

Sanderling Waldorf School Nursery Kindergarten HANDBOOK

Dear Parents,

Each year as the doors of the Nursery/Kindergarten open in September, children, parents and teachers are equally excited. The parents depart with one last goodbye kiss and hug, entrusting their dear little ones to our care. The child's day is full of creative play along with painting or baking, lots of singing and a story. When the parents arrive to collect their children and eagerly question them about the day's events, they are most often answered by dreamy gazes. "Nothing" may be the reply to the question, "What did you do today in school?"

The child of this age has a different kind of memory and lives in the wonder of the present moment. Often the kindergarten experiences may unveil themselves in a song or verse in the bathtub or before sleep. Sometimes a simple statement from the parent such as "It was walk day" will lead to a gently unfolding tale from your child.

As teachers, we want to build a bridge between home and school. We hope that this booklet begins to build that bridge by shedding light on our work with the children. More than anything else, we want you to feel that we are always open to your questions and concerns and that through the school we may grow as parents, teachers and children together into a true community.

Early Childhood Faculty

INTRODUCTION TO THE NURSERY/KINDERGARTEN

Our Nursery/Kindergartens are based on an understanding of child development in which the child between birth and age seven develops and learns through imitation. We thus strive to create a home-like environment worthy of imitation. Artistic activity, daily life experiences, and play using simple wooden toys and basic play materials leave the children free to unfold their own creativity. These activities also support their physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. They also nurture a love and joy for nature, the unfolding seasons, the beauty of color, music, language and movement in the children. Allowing the children's imagination and creativity to develop in school creates a foundation for academics and a continued desire to learn.

Another key to the Sanderling Waldorf School Nursery/Kindergarten is the attention to beauty and detail that the teachers work with. We consciously choose the items in the room, the activities with which we are engaged, and the stories and circle time activities that will promote the children's healthy development. There is attentive observation of the children as they grow with an eye to providing them what they individually need to support that development.

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Clothing

Dress reflects this appreciation for simplicity and healthy development that we strive to create for the children. We ask that parents dress their children in layers so that they are prepared for the cool mornings and the warm afternoons we often have at Sanderling Waldorf School.

Please dress your child in clothes suited for varied activities and weather conditions. We strive to create an environment that allows the children to play freely without distractions. School clothing, backpacks and lunch baskets should be free of slogans, cartoons, logos, commercial advertising, and caricatures. Girls need to wear shorts or leggings under short dresses so they can freely climb, run and jump. Please choose shoes that work well for running on uneven terrain. Shoes with back straps that are sturdy and with closed toes are requested. Flip flop sandals or shoes with heels or

flashing lights are not allowed. Please leave wristwatches and all jewelry at home and remove temporary tattoos and nail polish before coming to school. Apply sunscreen on your child before the school day begins.

Things to Bring to Class

There are a few items for your child to bring to school:

- A pair of slippers to wear in the classroom. Slippers should have an elastic or ribbing around ankles so they will remain securely on your child's feet.
- A change of clothes, all labeled with your child's name that will be kept in the cubby area. We all know how children love to create, build, cook and play, play, play. In the kindergarten, we want to foster healthy play and go outside every day and the children's clothes often get muddy or wet. A change of clothing midway through the kindergarten day is not uncommon. Please remember to check your child's extra clothes bag regularly.
- Raincoat and rain boots are required for play outside; rain pants are highly recommended.
- Sun hat, labeled with your child's name which will remain in your child's cubby throughout the year. Children may wear a warm hat in cool weather.
- A fabric apron with a full bib, labeled with your child's name, will stay on the apron rack throughout the year.
- Lunch basket. Please pack your child's lunch in a basket. Include 2 cloth napkins.
- Wednesday Walk Day: children will need closed-toe sturdy walking shoes.
- Soup Day: if your child attends on this day, bring one vegetable to contribute to our soup!

Arrival and Dismissal

Our drop off & pick up procedures accommodate families who have children in both campuses.

The morning gathering is an integral part of the day. Tardiness breaks this special early morning routine for children and does not allow them the needed time to transition from a drive to integrating with their classmates. Please note that at 8:30 a.m., parents must leave the yard so class can begin.

- 7:50-8:05 - Morning drive up and drop off (No walking on driveway at this time)
- 8:05-8:30 - Park on the street and walk up
- 12:30 pick up - Park on the street & walk up
- 2:30-3:30 - Drive up & park to pick-up from Aftercare

We are a licensed program. All children must be signed in & signed out.

Please be on time at dismissal each day. The Aftercare Program is only for children enrolled in the program. There is no drop-in care.

Check-Out Procedures:

1. Only persons listed on the "Emergency Information" form may pick up a child(ren).
2. For non-parents listed on the "Emergency Information" form, when picking up a child for the first time the approved person must present identification at the office. After confirmation on "Emergency Information" form, approved person will be given a "permission slip", dated and signed off by the Office Manager (or another office staff person). The approved non-parent then presents the "permission slip" to the teacher for release of child(ren).

If the teacher (e.g. substitute teacher) dismissing the students does not recognize the non-parent, the non-parent will be asked to go to the office for a "permission slip."

Please note that whether you are a parent or non-parent, you must bring your identification at pick-up if the teacher does not know you.

Carpooling is encouraged and names of drivers who are permitted to pick up your child must be listed on your child's emergency information form. If your child will be picked up by anyone other than your usual arrangement, we require notice from you.

Unexpected delays or last-minute changes may be called into the office. This helps the children feel at ease and avoids confusion.

Nursery Kindergarten Aftercare Program

We are very happy to be able to offer a caring and joyful environment for your child in the afternoon. After your child's full morning, we believe it is important that they are given the opportunity to rest and nap if needed. This is done through an hour-long rest time that includes stories and lullabies. The teachers visit the children's rest area to help them settle and get quiet. After rest time, the children will have snack and play until pick up time, 3:00-3:30 p.m.

If you are interested in enrolling in the Aftercare Program, please update your enrollment contract with Kim Paterson. You can choose to have your child attend all five days or individual days of the week (depending on availability) for the year and will be invoiced on a monthly basis with tuition. You will be charged for the number of days you have signed up for regardless of the number of days your child actually attends. Decreasing the number of days or canceling completely require a 30-day written notice. The program has a daily limit of 18 children and the highest priority will be given to those families needing five-day care.

Please Note:

- To avoid disturbing resting children, please do not pick up your child before 2:00 p.m.
- In honoring our N/K policy, we do not permit children to bring stuffed animals to rest with. If you feel your child needs a special item please speak with Ms. Angelica.
- Resting cots and personal bedding are provided for each child who attends aftercare.

Please direct any program questions to Angelica Rubano at angelica.rubano@sanderlingwaldorf.org. Business questions can be directed to Kim Paterson or Brian Wolff. Please deliver registration forms to the office for processing. The first day of care will be offered on Thursday, September 6, after the first day of regular classes.

We look forward to seeing you in the Aftercare Program!

Health and Illness

We strive to provide an environment which promotes healthy activity for your child. We wash hands regularly and discourage sharing food or mouthing toys.

In order to help maintain a healthy environment we ask that children not attend school if they have:

a fever, colored nasal discharge, vomiting, diarrhea, persistent cough, a contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep, measles, etc., impetigo, pin worms, conjunctivitis, or lice or if they are not feeling well enough to fully participate in the activities at school.

We recommend that children stay home 24 hours fever-free after having a fever. The lively kindergarten is not a soothing environment for a sick or recovering child.

Toys

We ask that children do not bring toys from home. If your child needs to bridge home and school, a toy could journey in the car and be waiting for the child at the end of the school day. If a child does bring a toy to school, we have the toy “rest” in the child’s cubby or with the teacher and then go home at the end of the day. Sometimes the children like to bring something to show the class. In this case, the child can check with the teacher and then we will make a time during the day for the child to share what was brought. If you have any questions, please speak with the teacher directly.

Electronic Media Policy

The Sanderling Waldorf School media policy is no media exposure during the school week (Sunday afternoon to Friday afternoon). The ideal for Nursery/Kindergarten children is no exposure to any electronic media or screen time. Research indicates that there are virtually no benefits while there are definite risks involved in watching television and movies and in the use of video games, computers, iPhones and iPads for the young child. Exposure to radio and recorded music is best limited.

Since the kindergarten child learns primarily through imitation, they need models worthy of imitation. The strong influence media has upon young children is thus quite visible. The greatest loss may be the dimming effect it has on a child’s imagination. Imagination provides the foundation for learning and growth, but a child may become “stuck” in specific images and unable to play anything but media characters.

Sometimes children cannot “think” of anything to play as their own imaginative forces have been suppressed or they cannot sit still during a story being told. Story time becomes a distressing time instead of a time of wonderment and delight. Language development may be effected and a child may speak in the tone of a certain character or machine, where speech is reduced to the sound of mechanical noises. There are other noticeable effects of media on children as well, such as general uneasiness and lack of attention span or perseverance.

The Nursery/ Kindergarten environment and activities nurture your child’s capacities for creative imagination, which lead to independent thinking and positive action in later years. Early exposure to media separates your child from authentic experience – it promotes a distorted and developmentally inappropriate view of the world. Parents consistently find that less media deepens family communication and fosters in the child a deeper connection to the world around them. We are committed to fostering age – appropriate media and digital literacy, therefore students in the higher grades use electronic media as a tool after they have developed an experiential foundation.

There are alternatives to media that we encourage you to explore:

- **Domestic Work** - cooking with you, washing dishes, folding laundry, gardening, carpentry, and cleaning
- **Artistic Activities** - reading and looking at books, drawing, modeling beeswax or dough, and craft making
- **Outside Time in Nature** – free time to explore!

Volunteer Flower & Laundry Families

Each month, we ask families to volunteer to bring flowers for the classroom and to wash the classroom laundry. You will see a sign-up sheet for these jobs. The Flower Family for the month brings a bouquet of flowers in once a week for the entire month they have volunteered. Flowers may be purchased or gathered from your garden. We will arrange them and put them in vases. The Laundry Family will receive a basket of towels, napkins, etc. from our classroom once a week for the month they have volunteered. Please ask the assistant or teacher for details about pick up and drop off of laundry. We are so grateful for your help and we know that the children benefit from seeing this working together of home and school.

Celebrating Birthdays in the classroom

Much thought and care are given to the preparation of the birthday celebration of each child in the kindergarten, which is celebrated with the class and the birthday child's family. It is a day filled with honoring and rejoicing for you and your child.

We strive to celebrate the child's birthday as close to the actual birthday as possible. Often, summer birthdays are celebrated as half-birthdays, depending on the age of the child. Your child's teacher will provide you with details about the birthday celebration.

Class Meetings

A series of class meetings are scheduled throughout the year. These meetings are an important part of your Sanderling Waldorf School experience. They offer parents the opportunity to learn more about Waldorf education and strengthen the nurturing community of parents and teachers. *We expect that at least one parent per family attend.*

Parent Teacher Conferences

We hold regularly scheduled conferences with you November 1st & November 2nd, and again, March 11th & 12th, to update you as to your child's progress and to hear your input. This is an opportunity to have some one-on-one time together.

Communication

Communication is very important to us. If you have any concerns, suggestions or delights to share, please let the teacher know.

During the school day, our attention needs to be focused on the children. We want to be able to give you our full attention when we speak together. Please schedule an appointment to talk with the teacher after school.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RHYTHM IN THE CLASSROOM AND AT HOME

Children experience the world in its totality and are carried along by the rhythms of the world they live in, from the rhythms of breathing in their bodies to the daily rhythms of sleeping and waking to the yearly cycle of the seasons. Our view is that children

flourish when their daily activities reflect the natural order of life with a rhythmic arrangement of the day, providing them with a sense of security and trust. Daily rhythm creates good hygienic, social and work habits. It is a key to sorting out and even preventing all manner of disciplinary situations. Recent scientific research shows that such repetition helps the development of neurological pathways to the brain.

Our daily activities flow with a sense of “breathing out” to “breathing in” from the active moments of circle and joyful work and play to the quiet moments of the fairy tale and rest time. Circle time incorporates both as we all sing and dance, celebrating the seasons and the joy of movement. The children are involved in self-directed creative play and teacher-directed practical work. At story time, the children experience the quiet magic of the fairy tale through listening, puppetry or playing it out. Outside play provides another breathing out for the children. All transitions between activities are graced with song as the teacher creates a rhythm of active and quiet experiences for the children. Activities such as watercolor painting, coloring, beeswax modeling, puppet show or play, finger knitting, sewing, housekeeping, cooking, baking, gardening and gift making are also shared.

Just as children are carried along by the school day’s rhythms, so too are they nourished by the regular rhythms at home. As difficult as it is in these modern times to establish set mealtimes and bedtimes, we strongly support you in such a commitment. It is so healthy for young children to go to bed at the same time every night. We recommend a bedtime between 7:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Children of this age should have 12 hours of sleep every night.

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Discipline is approached through loving firmness and respect. We leave the children free in their work and play as much as possible. This supports the development of their will capacities and allows them to develop essential social skills. Where direct discipline is needed, play is redirected. The child is taken by the hand with care and guided to alternate play or to help the teacher. The teacher speaks and uses gestures as an example for the child. The guiding impulse is that the children imitate the example of the teachers and thus learn to work and play harmoniously.

When there is a safety issue, either physical or emotional, the teachers will intervene. Hurtful words and actions are not tolerated. First the person hurt or the object damaged is attended to with care, attention and compassion. Then the "offending" child is asked to help in assisting and comforting their friend or in cleaning up or mending what was broken. Focus is put on the hands or the feet or the object that caused the hurt or did the damage. For example, the teacher may say, "Hands are for working and playing" as the teacher gently rubs the child's hands. In some cases, the teacher will need to say to a child individually and firmly, "No, we do not hit (kick, hurt...)."

We strive to have consequences fit the action or behavior. For example, if a child colors with a crayon on the wall, the teacher says, "We color on paper," while bringing two sponges for the child and teacher to clean the mark off together.

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

Celebration of the seasons lies at the heart of the Sanderling Waldorf School nursery/kindergarten. Young children live so fully into the world that surrounds them, so our celebrations primarily focus on seasonal changes. We want the children to experience the seasons with a time of preparation, a time of peak experience and a time for letting go and saying goodbye.

As the year weaves through the seasons the children love learning songs and verses chosen just for that time of year, making seasonal crafts, and baking special treats. The stories told give the children a pictorial understanding of nature and speak deeply without the need to explain.

Each room has a nature table which changes seasonally, bringing a visually experience of the yearly rhythm. You might like to let your child have a small table or windowsill to create his or her own nature table at home with things gathered from walks or outings.

LEARNING ABOUT WALDORF EDUCATION

Parents and educators alike regard children with wonder and interest. What is the true nature of the child? The wisdom of experience through the body of literature on child development and Waldorf education can help us come to a clearer understanding of our children. There is a wealth of pertinent books available through various bookstores and small publishing companies to which one of the teachers would be happy to direct you. Additionally, there are class meetings and events throughout the year during which the teachers will share aspects of child development and Waldorf education.

The following is a list of recommendations for parents of young children.

Books:

In a Nutshell: Dialogues with Parents at Acorn Hill, Nancy Foster

Beyond the Rainbow Bridge, Barbara Patterson and Pamela Bradley

You Are Your Child's First Teacher, Rahima Baldwin

Lifeways, Gundrum Davy and Bon Voors

Endangered Minds, Jane Healy

Failure to Connect, Jane Healy

The Hurried Child, David Elkind

What is a Waldorf Kindergarten? Sharifa Oppenheimer and Joan Almon

Heaven On Earth, Sharifa Oppenheimer

Festivals, Family and Food, Casey and Lange

How Children Play, Ingeborg Haller

Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv

Simplicity Parenting, Kim John Payne

Websites:

www.youandyourchildshealth.org

www.whywaldorfworks.org

www.allianceforchildhood.org