagogical Council

Administrator
Itzel Butcher
Allison Wall

Steering Committee

Administrator
Board President
Parent Coordinator
Faculty Representative

Board of Trustees

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Trustees

Joel Eidsath
Chris Meyers
Dan Lynch
Savitri Tsering
Administrator
Adam Derr
Sam Dillman
Andrew Keeley Yonda

Parent Coordinator

TBD

parentcoordinator@madisonwaldorf.org

Part 2: Communication

Communication Guidelines

Madison Waldorf School faculty and staff are committed to fostering communications based on mutual regard and reverence. We strive to create a climate in which all perspectives are heard and valued and contribute to the strength and vitality of our school community. **When practiced with an awareness of and sensitivity towards the other, our adult interactions model for students how they may cultivate healthy, constructive, and respectful relationships. We expect all adult communications, in person and electronically, to be respectful, kind and honest. We expect that members of our community will not speak negatively about other members.**

As parents and teachers, our highest priority is the children. We all care deeply that each child's educational and social/emotional needs are recognized and addressed, to the best of our ability. **In order to do so effectively, we must work in respectful partnership with one another through open and direct communication, having courage and fortitude to listen deeply, speak candidly, and always with respect.** Through our mutual striving in this regard, the children experience a circle of support and care that enriches their educational experience, while building the foundations for the healthy school community we seek for ourselves.

Communication is most effective when issues are brought to the attention of the appropriate person for discussion and resolution. Below are guidelines for where to take questions and concerns that arise in the classroom and in the larger school community.

Communication Channels

Where should I take my question or concerns about my child's curriculum or the way a teacher is bringing something to the classroom or the playground?

- To the teacher. Request a meeting with the teacher (and not during drop-off and pick-up times). Teachers will return calls and reply to messages within 48 hours at least (except for weekends and vacations). Each class teacher will provide parents with their specific availability and preferred method of communication. Conferences may be scheduled throughout the school year, as needed, to bring clarity and focus to the student's needs and challenges.
- If the situation or concern requires additional or ongoing attention, parents may request a meeting through [our online form](#). Your concern will then be brought to the attention of the Pedagogical Council (PC).
 - The Pedagogical Council will take up the concern and determine the next steps according to Waldorf principles and Madison Waldorf School policies. The PC will

communicate back to parents (sometimes via the Administrator) within ten business days.

- The PC will carry through the implementation of the next steps and will document the process and resolution.

Where should I take my question or concerns about my child's emotional, behavioral, or academic needs?

- To the teacher first.
- If the situation or concern requires additional or ongoing attention, parents may request a meeting through [our online form](#). Your concern will then be brought to the attention of the Educational Support Group (ESG).
 - If needed or requested by parents or faculty, the ESG will work with families to formulate a Care Plan to help to best meet the needs of the child.

Where should I take my question or concerns about the administration, programming, and policies of the school?

- To the administrator (admin@madisonwaldorf.org). After hearing your concerns, if the administrator cannot give you an answer right away he/she/they will take this to the full faculty. As soon as an answer is available, the administrator will communicate that with you either through email or an in person meeting (if the information is more sensitive).
- If the concern is specifically about the administrator, you may bring this concern to the President of the Board of Trustees who has the responsibility of overseeing the position of the administrator.

Where should I take my question or concerns about emergency or safety issues?

- If anything occurs that falls into the Level 4 discipline column in the discipline policy (see discipline policy in handbook) or is about safety issues within the facility these concerns should be brought directly to the administrator (admin@madisonwaldorf.org).

Where should I take my questions and concerns about enrollment (including withdrawing from the school)?

- Questions regarding enrollment should be directed to our Enrollment Director (enrollment@madisonwaldorf.org).

Where should I take questions and concerns about tuition payments/FACTS charges, contracts, withdrawing from the school, and the Accessible Education Grant (AEG)?

- Business related questions should be directed to our Bookkeeper (business@madisonwaldorf.org).

Where should I take my questions about class trip arrangements, events, school store, Grocery Cards, or other daily questions?

- Our Office Assistant (office@madisonwaldorf.org) has the answer to many practical questions.

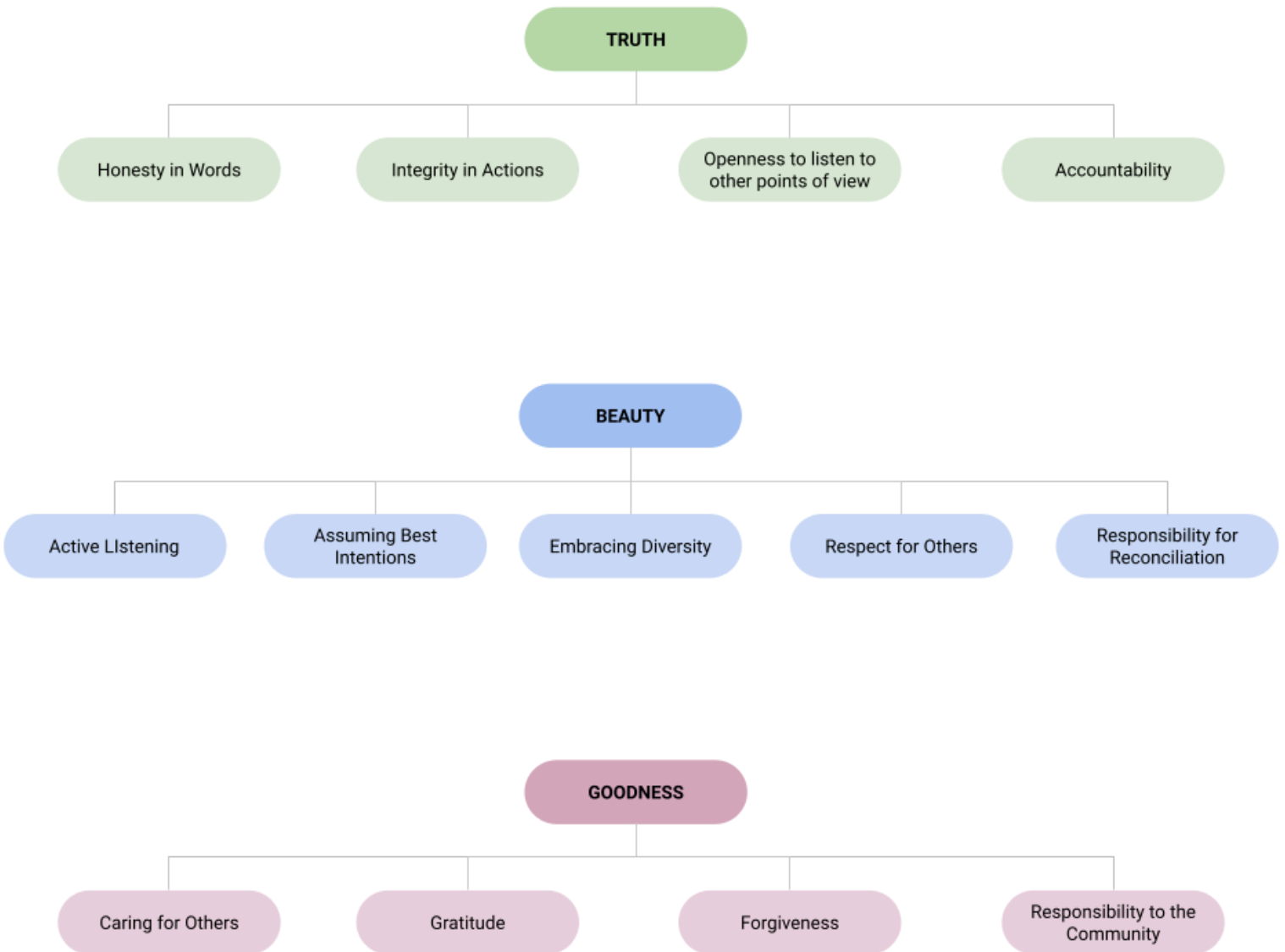
Where should I take my questions about financial policies, legal issues, new campus search, and fundraising?

- The Board of Trustees is responsible for the financial and legal aspects of the school.

Community Communication Agreement

Madison Waldorf School is a faculty-led school founded and led by Waldorf principles. As part of this community, we and all members will adhere to these communication values and the rules that follow. Together we will weave a positive and collaborative social fabric.

We base our values in TRUTH, BEAUTY, and GOODNESS.



We live out our values by adhering to the following rules and guidelines.

TRUTH

- Be proactive – do not wait to bring concerns forward to us.
- Take questions or concerns directly to the teacher, parent, employee, or colleague.
- Follow the MWS social media policy.

BEAUTY

- Important discussions will only take place in person or over the phone and not via electronic communication (email or text). Only use electronic communication for information dissemination, requesting and coordinating meeting, and follow-up documentation from conversations, if applicable.
- Only teachers, administrators, and class parents are authorized to relay information using the class email lists.

GOODNESS

- Refrain from engaging in gossip or conversations that involve hurtful or harmful speech.
- Refrain from discussing concerns when children or community members are in earshot.
- Respond to communication within 48 hours, except for holidays and weekends.

Concerns should be addressed through the following process:



General Communications

It is important to read all correspondence from the school. Knowing how many emails we receive in our inboxes, we do try to limit our correspondence to what is timely and important. You will receive emails from your classroom teacher, the Administrator, Board President, office assistant, and other members of the faculty as needed.

Calendars

Events are posted on our Madison Waldorf School website: [MWS Calendar](#). In addition, events are on our “Madison Waldorf” Google calendar, which you can add to your Google calendars if you use them: [Madison Waldorf](#).

Part 3: School Organization

Madison Waldorf School Governance (as stated in our bylaws)

In accordance with the principles of Waldorf education, the governance of the School shall be shared exclusively among the Board of Trustees, the Faculty, and Administrator. Each Governing Body shall be an equal contributor to and supporter of the School in its separate role as described below. The Leadership Circle shall support the Governing Bodies.

Role of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees shall govern the business, fundraising, and legal affairs of the School. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the financial well-being of the School. The Board of Trustees establishes financial policies, organizes fundraising, oversees the development and implementation of the school's budget, determines tuition rates and financial aid policies, and develops long-range plans to support the continued health and growth of the School.

Role of the Faculty

The Faculty shall determine School policy in relation to the pedagogical direction of the School, and the hiring and firing of Faculty members. The Faculty is responsible for development of the School's programming, curriculum, and student admission policies.

The Board of Trustees shall coordinate with the Faculty on appropriate matters such as teacher compensation as well as the scope of educational programming.

Administration

The Board of Trustees shall oversee the administration of the School by hiring and supervising an Administrator. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Faculty the authority to provide the Administrator with direction and oversight regarding any and all School matters until such time as the Board of Trustees addresses each such matter. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Administrator the authority to act autonomously regarding all day-to-day operational and ministerial tasks. However, the Administrator shall consult with the Faculty and/or Board of Trustees, as appropriate, for all matters involving School policy-related decisions.

Leadership Circle

The Leadership Circle shall carry out specific day-to-day administrative tasks or ministerial responsibilities delegated to it by any Governing Body. Such tasks and responsibilities shall convey only limited decision-making authority and shall be performed within the express parameters or pursuant to explicit directions provided by the delegating Governing Body. The Leadership Circle is responsible for completing delegated tasks and responsibilities efficiently, timely, and accurately.

Faculty Organization

The Faculty operates with two major committees: The Pedagogical Council (PC) and the Education Support Group (ESG).

The Pedagogical Council

The Pedagogical Council (PC) develops and upholds Madison Waldorf School's pedagogical and academic standards based on Rudolf Steiner's indications. The PC serves as the supporter and coordinator of the faculty in their roles as educators and cultivates an optimal environment that upholds Waldorf teaching of the highest quality.

The PC also develops policies and procedures for professional development, oversees ongoing review and evaluation, mentoring (internal and external), peer mentoring, and continuing professional development to ensure excellence in our teaching faculty and staff, while encouraging and supporting our highest capacities.

The Educational Support Group

The Educational Support Group (ESG) is founded on an anthroposophical and pedagogical understanding of child development. The ESG provides consultation, study, and support from an educational and therapeutic perspective to MWS faculty regarding the individual and group needs of the children in the school. The group dedicates itself to addressing the pedagogical and socio-emotional needs of the children brought before them, to facilitate growth and development. This group may also provide support during parent meetings to facilitate formulation of plans of support, to include crafting care plans and accommodations for children who may require them.

Parent Organization

Parent Coordinator

The Parent Coordinator helps coordinate volunteers for our many events and needs during the year. The Parent Coordinator will also represent the parents in our Leadership Circle, which strives to foster constructive relationships and maintain a healthy flow of communication between faculty, board, administration and parents

Class Parents

Each class at Madison Waldorf School has a designated Class Parent who supports the Class Teacher. The Class Parent helps mobilize other parents in the class to offer help where needed. The Class Parent can also help socially integrate all families in the class so everyone feels welcome and has a role to play. The Class Parent from each of the classes meet together to assess how things are going in the classes and how best they can support each other, the Parent Circle, and MWS.

Parent Circle

The Parent Circle, which includes all Madison Waldorf School parents, is a vital link between the parents, relatives and friends of the school, and the rest of the school community. The group's primary goal is to grow a vibrant, connected, and committed community at Madison Waldorf School. The group focuses on building personal connections and helping every family feel a part of the life of the school. Related goals include providing parents and friends with volunteer opportunities and supporting the faculty, administration, and Board.

Parent Volunteerism

In 2007, a small group of parents and teachers joined together with powerful intentions, open hearts, and strong hands to create Madison Waldorf School. The school that began with a handful of parents and teachers is now an Associate Waldorf School. Since our earliest days, volunteers have been crucial to ensuring the smooth functioning and beautiful environment of Madison Waldorf School.

There are many ways for parents to be involved:

- Classroom Projects
- Field Trip Organizers, Chaperones and Drivers
- Festivals
- Open Houses
- Fundraising Events
- Buildings and Grounds work days
- Special Projects
- Board and Committee membership, and more!

We use an online platform, iVolunteer (which we call iVol), to facilitate sign-up for volunteer opportunities that require a large number of volunteers. Calls for signing up for upcoming volunteer opportunities are sent via email. For a summary of volunteer opportunities or to sign up, visit our volunteer site: <https://madisonwaldorf.ivolunteer.com/>

And last, but not least, your enthusiasm and willingness to share with others about Madison Waldorf School helps attract new students and families to our community.

Classroom Parent Meetings

Three or more class parent evenings will be held throughout the year. Your teachers will inform you of the dates. It is vitally important to be present at these meetings. The evenings provide an opportunity for the teacher to present an overview of what the children are learning, what they are doing, and will be doing in light of the tenets of Waldorf education.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

In addition to these whole-class meetings, Parent Teacher Conferences are scheduled twice a year. These allow for one-on-one communication directly about your child. Additional conferences may be held at the initiative of the parents or the teachers. In addition, after the close of the school year, all Grade School and Middle School parents receive a written progress report summing up the year's work and achievements for each child.

Parent Education

Madison Waldorf School organizes several school-wide parent education evenings each year. These events are typically open to families and the community and are advertised in advance. These evenings are usually organized around a topic of specific interest to parents. Topics may include discipline, storytelling, media exposure, kindergarten and first-grade readiness, literacy, math and science curriculum, social inclusion, promoting resilience in children, service learning, conflict resolution, etc. Finally, these gatherings offer parents an opportunity to get to know one another, ask questions, and share ideas. In order to fully embrace all that a Waldorf education has to offer we ask that parents attend as many parent evenings and parent education opportunities as possible.

Part 4: School Community

Festivals

One of the most joyous and vital elements of Waldorf education is the celebration of a number of festivals throughout the year. Their purpose is to provide nourishment for the soul of each individual as well as bring the community together. Each festival is a celebration of life and the turning of the seasons. We acknowledge our shared human experience that brings to the school community a richness of story, song, light, and food.

Our major traditional festivals are described below. Throughout the year, other cultural holidays and festivals are often observed in the classrooms through songs, poems, stories, and crafts. These contribute to the recognition of the seasons and all of humanity through celebration.

Michaelmas, September 27, 11:45-2:00 pm

On the last Friday afternoon of September, we celebrate the first of our autumn harvest festivals, known as Michaelmas. The festival is named for the archangel Michael, stories and legends of which arose long ago from several religious traditions and typically depict a noble hero, sometimes on horseback, with sword in hand, subduing a dragon at his feet.

On the day of this festival, the grade school children perform a pageant about Michael, a similar legendary figure, St. George, and a courageous princess, whom embody the clarity and strength of heart to tame the fiery dragon. The entire school community gathers to watch the pageant, participate in games, and share homemade dragon bread and soup.

This festival speaks so strongly of what is needed in our world today – the awareness, strength, and courage to tame the dragons within ourselves and to transform the world we live in.

Lantern Walk (Martinmas), November 8, 5:00pm

In November, we celebrate the last of our autumn festivals with the Lantern Walk, also known as Martinmas. As the days seem significantly shorter, the nights longer, and winter is nearly upon us, students throughout the school make their own lanterns to light and carry with them on our evening walk through Hoyt Park. The lanterns are symbols of the individual light that shines out in each of us to overcome the darkness and make a difference in the world. There is a short play during the festival, depicting the legend of St. Martin of Tours. This festival can inspire in us a sense of responsibility toward those who are suffering and oppressed in our world today.

Winterfest, December 14, 10:00am-3:00pm

Our entire school, inside and out, is transformed into a winter wonderland during our Winterfest, celebrating the magic, warmth, and good cheer of our school community during this season of many holidays. Winterfest is also a major fundraiser for Madison Waldorf School.

For several weeks beforehand, parents in the school gather together to make beautiful handmade crafts for the Magic Gift Room, as well as prepare many other events for Winterfest. In addition to the Magic Gift Room, highlights include vendors selling local handcrafted gifts, the Dragon Maze, stories and/or a puppet play for young and old alike, a crafting area for children, good food, and music. This event attracts alums, alum parents, and the community at large.

Winter Spiral, December 18 and 19

At the Winter Spiral, a spiral of evergreen branches is laid out in the quiet and darkness of our Movement room, which is accompanied by live, gentle music. Both children and adults have the opportunity to walk the spiral and place a lighted candle along its path and experience the mystery and power of the light that pierces through the darkness, warms our space, and unites us in friendship, community, and song.

The grade school children participate in the Winter Spiral during the school day with their teachers. Parents of early childhood students are invited to experience the Winter Spiral with their children in a special ceremony in the evening.

Candle Day, February 3 and 4

Our traditional Candle Day festival has its roots in the many cultural/religious traditions that mark the time of year falling halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, approximately February 2 (which falls on a Sunday in 2025). It marks the end of the winter festival season and the lengthening of our days.

We set aside a portion of our morning schedule to give each student the opportunity to make their own beeswax candle. It is an exercise in patience, observation, and careful movement. It takes practice to dip a wick in a pot of hot wax, let it cool *just* the right amount, then dip it again, all the while maintaining a calm, healthy respect for a pool of hot wax!

MayFest, May 3

MayFest celebrates spring! During the week before Mayfest, students practice their Maypole dancing and spring songs. The entire community gathers at Lake Farm Park for a picnic, games, flower crowns, and a musical desserts jamboree. Lady Spring appears and chases away King Winter to allow spring to come in with its full glory!

Other Events

Below are some of the other events at Madison Waldorf School:

Parent Coffees

Each month a Parent Coffee will be held at the school so parents can meet for refreshments and conversations.

Assemblies

Several times during the year, grade school students will showcase some of their classwork with music, dance, poetry, drama, and surprises for the entire school. Parents are encouraged to attend. Early childhood parents are also encouraged to attend as the grade school students love that support and you can preview what is to come in the later years of your child's school life.

Grandparents Morning

The Tuesday morning before Thanksgiving, grandparents or other important family or friends are invited to come to school to tour, meet your child's teachers, and visit the classrooms. The morning culminates in an assembly for everyone.

Gala

In the spring, the culmination of our online auction is an in-person live auction and gala. Parents, faculty, staff, and friends share food, refreshments, dancing, and a good time together. Auction items, raffles, door prizes, and many other surprises are a highlight of the evening. The auction and gala is a big fundraiser for our school.

Part 5: Early Childhood

Early Childhood Principles

- We believe that early childhood, from birth to age seven, is a unique period of life that deserves respect, guidance, nurturing, and protection.
- We strive to work primarily out of Rudolf Steiner’s pedagogy, which identifies that children have not only a physical nature, but a soul and spiritual nature as well.
- Meaningful work and creative play in a structured environment are the pillars upon which a healthy life can be built.
- The gradual development of the young child’s social skills is of utmost importance for their educational and interpersonal success.

Madison Waldorf School Early Childhood Tenets

Young children have a drive and a desire to master the physical world.

Young children are gradually “moving into” their physical bodies and need plenty of opportunities and space to move, work, and play. They are also building their physical bodies in the early years, requiring warmth and movement. Their education at this time takes place primarily through active participation in the life around them.

Young children are best supported by strong daily, weekly, and yearly rhythms.

Consistency and predictability are the foundations for children’s health, development, sense of self, confidence, and learning. An unhurried unfolding of the day, the week, and the year benefits both the children and the teachers.

Young children can learn best in a mixed-age environment with consistent caregivers.

Ongoing, nurturing relationships are essential to a child’s sense of security and emotional well-being. A setting that includes children of diverse ages allows younger children to aspire to their future and the older ones to serve, lead, and nurture the little ones.

Young children need support, loving guidance, and practice to develop social skills.

Much of the young child’s work is about learning healthy social skills: meeting new friends, sharing, waiting, asking, thanking, helping those in need, etc.

Young children need ample time for creative and social play.

Imaginative, uninterrupted play with open-ended toys and materials that can be continually transformed is the cornerstone of healthy early childhood education.

Young children need to experience meaningful, purposeful, and practical life-skills.

Children benefit greatly when they have opportunities to join in, as they are able, with adults engaged in the daily tasks of life: cooking, cleaning, gardening, washing, woodworking, sewing, building, etc.

Young children need to have daily, extended contact with the natural world.

Indoors, the children's senses are deepened and developed when surrounded by playthings made of natural materials. And when they are outdoors, seasonal discoveries and transformations in nature are a healing balm to the young child. Children are able to form bonds with the earth which can later develop into a true attitude of stewardship.

Young children grow and develop through experiencing the nurturing arts, as practiced by the adults who care for them.

Children know they are loved when they are fed, washed, sung to, given a rest, bandaged, have their hair brushed, or their back rubbed.

Young children experience health and wellbeing when they help prepare, serve, and eat nutritious and mind-and-body-building food.

When children know where their food comes from and participate in its preparation, they develop skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Young children grow and develop when they are exposed to and take part in artistic offerings.

Puppet plays, song, verse, and storytelling provide children with a language-rich environment. Such an environment stimulates the children's imagination, gives them pictures to inform their moral intelligence, and provides soothing human connections. Drawing, watercolor painting, and simple handwork projects allow them to connect their inner and outer worlds while developing important fine motor skills and neural pathways necessary for later learning.

Early Childhood Information

Early Childhood Classes

Madison Waldorf School has two Early Childhood classes: the preschool class (Moonbirds) for children 2 ½ - 4 and the kindergarten (Sugar Maples) for children 4-6. We also have a Playgroup for babes-in-arms and toddlers with their parent or caregiver for two hours on Wednesday mornings.

Home Visits

For the teacher to begin to form a connection to the children and create a broader picture of their lives, we encourage (but do not mandate) home visits. These visits help to create a feeling of security for the children and build a bridge between home and school. The children can become familiar with the teacher on their own “turf,” while the teacher can gain insights into the children’s world after seeing their special hideouts, favorite toys, or their backyard. These visits usually last up to one hour, which is enough time to begin to create a special connection with your child that will continue to grow as the year progresses. If it is preferred to meet somewhere other than the home, that can be arranged.

Transitioning from Home to School

Stepping over the threshold of the school building offers a unique opportunity to instill lifelong habits in children. To begin building a feeling that school is a special place with special rules, we ask that you help support our community as we work toward an environment that respects people as well as property. It is important that the adults reinforce the following behaviors among children until they are able to remember them on their own:

- Staying next to Mom/Dad/other adult’s side until delivered to the class teacher at arrival time is a must.
- “Walking feet” (as opposed to running ones) are required inside.
- Stairway manners include holding on to railings, as needed, and stepping down stairs.
- “Indoor voices” are requested unless or until the children are outside under the “Big Blue Sky,” which can hold their “big” voices.
- Quiet feet and voices in the hallways and bathrooms help students working in their classrooms carry on without distractions.
- Caring for our shared spaces (hallways, movement room, kitchen, and playground) promotes both outer and inner order. It is especially important to help the children care for their cubby/storage space and hallway area.

Items to Keep at Home

Children should not bring any toys or other materials from home, unless your child’s teacher has specifically requested them. We have found that toys or other precious things from home are often brought to school with the best of intentions, but inevitably cause conflicts and unhappiness in the class that can be avoided by leaving these things at home or in the car. The materials in the classrooms have been selected with care and attention. They are open-ended, natural items that promote the education and creativity of children in their early childhood years. If your child wants to share something with the class (something from nature or a hand-made creation), ask the teacher in advance. The following items should not come with your child into school:

- Toys and stuffed animals
- Jewelry and watches
- Candy and gum

- Money
- Umbrellas
- Sunglasses

The Nature Table

Each Early Childhood classroom has a special table or shelf with an evolving display that reflects the activity of nature throughout the year. You will notice that, as the seasons change, there is a continual transformation on the nature table, as the beauty and gesture of the natural world is expressed. The children may occasionally bring contributions – stones, leaves, flowers, nuts, etc. These can be something that they wish to give to the room or something they would like to share for the day and then take home again.

Fresh flowers are always a welcome addition to the classroom, either for the nature table or as a centerpiece at our dining table. We would be most grateful if you can spare a few from your gardens from time to time.

Some things from nature make especially nice play materials for the classrooms. Bowls or baskets of acorns, chestnuts, seedpods, etc. are always welcome. They are frequently used by the children for “cooking,” counting, bartering, etc. If you happen to collect an abundance of such things on a hike or picnic, we would gratefully receive some for our classrooms.

Morning Snack and Lunch

Each day, teachers and children share meal times together with their healthy mid-morning snacks and lunch, brought from home, accompanied by herbal tea and/or water to drink.

Extended Care for EC Children

The extended care program provides strong rhythms and continuity of care for children from 12:30-3:20 each day (except Thursdays, when there is early dismissal at 2pm). After lunch there is a 30-minute transition before the children begin to rest. Children will rest for about an hour, followed by a snack brought from home. Then outdoor/indoor play activities will follow until pickup time. The afternoon assistants work together to provide individual attention, as needed, during rest time and continuity of care throughout the afternoon. Many of the children nap during rest time (even those who have given up their nap at home), providing children the necessary time to fully relax after spending a very active Early Childhood morning with a group of peers.

For the EC extended care program, students are required to keep the following items at school (taken home occasionally for laundering):

- A small blanket, sleeping bag, sheepskin, or resting mat to rest upon
- A small pillow
- A blanket to cover and snuggle with, appropriate for the season

Rest and Sleep

The school day is both exciting and tiring for children. Parents can help ease the transition by providing a nap or quiet time after lunch (if the children are not in the EC extended care program). By using the time after dinner for calming activities, this intentionality can lead into a calming bedtime ritual. We recommend that children have an afternoon rest until they reach first grade. However, if your child no longer takes naps, we encourage you to provide quiet time every day after lunch. Pediatricians typically recommend 11-13 hours of sleep per night for children three to six years old. The hours before midnight provide the deepest and most rejuvenating sleep. It is ideal for children to awaken themselves in the morning feeling rested, refreshed, and ready for an active day.

Part 6: Grades & Middle School

Grades Program

Madison Waldorf School is committed to excellence in all foundational academic subjects. Our elementary school provides a strong introduction to the Classics, History, Geography, Mathematics, and the Sciences. Students receive instruction in two foreign languages - German and Spanish - beginning in first grade. Equally important, music and the arts - visual, dramatic, and practical - are integrated into all of the main lesson content and are also taught as special subjects throughout the day. In this way, students receive an education that engages not only their intellect, but their whole being, through their head, heart, and hands. Waldorf education fully integrates the artistic and creative with the scientific and intellectual study.

Each day begins with a two-hour Morning Lesson, during which the core academic work is presented. Morning Lesson subjects (language arts, math, science, social studies) are taught in three- or four-week blocks that rotate throughout the school year. This approach allows students to deeply explore and digest the material. Lessons in the first grade class are often a little shorter, especially at the beginning of the year. Movement is integrated into all grade school lessons to provide a healthy, breathing rhythm to the child's learning experience. Our students can sit at a desk when they need to because they do not sit at a desk all day. Outdoor education includes frequent hikes to nearby parks and nature areas, farm adventures, and expanded excursions and adventure challenges in the older grades.

Guided by their teachers, students create their own Morning Lesson pages for each subject taught. This allows them to integrate and assimilate the material, discovering a personal relationship to it. These pages are bound together at the end of the year and form the student's Morning Lesson book for that school year. (Review of the student's Morning Lesson work is one component of assessment and part of parent-teacher conferences.) Extra lessons and skills promote application and practice of foundational skills on a daily basis. Homework is generally not assigned until the fourth grade and is kept to a minimum so that children have time and space in their day to relax, play, spend time outdoors, and participate in extracurricular activities that bring balance to their lives and help them develop into well-rounded human beings.

The development of a close and often lasting teacher-student relationship is a unique and essential component of Waldorf education. The class teacher guides their class (typically for several years) as guardians and mentors, fostering a strong sense of classroom community and often life-long friendships. The trust, mutual respect, and regard for each person's uniqueness and dignity is consciously fostered by the class teacher, with the goal of forming the class into a dynamic and supportive learning environment.

Children's growth occurs in predictable developmental phases, and Waldorf education works with these phases to maximize the learning process at every step. The brilliance of Waldorf's rich and varied curriculum is its wisdom to "bring the right lesson at the right time." The MWS curriculum values challenging academic work, as well as engaging artistic and practical experiences, all of which are age-appropriate and grounded in child development. Our experiential and integrated approach to learning engages the intellectual, physical, and emotional development of every child.

Middle School Program

The coming of adolescence marks another important milestone in child development. In every realm of the child's being – physical, emotional, and intellectual – new developments and new opportunities come into view as the child enters Grade 6 and moves ahead into Grades 7 and 8. The Middle School program at Madison Waldorf School keeps pace with these advances by providing a curriculum that is both academically rigorous and emotionally rich. Students in the Middle School continue to experience the full complement of Waldorf Morning Lesson content and special subjects. In addition, here are some other things that MWS students will experience:

- Differentiated math curriculum.
- Compatibility of Waldorf Math and Common Core standards, for ease of transfer to local High Schools.
- Intensive study in one foreign language (either Spanish or German), chosen by the student.
- Integrated Arts coursework, including blocks in perspective drawing, work in pastels, charcoal, and clay, as well as a progression of the handwork and woodwork curriculum taught throughout the school.
- Optional Overture Band program (the band program begins in Grade 4).
- Service work at school and in the community.
- Coming of age coursework.
- Grade 8 class trip.

Part 7: Guidelines and Policies

Media

Teachers and staff at Madison Waldorf School know that most children are exposed to at least some media/electronic experiences. These include TV, films, video, computer games, and the Internet (including social media). We also know that, typically, parents at our school expect and assume their child's classmates' exposure to media is monitored and regulated. The following statements reflect the school's position on this important topic in our community. We encourage an ongoing conversation among parents and teachers for broad agreement on media at Madison Waldorf School.

We believe that:

Children are affected by electronic exposure in various ways.

Their behavior in play and social situations, their ability to participate in the learning environment of the classroom, and children's integration of content from their lessons are affected by such exposure. Daily experiences and images are integrated during sleep. With electronic stimulation and the strong visual and sensory experiences of electronic media, the benefits of Waldorf Education can be undermined.

Children are imitative.

It is common to see children acting out characters and actions from movies and video games. Consider how your child's exposure to media might affect the kind and quality of their play. Children's free imagination is valuable; the media interferes with it by substituting commercial or adult images for the child's own imagination about a story or scene. Restricting media exposure allows the images the children experience during the day in stories, artistic work, movement, speech, and poetry to continue to work in them for the next day's review and/or development. In our school, we deliberately open children to the world through their senses.

Our policies are:

- Families are strongly encouraged to restrict media exposure, especially on school nights. Visual images (TV, computer, YouTube, movies) should be particularly avoided after school and before sleep. No media exposure on school days and nights is the goal.
- Tolerance for our children's media exposure varies considerably. Before allowing your child to share movies, YouTube, or video games with classmates and friends, it is considerate to get permission from the parents of those children.
- Students who bring cellphones to school must turn them into the office and retrieve them at the end of the day. Parents must sign a permission slip before students may bring cellphones or other electronic devices to school. Adults should not use cell phones for texting or calling while in public spaces in the school, including the hallways and playground. Adults can go into an office or other quiet space (conference room, for

instance) to use cell phones. Exceptions are made for teachers out in the playground who must communicate with other teachers or administrators should they need assistance.

Sleep

It is vital for children to have plenty of sleep. Their health and their educational success depend upon it. Please speak with your child's teacher, and perhaps your child's pediatrician, if your child is experiencing sleep disturbance on a regular basis.

A deeper consideration of the connection between sleep and learning has been a pedagogical study among Waldorf educators and others for many years. Still, the value of "sleeping on one's lessons" can be an underappreciated aspect of learning. A basic premise of Waldorf education is that the class teacher presents lessons appealing to the students' imagination and feelings, and that the children will later integrate those lessons in their sleep before being reviewed by the class in subsequent lessons. In this way, educational experiences and content work their way more deeply into the child's being and become their own.

Attendance

Much of the learning at Madison Waldorf School is based upon experience, as it is in all Waldorf schools. The content and skills lessons are arranged and taught with an intentional daily and weekly rhythm. The class teacher prepares with the goal of offering healthy, meaningful lessons, most of which are presented orally to the children.

For this style of teaching to work, the child must be in class to experience the lessons and the rhythm created. For it to work well, there must be close cooperation between home and school. Morning Lesson, from 8:30am until 10:30am in the Grades and Middle School is critically important for our students' educational experience. Because of how the curriculum is presented to the children in class, it is not feasible for a grades teacher to 'make up' what a child has missed. It is, however, the responsibility of the family to ensure that all assigned homework is completed.

For early childhood students, starting the school day on time cultivates their habit life and smooths their integration into the social fabric of the class.

If a child will be absent or late to school, a parent must call the office at (608) 270-9005 (leave a message on the answering machine at school), or email your child(ren)'s teacher(s) before school starts, so that the teacher can be informed before the start of school. Please state the reason for the absence.

If a child is unable to attend school for more than one day, please notify the office each day, unless it was a planned absence that is communicated in advance. Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule medical or dental appointments outside of school time, but if that is not possible, appointments should be scheduled after the Morning Lesson period (after 10:30 am).

An excused absence is when a student misses school due to illness, family emergency, or religious obligation. An unexcused absence is when a student misses school for any reason other than illness, family emergency, or religious obligation. Family trips or vacations during school days are not considered excused absences.

In the event of a planned, unexcused absence (such as vacation), parents will be required to sign a document indicating that teacher will not provide additional work, materials, or support of any fashion, before, during, or after the trip absence.

Tardiness

The beginning of the day at our school is especially important. Tardiness interferes with the Morning Lesson. Children who are consistently late will miss a vital part of their education and disrupt the education of the other students. The best way to avoid tardiness and the consequent disruption is to ensure that the child arrives ten minutes early (8:20am), giving the child a chance to transition between home, travel to school, and school. This aids in a smooth start to your child's day.

If your child is tardy, parents need to sign them in the upstairs office and pick up a tardy slip to present to the teacher.

Timely, regular attendance in all classes during the entire day is crucial for your child's progress in school. If a student accumulates seven tardies and/or absences within a 30-day period, an absent/tardy alert will be sent home and the parent will be required to arrange a meeting with the teacher to discuss the impact of tardies or absences on the student's learning, how to best support the student, and how to best minimize such tardies or absences in the future.

Drop-Off

The school day begins at 8:30am and ends at 3:30pm; Early Childhood classes begin and end 10 minutes earlier - classroom doors open at 8:20am.

Parents are expected to accompany their child(ren) into school from Preschool through Grade 3. Additionally, we recommend parents accompany children to the classroom in Grade 4/5 during the first weeks of school, at least.

Parents of children in Grades 1-2 should park in the front. Early Childhood families and Grades 3-8 should park in the back parking lot. Please do not drop your child off in the driveway.

Pick-Up

Early Childhood Students

Dismissal is at 12:30pm for morning Early Childhood students. Parents may pick up their children in the school lobby. Dismissal for extended care Early Childhood students is no later than 3:20pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, and at **2:00pm on Thursdays**.

Grades and Middle School Students

Dismissal for students in Grades 1-8 is 3:30pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday and **2:00pm on Thursdays**.

Children in Grade 1-2 are released to their parents or designated caregiver in the front playground. Children in Grade 3-8 are dismissed to their parents or a designated caregiver from the back playground.

For all children:

Students will not be released to any person other than the parents or designated caregivers unless prior authorization has been provided in writing, via telephone, or via text to the office or child(ren)'s teacher(s). In the interests of safety, teachers may hold a child until they can verify that the person picking them up has authorization to do so.

After dismissal, parents are in charge of their children. Caregivers, please remind children that school rules are in effect at all times, both in the building and on the grounds.

Parking Lot Etiquette

Everyone must drive slowly into and out of the parking lot.

After dismissal, parents are responsible for supervising their children in the back playground and parking lot area. Children must be supervised at all times. Please pay special attention to supervision of your very young children in the back parking lot area.

The back parking lot closest to the school is cordoned off from 10:30-11:20am and again from 12:50pm to 1:50pm for recess.

Photography of Children at School Events

It is understandable and common for parents to want to record special moments. However, flashes and mechanical sounds distract children.

Parents are not permitted to take pictures or video of children in assemblies, plays, or Early Childhood celebrations. Group or individual photos may be taken by school staff at some assemblies and events/festivals. Ask your child's teacher in advance before taking pictures at other school-sponsored events. Under no circumstances should parents post pictures of other people's children on social media without the express permission of that child's parents. Being present with our children without a lens between us and them is one of the greatest gifts we can give them.

Food Guidelines

Good nutrition is the cornerstone of a healthy life and supports learning. We encourage parents to pack food that is fresh and high in nutrition. We discourage highly sugared or processed foods. Children require nutritious foods to properly develop. Healthy lunches include raw fruits and vegetables, yogurt, cheese, nuts, seeds, whole grains, dried fruit, hard-boiled eggs, soups, stews and salads. Good proteins include tuna, peanut butter, tofu, turkey, chicken, salmon, beans, beef sticks, and legumes.

Water, milk, or herbal tea make the best drinks for children. Drinking water is always available to children from the drinking fountain.

In the event that we have a child(ren) with peanut (or other) allergies, we will notify everyone to not send food with peanuts (or other food, as needed).

Children need to bring both a lunch and a snack (or two, for Early Childhood students) to school daily. Please do not send lunch boxes portraying media or cartoon images. Microwaves are not available for any class other than the oldest class.

Birthdays

Birthdays are often acknowledged at school. If you would like to bring a birthday snack to celebrate, please plan the details with your child's teacher, who can inform you of any food allergies or restrictions among children in the class.

Immunizations

Our vaccination practices are consistent with the State of Wisconsin law in that parents must fill out a Student Immunization Record or waiver before the first day of school. This is done upon enrollment or if your child is going into kindergarten, 6th grade, or if there is a change.

Illness at School

It is essential to try to prevent spreading contagious diseases to other children and their families. Therefore, we ask parents to keep sick children at home where they can be given the extra care and attention they need. Please do not send your child to school if he/she is sick.

Signs and symptoms for keeping your child at home:

- Cough
- Feeling cold/shivering
- Fever (pale or flushed face, glazed eyes, warm forehead, and temperature above 99.6)
- Sore throat
- Unusual lethargy, grouchiness, or weepiness
- Unusual unwillingness to get up in the morning
- Diarrhea or vomiting, including the night before
- Inflamed/pink eyes (may be conjunctivitis)

Requirements for parents to follow to avoid exposing other children in the classroom to possibly contagious illness are as follows:

- Children must be fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.
- If a child vomits or has diarrhea the day before, during the night before or in the morning before school, that child should be kept at home for 24 hours from the last episode.
- If a child has a productive cough that cannot be controlled with medication, then that child should stay home.
- If a child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness such as measles, chicken pox, impetigo, or conjunctivitis, then the child should be kept home until illness is healed or cleared by a doctor. If a child has eyes that are red, swollen, itchy, producing purulent drainage, or have a crusty appearance upon waking, that child should be kept at home until symptom-free or cleared by a doctor.

Head Lice

We have a no-nit and no-lice policy at Madison Waldorf School. Children will be sent home if they exhibit symptoms of head lice (excessive head itching and/or found nits or lice). For the health of all students and faculty, treat your child's head and remove all nits and lice before they return to school. The school reserves the right to check all children's heads in a classroom should a lice outbreak occur. Families will be notified if we have a case of nits or lice in their child's class.

Pertussis/Whooping Cough

When we receive notification of a confirmed pertussis case, the child in question will stay at home until five days of treatment have been completed. During a pertussis outbreak, we ask that anyone with a child who has any kind of a cough or cold get tested. The symptoms may range from cold-like symptoms to a simple cough, to a raspy whooping cough. Even if your child's cough seems to get better, they are still contagious. Pertussis is highly contagious.

Measles

In accordance with Public Health Madison and Dane County, a student who is not vaccinated and is exposed to measles will not be able to come to school for two weeks. If there should be a measles outbreak in our school, we will follow the recommendations of Public Health Madison Dane County.

Injury at School

A student who comes to the office with a medical emergency will be assessed by the faculty or staff member who will:

- Determine if 911 should be called.
- Notify the child's parents or other emergency contact.
- Provide emergency care until either a parent or advanced medical personnel assumes that responsibility.

COVID-19

Madison Waldorf School will continue to follow Public Health Madison Dane County's guidance for COVID-19. See information [here](#).

Medication Policy

We will administer medication only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent via an official medication administration permission form. Other things to note:

- For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians must provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication, the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.
- For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians must provide the medication in its original packaging. The medication must be labeled with the child's first and last names. Specific, legible instructions must accompany the medication.
- Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the school staff in writing on the medication administration permission form.
- Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration for over-the-counter or prescribed medication.
- A medication log is maintained by staff to record the instructions for giving the (prescription or over-the-counter) medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of the medication.

Dress Codes

Dress Code for Early Childhood

"There is no such thing as bad weather, only poor clothing choices." --Ulrike Schnaar, Kindergarten teacher

Mother Nature is said to be the archetypal teacher, and we encourage the children to explore her as fully as possible. The puddles, mud and snow call out to be played in, and as we have so few years to fully immerse ourselves in them, it is important that children take full advantage of these opportunities. At Madison Waldorf School, we want children to experience the joy of exploration, so it is important to dress them in sturdy clothes that are appropriate for the weather conditions. Dressing children in layers is usually the best way to ensure that they are ready for anything.

All growing beings need warmth, so we ask that the children always have their back, stomach, legs and feet covered. On days when your child is dressed in shorts or a skirt/dress, make sure that they also have a pair of light-weight pants or leggings to put on when hiking in the woods or tall grasses. An outdoor hat is important no matter what the season: a wide-brimmed hat and sunscreen for warm days, and a warm hat and scarf for chilly weather.

Media-influenced clothing, such as clothes with TV or movie characters, is not appropriate for early childhood students. Additionally, clothing featuring sports teams, large product logos, or brand names is discouraged. These include underwear and undershirts.

All clothing should be clearly labeled with your child's name. All students (Preschool - Grade 8) must have a complete change of clothing, all labeled with their names, available at all times. This includes pants, a shirt, two pairs of underwear, and two pairs of socks for those days when the elements get the best of us. Send extra clothing items in a cloth, drawstring bag (preferable) or in a small backpack (no media images).

Early Childhood children also need a pair of soft-soled shoes, slippers, or moccasins to wear indoors. These 'inside' shoes should be kept at school because your child will need them each day. Shoes or slippers that are comfortable, practical to move in (no heels), and stay on your child's feet when she/he is dancing, skipping, leaping, etc. will best serve your child's needs at school.

Your child will also need a pair of shoes and/or boots for outdoors. These can come and go each day. Outdoor footwear should meet the same guidelines as stated above and be appropriate for the weather and the season.

For wet weather, we have found that full-body rain suits are best and keep kids the driest. The outdoor gear brand OAKI has provided MWS with an ongoing, online discount of 25% by using the following code at checkout: **MadisonWaldorf**. (Code is not case sensitive.)

Dress Code for Grades and Middle School

We do not want to interfere too much with individual expression, family standards, or sensitivity/sensory issues. The dress policy has to do primarily with:

- Protection of children's senses.
- Protection of their ability to play freely.
- Protection of their ability to move safely and confidently.
- Protection of the learning environment from distractions.
- Protection from the sun.

Please wear clothing (e.g., leggings or tights) under skirts, so that play is not restricted. Dress in layers.

Shoes or appropriate footwear are required at all times for safety reasons. Heels, wedges, and clogs can restrict running and jumping and should not be worn for school. Shoes should have a closed heel and closed-toe, with straps or ties. Wood chips used on the playground are a hazard to feet in open-toe shoes. Shoes that are not closed at the heel are a hazard because they slip off easily and children run out of them. Indoor shoes should have rubber soles and stay on feet.

Some Dress Code specifics:

- No hats in the classroom. If there is a specific need, a conversation between the student's parent and the teacher is needed.
- Footwear required at all times.
- Appropriate dress for weather (If it is 40° or below, students must wear jackets and warm pants. There is no longer a specific date for wearing shorts).
- Logos:
 - Kindergarten: None
 - Grades and middle school: No media, violence, culturally offensive images/wording. Sport team brand names are ok
- Hair dye and nail polish is allowed.

Behavioral Expectations

At Madison Waldorf School, we expect the following behaviors from our community members:

- **Courtesy:** We expect everyone to be courteous to each other. Communication is best when a polite tone of voice is used and we listen when others are speaking. We encourage everyone to say please and thank you. We encourage cooperative play and the inclusion of others. Part of being courteous is knowing how and when to respond when frustrated. Teachers are available to help children work through these emotions. Classroom interruptions are discourteous to the teacher and to the class as a whole. They distract others and make it hard to focus. The community will follow teacher guidelines for classroom courtesy.
- **Gratitude:** At MWS, we have a lot to be grateful for. Gratitude deepens when we acknowledge the contributions of others.
- **Responsibility:** Learning how to be responsible for yourself, your family, and the world is an important aspect of Waldorf education. When we take care of something or other people, we know that we can make a difference in the world. Students will be asked or reminded to tend things in need of care, complete chores in the classroom, take care of classroom materials, put away balls and supplies outside, and to be thoughtful and responsive to the feelings of others.
- **Strong Work Habits:** Strong work habits are essential for success in any learning environment. Students are expected to be prepared for school and on time. They are expected to complete all assignments and tasks to the best of their abilities in a timely manner. If work is not up to a student's capabilities, teachers may ask students to improve it, change it, or start over.

Discipline Policy

Our Behavioral Expectations are meant as a guide to build our community at Madison Waldorf School. We understand that children make mistakes, as do adults. Our hope is that children can learn from their mistakes. Our goal with our Discipline Policy is to help children become aware of and transform their behavior for the better. When behavioral expectations are compromised, our aim is to promote learning about the desired behavior. Discipline situations are all unique and the teacher involved uses his or her discretion in handling each circumstance appropriately, using the following guidelines. In every case, we aim to promote increased awareness and the ongoing self-development and social responsiveness of the students.

The faculty uses several different disciplinary procedures depending on the child's age, the specific infraction, and a general pattern of behavior. The aim of disciplinary measures is to create a safe and harmonious environment for all children. Discipline actions are meant to be logical, non-shaming, and foster opportunities for restitution, learning, and forgiveness. Effective discipline should encourage self-discipline.

Guidelines are on the following pages.

Level 1 Guidelines

<p>Level 1 Behaviors: Teacher-managed behaviors; contact with parent/guardian will come from staff involved or class teacher.</p>	<p>Level 1 Actions: Teachers may use an Observation Form to track behaviors. Observation Reports are usually kept by the teacher and shared with the parents and administrator when a pattern emerges.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disrespect, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Talking back; ○ Mocking; ○ Note passing; ○ Inappropriate voice level; and/or ○ Inappropriate language, comments. ● Disruptions, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Talking or non-verbally communicating with classmates at inappropriate times; ○ Noisemaking; and/or ○ Emotional dysregulation. ● Defiance, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-compliance with classroom or playground rules or instructions; ○ Incomplete work; ○ Not working; and/or ○ Rough play involving pushing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ways teacher can help a student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remind student of playground, class agreements, or rules; ○ Redirect; ○ Relocate to another space (“Quiet Corner” or a space outside of the classroom); ○ Reflect (what changes could be made, what needs of the student could be met, role play); ○ Restore/mend/repair with another student/teacher; ○ Logical consequence(s) (including acts of service); and/or ○ Outline of supports and coping strategies.

Level 2 Guidelines

<p>Level 2 Behaviors: Teacher and/or ESG managed behaviors.</p>	<p>Level 2 Actions: Incident Report submitted; kept on file in Administrator’s office.</p>
<p>Repeated Level 1 behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disrespect, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chronic disruptive behaviors; ○ Put-downs/low level teasing, name calling; ○ First offense of behavior that could become bullying or harassment; and/or ○ Minor vandalism. ● Disruption, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Repeatedly talking out; ○ Chronic (multiple days) disruptive behaviors. ● Defiance, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dishonesty ○ Failing to follow rules/directions ● Physical contact (unintentional or begins as play), in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invading others personal space (bodies and belongings); ○ Wrestling or horseplay with another student without consent; and/or ○ Physical harm including pushing, shoving, kicking, grabbing, jumping on, butting in line, biting (with no mark by a child under the age of 10). ● Emotional harm, in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Repeated hurtful language; ○ Start of bullying; and/or ○ Low-level harassment. 	<p>Parents/guardians are notified and given a copy of the Incident Report.</p> <p>The following is not a sequential list. Action and sequence are based on the circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Additional supervision (“Would an adult standing next to you help?”); ● Pre-planning (e.g. planning for times that student struggles, like during recess); ● Letter writing with restorative mindset; ● Social skills interventions; ● Behavior monitoring; ● Removal from difficult setting/situations until ready to re-enter; ● Provide time (“Do you need a break?”); ● Student meeting with teacher; ● Logical consequence(s); ● Meeting with parents to agree to and create an observable tracking system to inform student when expectations are or are not being met; ● Additional classroom support; and/or ● Possible referral to ESG (Education Support Group).

Level 3 Guidelines

Level 3 Behaviors: ESG Managed (teacher also involved).	Level 3 Actions: ESG-Led.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeated Level 2 Behaviors (must be documented). ● Chronic disrespectful, disruptive, or defiant behavior directed toward someone (adult or child) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refusal to follow rules or redirection; ○ Non-compliance; ○ Disruptions; ○ Inappropriate voice level; ○ Arguing; ○ Inappropriate or rude gestures; ○ Disrespectful language; ○ Threats; ○ Abusive language; ○ First time incidents of racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious harassment, slurs, or intimidation; ○ Leaving supervised area without permission/hiding from a teacher; ○ Vandalism; and/or ○ Petty theft or theft (when a child is over the age of 10). ● Physical Contact or Aggression (with intent): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hitting, pushing, shoving, pinching, kicking, grabbing, tripping, slapping, punching, spitting, hair pulling, throwing objects, or biting (when a child is over the age of 10); ○ Fighting/physically hurting another person; and/or ○ Verbal, relational, or online aggression. 	<p>Note: This is not a sequential list; certain behaviors may result in more (or less) severe consequences than listed.</p> <p>Possible ESG Referral (Steps taken depend on circumstances. Some of these behaviors may move directly to removal from class and/or suspension if behavior warrants it):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting with ESG; ● Attempt to understand needs behind behavior and find ways to meet needs while also meeting needs of teacher and rest of class; ● Review in-class steps/agreements, calm warning, clear instructions; ● Temporary removal from class/activity; ● Repair damage(s); ● Address harm to individuals; ● Reiteration of supports and coping strategies; ● Possible conflict mediation; and/or ● Work with parents to inform and enlist support. Parent buy-in and support is crucial and necessary in order to make any further progress. Children who do not receive help/support from parents must be evaluated for referral according to the mandatory reporting guidelines.

Level 4 Guidelines

Level 4 Behaviors: Administrator Managed.	Level 4 Actions: Administrator-Led.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Repeated serious Level 3 Behaviors (must be documented). ● Chronic disrespectful, disruptive, physical, or defiant behavior directed toward someone (adult or child) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Illegal activities: drugs/alcohol use or possession; ○ Assault, sexual assault, or abuse; ○ Fighting/Physical aggression (with intent); ○ Severe physical acts including hitting, pushing, shoving, kicking, grabbing, tripping, slapping, punching, spitting, hair pulling, biting, and/or throwing objects with intent to do harm; ○ Possession of weapons/dangerous items (Exceptions may be made for knives/pocket knives during school camping trips or special projects with prior permission of the teacher); ○ Theft of items of value; ○ Major damage to property; ○ Repeated incidents of racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious harassment, slurs, or intimidation; and/or ○ Possession of pornography or other sexually explicit materials. 	<p>Note: This is not a sequential list; certain behaviors may result in more (or less) severe consequences than listed.</p> <p>Administrator Referral (Steps taken depend on circumstances. Some of these behaviors may move directly to removal from class and/or suspension if behavior warrants it):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include above consequences from Level 3; ● Possible notification of law enforcement officials; ● Parent/Administrator/teacher conference; ● Possible suspension (1-5 days)*; and/or ● Possible expulsion. <p>*Any time a student is suspended due to behavior, a meeting with parents must be held, and a behavior support plan created before the student can return to school.</p>

Addressing Teasing and Bullying

MWS emphasizes a positive approach to discipline, with a focus on helping students develop increasing levels of self-awareness, sensitivity, and respect toward others. Every situation is unique, and the teacher involved uses her or his discretion in handling each circumstance appropriately. However, the overarching aim is to promote respectful, compassionate interactions between individuals and for all students to feel safe and supported by their teachers and peers. Especially in the Early Childhood and Early Grades classes, self-discipline is recognized as a gradual process. It is most effectively learned through modeling, repetition, and practice (as well as the use of consequences and restorative justice, when appropriate).

Distinguishing between Bullying and Teasing

Teasing is not okay when someone asks for it to stop and it does not, when it is meant to hurt or put down another person, or when it becomes a habit. Mindless teasing occurs when someone does not have the intention to do harm, but it still hurts. It is an opportunity for everyone to learn. All forms of teasing can become bullying when pushed too far.

Bullying can include the following acts, especially when they are persistent, prolonged, and deliberate: exclusion and leaving someone out, physical aggression, verbal abuse and name calling, ignoring, disrespect of property or stealing, ganging up, malicious and hurtful rumors, active intolerance of differences, or incitement of others to do any of the previously identified actions.

Students who are the targets of teasing or bullying or those who witness such behavior are strongly encouraged to report incidents to their teachers, especially if efforts to stop it on their own have not worked. Parents whose children report incidents of teasing or bullying should strongly encourage them to get help from their teachers. Parents should also speak to the class teacher.

Teachers who witness teasing or bullying behavior – or suspect that it has occurred or are told that it has occurred – will acknowledge the incident, assist, and comfort the distressed student, address the feelings and effects of teasing or bullying, and have the student practice “right action” to make amends as appropriate to the situation. Whenever possible, the children involved should be addressed together so that they can be heard and cared for in the presence of the other.

Once the teacher is aware of an incident, there will be heightened supervision of that student. Since teasing and/or bullying behavior occurs more often during unsupervised or less-structured activities (in the hallway, in the restroom, on the playground), teachers will reduce recurrence of incidents by providing close supervision or alternative activities at those times. For example, the student who initiates teasing or bullying may be required to accompany the teacher on the class hike, work with her/him during a recess period, or be accompanied to the restroom (as necessary) to ensure a safe and friendly environment for all.

When significant teasing or an incident of bullying occurs, the teacher will complete an Incident Report which will be shared with the parents and administrator and appropriate steps in the Discipline Policy will take place.

At times, a teacher may discern that the student needs an immediate consequence after an egregious physical or emotional offense to another student. The student may be sent to the office and the administrator or another teacher called to meet with them. The parents will be called and the student sent may be sent home for the remainder of the day. Appropriate steps in the Discipline Policy will take place.

Playground Supervision and Expectations

- There will be an appropriate level of teacher/staff supervision at all times.
- Respectful and cooperative behavior, language, and play will be expected at all times.
- Teachers and staff will encourage and support social inclusion and creative problem solving.
- Rude or offensive language, name-calling, or bullying will not be tolerated.
- Students will stay within the designated outdoor boundaries established by the teachers and staff on duty. The teachers/staff on duty may adjust the play area boundaries somewhat depending on the amount of adult supervision available, the time of day, traffic flow, and capabilities/needs of the students. Students are expected to comply with the boundaries set by the teacher or staff on duty at all times.
- When necessary, teachers and staff may stop, amend, or otherwise intervene in games or play that have become aggressive, unsafe, or disrespectful. Students will be redirected and supported through facilitated problem-solving and conflict resolution.
- Teachers and staff will direct students to safely, properly, and respectfully care for playground materials and equipment. Time towards the end of recess periods is built in for clean-up of all toys and equipment before students return to class. In the Grades, teachers may designate specific students or a specific class to routinely take responsibility for making sure the playground equipment is cleaned up and well cared for.
- Climbing on the school roof is not permitted.
- Climbing on the roofs of play structures in the front playground is not permitted.

Field Trips and Other Off-Campus Events

Our school is fortunate to be able to use a wide variety of nearby parks. Time spent at outdoor sites is considered part of the curriculum. During the enrollment process, permission was asked for students to walk to these destinations. Any field trip requiring driving requires a separate permission slip. Permission slips will be sent or given to you by your child's teacher prior to each trip and must be signed and returned to school prior to the trip. Overnight trips require a permission slip and have a special set of expectations and preparations.

Severe Weather

We will close the school when the weather creates an unsafe environment for students and faculty.

Playgroups, Early Childhood, and the Grades all follow the same calendar and snow policy. Playgroup snow closures follow MWS school closings.

When school must close due to severe weather conditions, we will email our MWS school community, post it on our website and Facebook pages, and contact the following television stations: Channel 3, 15, and Channel 27.

Whenever possible, the MWS Administrator will notify parents directly by email no later than 6:30am if school is closed.

Safety Procedures

Medical Emergency

Life-Threatening Situations:

The Emergency Medical Response (via 911) will be called prior to parent/emergency contact being called. A member of the staff will remain with the student.

- The parent or emergency contact is notified *after* the Emergency Medical Response is summoned.
- If a student is transported to a hospital or other urgent care setting, a staff member will accompany the student in the rescue vehicle if no parent is present.

Minor Injury and Illness Guidelines

In the event of a minor injury or illness, the student may report to the office for assistance. This assistance may include the application of ice or a bandage, a period of rest, and/or a telephone call to parents or others designated by the parents.

If the injury requires more attention, parents will be called and a determination made with them about the next step. Excessive minor occurrences also warrant a phone call to parents.

No ill or injured student should be allowed to go home without being accompanied by a parent or emergency contact.

In the case of a serious or worsening condition, an adult will be designated to remain with the student and extra children will return to their class unless their presence is essential.

An Accident Report will be prepared in writing as soon as possible in connection with every accident.

General Evacuation Procedures

Fire Procedures

The administrative team will ensure that the fire alarm system and fire extinguishers are maintained and recertified each summer. Additionally, fire drills will be conducted once per month with one of those drills supervised by the Madison Fire Department.

Each class will evacuate to the back parking lot with their teacher and stand in a single-file line. A member of the administration will verify with teachers that all class members are present.

Lockdown

In all situations involving armed intruders or threatening individuals, parents are not allowed to come to school to pick up children until the Administrator or the police have informed them that it is safe to do so. No student or employee should ever attempt to confront or subdue an armed intruder or menacing person. The following steps will be taken if a lockdown situation were to occur:

- Call 911 and notify faculty via text or verbally.
 - All students and staff would remain in classrooms with doors and windows locked, lights turned out.
 - Students and staff would get crouched on the floor, preferably under desks and tables, away from windows and doors.
 - Silence electronics.
 - Remain quiet.
 - Students and faculty who are outside should run to Lighthouse Christian School.
 - Everyone should remain in place until they have been given an all clear sign.
- Administrator will send an email message to parents that is brief and to the point, stating more information will be coming.
- Parents will be notified when it is safe to pick up their children.

Tornadoes

Tornado drills will be conducted twice per school year.

Part 8: Fundraising

Fundraising

Like all non-profit private schools, it takes more than our tuition income to support our rich program and our Accessible Education Grants which help make it possible for many families to attend Madison Waldorf School.

To help support our school we have several fundraising activities:

- Annual Giving Campaign: We ask each family to contribute whatever amount you can afford to our Annual Giving Fund
- Grocery Cards: If you shop at Willy Street, HyVee or Woodmans, we ask that you purchase grocery cards from us. When you use these cards, the school gets a percentage of the cost of the card. **This is at no extra cost to you!**
- School Store: Our school store is stocked with many of the supplies used in the classrooms. Children often love having some of the same materials at home. We also have books, candles, silks, toys and more. A great place to pick up birthday gifts!
- Winterfest! All hands on deck for this event as our school is transformed into a Winter Wonderland and we welcome not only our school community but the community at large to come to our school for games, good food, shopping and cheer.
- Gala/Auction: We ask for donations from our school community and community at large for our online auction, held in May. It culminates in our Spring Gala, also a fundraising event and a lot of fun.
- Grants: Recently, we have been a grateful recipient of some grants and gifts. We are actively researching and applying for applicable grants. If you can help in this area, please be in touch with one of the members of our Board of Trustees.

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read the *Family Handbook*. From time to time we may find the need to add something or make changes to the *Family Handbook*. We will alert you if and when that should happen! It is our intention that this Handbook will help you to gain a better understanding of our commitment to your children.