



# Parent Handbook

2015-2016

## Contents

<b>MISSION, VISION, &amp; VALUES</b>	4
<b>I. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION</b>	5
School Status	5
School Constituencies	5
<b>Governance Groups</b>	6
The Faculty College	6
The Board of Trustees	6
The Leadership Team	6
Policy and Decision Making	7
The Parents Association	7
<b>II. COMMUNICATION</b>	8
<b>Channels of Communication</b>	8
<b>Information Sharing</b>	9
RWS Directory	9
Parent Mailboxes	9
All School Email and Constant Contact Email	9
The Messenger	9
RWS Website and Online Calendar	9
Class Specific Communications	10
<b>III. FINANCES</b>	10
Tuition Payments	10
Tuition Adjustment	10
<b>Fundraising &amp; Community Service</b>	11
Annual Giving	11
<b>Arrival and Dismissal</b>	11
Arrival	11
Dismissal	12
Early and Late Pickup	12
Aftercare	12
<b>Weather Closings and Delays</b>	12
<b>Attendance</b>	13
Absence	13
Tardiness	13

Repeated Absences and/or Tardiness .....	13
<b>Personal Belongings</b> .....	13
Lost and Found .....	13
Forgotten items.....	13
<b>Dress Code</b> .....	14
General Principles .....	14
Clothing for Playing and Working Outdoors.....	14
Change of Clothes.....	14
<b>Specific Guidelines</b> .....	14
School dress.....	14
Assembly dress.....	15
Concert dress.....	15
<b>V. HEALTH AND SAFETY</b> .....	15
<b>Immunizations</b> .....	15
<b>Illness</b> .....	15
<b>Medications</b> .....	16
<b>Field Trips</b> .....	16
<b>Playground Rules</b> .....	16
<b>Missing Child Policy</b> .....	18
<b>Allegations of Child Abuse</b> .....	18
<b>Safety Drills and Emergency Response Plan</b> .....	18
<b>Insurance</b> .....	19
<b>VI. PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION</b> .....	19
<b>Parent-Teacher Conferences</b> .....	19
<b>Homework Policy</b> .....	20
Types of Assignments .....	20
Time spent on Homework.....	20
<b>Student Electronics and Cell Phone Use</b> .....	22
<b>VII. STUDENT CONDUCT</b> .....	22
A Caring Community.....	22
Code of Conduct.....	22
Discipline.....	23
Serious Misconduct: Inappropriate and Aggressive Behavior .....	23
Discipline.....	23
Bullying .....	23

## MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

### Mission

Our mission is to provide, with a sense of community, an education for children that embodies Waldorf principles, fostering learning through the hands, heart and head.

### Vision

Our vision is of a thriving, well-supported, inclusive school that nurtures the mind, the heart and the will of each child towards becoming a thinking, caring, self-directed individual with balance and purpose.

### Values

- ❖ We believe that students thrive when exposed to a hands-on, integrated curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and grounded in artistic and practical work.
- ❖ We believe that all students must develop intellectual curiosity, social sensitivity and physical stamina in order to meet their full potentials.
- ❖ We believe that students who are exposed to world cultures through story and sensory experience will become thoughtful, clear-thinking adults who understand and take an interest in the world and its people.
- ❖ We believe in the importance of a safe, inclusive learning environment where the interests and strengths of all students are honored and encouraged.
- ❖ We believe that schools should awaken social responsibility, service to community and stewardship of the earth.
- ❖ We believe that open, clear and direct communication is critical for maintaining a supportive and productive educational community.
- ❖ We believe that effective teachers are committed to building long-term relationships with students, while demonstrating enthusiasm and honest striving in the world.
- ❖ We believe that cooperation and collaboration between parents and teachers play a vital role in helping students meet their full potential.
- ❖ We believe that strong schools rely on initiative and commitment from all members of the community.
- ❖ We believe in the power of the human spirit to invoke positive change in the world.

## I. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

### School Status

- Richmond Waldorf School is an independent school incorporated in the state of Virginia.
- The school is a not-for-profit organization with 501(c)3 status
- The school's bylaws describe the school's purpose, main operating practices, and how the Board of Trustees functions.
- The school adheres to all city and state health, safety and building codes and laws.
- The school's early childhood program, including before and after school care (as it pertains to children 5 years and younger), is licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services.
- RWS is recognized as a candidate member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and will be pursuing accreditation through AWSNA.
- RWS is planning to pursue membership in and accreditation by VAIS and SAIS.

### School Constituencies

Richmond Waldorf School is comprised of four main groups: students, parents, staff, and school governance bodies.

- The students are the reason our school exists; everything that happens at the school is done on their behalf.
- Parents at RWS make it possible for our school to operate. They support their children's education through their participation in their children's classes and support the school through tuition, annual giving, and volunteerism.
- The staff provides the educational program and the administrative support that keeps the school operating properly.
- The governance bodies include the Faculty College and the Board of Trustees. They hold the vision of the school, develop long-range plans to realize that vision, oversee the management of the school, and insure that the school achieves its mission through its program, staffing, and facilities.

## Governance Groups

### The Faculty College

The Faculty College is responsible for the destiny of the school as expressed through its mission, program, staffing, and facilities. The College is ultimately responsible for the school's relationships with students, parents, colleagues, the Board and the wider community. The College works as an esoteric group that strives to cultivate a spiritual relationship with the school through meditation, study, and self-development. Just as the child is the teacher's focus, the school as an organism is the College's focus.

The College keeps a long-range view of the school and also works with issues that arise in the school's daily operations. The College is responsible for the educational program, how it affects the students, and how it is delivered by teachers. It is responsible for hiring and firing teachers, and setting the budget for staffing the educational program. The College is responsible for the life of the school, its students and teachers.

### The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has legal and fiduciary responsibility for the school. It sets policies for and oversees, tuition, the operating budget, fundraising, financial aid and scholarships, school contracts, insurance, and the school facilities. The Board has ultimate responsibility for the financial state of Richmond Waldorf School.

The Board may have up to thirteen members plus the Operations Manager, School Director, College Chair, and Parent Association Moderator who serve as ex officio members. Board members are listed in the Parent Directory.

The Board meets monthly. Board Committees are responsible for the work of the Board in the various realms of the school. They include the Executive, Governance, Audit, School Leadership Support, Finance, Advancement, and Post-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Program committees, as well as various subcommittees and task forces. Board committee chairs are listed in the Parent Directory. Parents who would like to learn more about a committee's work and how they could support it, should contact the committee chair.

### The Leadership Team

The Leadership Team serves as the executive arm of the College and the Board, and it is overseen and accountable to those bodies. The Leadership Team includes the *Operations Manager*, the *School Director*, and the *College Chair*, who work together to ensure coordination and execution of tasks and communication among all realms of the school. Each member of the Leadership Team is responsible for a department of the school: The *Operations Manager* for operations and administration; the *School Director* for community relations and institutional advancement; and the *College Chair* for the pedagogical program and staff. The members of the Leadership Team have oversight over and support and assist the staff in their departments.

For the 2015-16 school year, the leadership team consists of  
Operations Manager – Pete Svoboda  
School Director – Roberto Trostli  
College Chair – Dawn Pollard

### Policy and Decision Making

- Faculty College and the Board of Trustees are responsible for setting policy and for making major decisions.
- Although the College and the Board each have their areas of responsibility, the two groups work collaboratively.
- Decisions about most issues are made after input from the representative constituents, by committees, or by a designated decision-making body.
- Faculty College decisions are reached by consensus.
- Board decisions are reached by consensus and, where required, by majority vote of a quorum.

Parent input on important school issues has a formal channel through the Parent Association representatives on the board and through parents who serve on board committees.

### The Parents Association

The Parents Association (PA) supports RWS' educational goals through parent involvement, helping to build and sustain the school community through its input and work. Every RWS parent is a member of the Parents Association. Each class is asked to have a parent representative to attend PA meetings, but all parents are encouraged to attend and become active in this group that "parents" and supports the school. The Parents Association meets monthly; meeting dates are posted on the RWS Calendar.

The Parents Association, is not a decision-making body but it works in partnership with the faculty and board to further the goals of the school and to facilitate communication within the adult community.

The Parents Associations work correspond to the three soul faculties of the human being: thinking, feeling and willing. It works in

- the *thinking life* as expressed in parent education and open dialogue so that through our vision we ensure that the school community grows in clarity, responsibility and freedom;
- the *feeling life* as expressed in school celebrations, hospitality and wholehearted exchange so that through our caring, the community is inclusive, loving and healthy;
- the *intentional life* as expressed in the school's material aspects of building, grounds and economics so that through our labors of love and support, the school functions safely, efficiently and with beauty.

The Parents Association activities are carried out in its meetings and by its committees. The work of these committees includes organizing community events, assisting with building and grounds upkeep and beautification, engaging in community outreach, and welcoming new families.

## **II. COMMUNICATION**

At RWS we strive for warm and cordial relationships and communication. We encourage people to speak to each other directly regarding questions and concerns. Whenever possible, these conversations should be face-to-face.

The chart below outlines the channels of communication at RWS. In each category, you should first contact to the first person listed. If the matter remains unresolved or would benefit from the involvement of another person, please contact the member of the Leadership Team in whose department the matter lies. For the 2015-16 School Year, the Leadership team consists of

**Operations Manager:** Pete Svoboda – operations, finances, school certification, health & safety, facilities,

**School Director:** Roberto Trostli – community development, enrollment, marketing, fundraising, PA, parent volunteer coordination

**College Chair:** Dawn Pollard – educational program and staffing

### **Channels of Communication**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Student Status</b>	<b>Policies</b>	<b>Family Life</b>	<b>Community Development</b>
Educational Matters Social/Emotional Matters Discipline Matters Program/Curriculum Schedule Assessment/Reports	Arrival/Dismissal Attendance Forms Report Dissemination Student Records	RWS Policies & Procedures	Parent Association Social Events Volunteering New Families	Enrollment Retention Marketing School Image School Outreach Fundraising & Dev.
1. Your child's class or specialty teacher 2. Early Childhood or Grade School Chair 3. College Chair	1. Front Office Mgr. 2. Operations Mgr.	1. Your child's class or specialty teacher 2. Early Childhood or Grade School Chair 3. Leadership Team	1. PA Moderator 2. School Director	1. Enrollment or Development Coordinators 2. School Director
<b>Information</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Finances</b>	<b>Health/Safety &amp; Logistics</b>	<b>School Status &amp; Legal Matters</b>
RWS Calendar The Messenger Constant Contact Event Notification Parent Mailboxes Parent Directory	Professional Conduct Mentoring Evaluation Professional Dev. Conflict Resolution	Tuition payment Bills & Fees Delinquent Accounts Tuition Adjustment	Illness/Medications Lost & Found Safety School Closing Emergency Procedures	Facilities Management Licensing & Certification Legal Matters AWSNA
1. Front Office Mgr. 2. School Director	1. Leadership Team member in whose department the staff member works	1. Operations Manager 2. Board Executive Committee	1. Front Office Mgr. 2. Operations Mgr.	1. Operations Mgr. 2. Board Executive Committee



## Information Sharing

### RWS Directory

- The School Directory contains contact information for families and staff. Every family receives a PDF copy.
- The directory is only to be used for RWS community communication.
- We ask parents to respect the privacy of our school families by not sharing the directory or any personal information therein with any other person or organization.

### Parent Mailboxes

- Every family has a mailbox at the bottom of the main stairwell.
- Mailboxes are to be used only for official RWS school communication or parent-to-parent communication unless permission has been granted by the Front Office Manager
- Parents should check mailboxes daily.

### All School Email and Constant Contact Email

- RWS uses Constant Contact email to distribute timely information and updates.
- All parents whose email addresses are in the School Directory will be enrolled for Constant Contact email messaging.

### The Messenger

- The weekly Messenger contains articles, stories and anecdotes, reminders of upcoming events, announcements, and expressions of gratitude.
- RWS community members are welcome to submit articles, photos and announcements to The Messenger at [messenger@richmondwaldorf.com](mailto:messenger@richmondwaldorf.com)
- Submissions for the next week's Messenger should be emailed to [messenger@richmondwaldorf.com](mailto:messenger@richmondwaldorf.com) by 5:00 p.m. Friday.

### RWS Website and Online Calendar

#### Website:

- The school's website <http://www.richmondwaldorf.com> offers our families and the wider community information about the RWS and Waldorf education.
- Under *Our Community* there is a *Parents' Corner* tab with information exclusively for parents. <http://richmondwaldorf.com/our-community/google-cal-embed>
- The password for the Parents' Corner is: *gnomes*
- This password may not be shared with anyone who is not part of the RWS community

#### Calendar:

- The RWS Calendar is found under the *Come Visit Us tab in Our Community section*.
- The Calendar lists when school is in session and school events. These include assemblies, festivals, class meetings, PA meetings, Board meetings, sports events, social activities, etc.
- The calendar is updated often, so parents should check it regularly to stay informed.

### Class Specific Communications

- Each class teacher establishes a communication framework suited to the needs of her or his class.
- The communication framework establishes the methods through which the teacher is most efficiently reached, the hours the teacher is available for parent queries and meetings, and the frequency with which class meetings occur.
- Class Teachers publish their communication framework to parents in the initial weeks of the school year.

### **III. FINANCES**

Although Richmond Waldorf School is an educational institution with a spiritual mission, it is also a business. Like any business, it needs to manage its revenue and expenses efficiently and effectively. Parents assist the school's economic operations by

- fulfilling their contractual obligations
- communicating and returning paperwork in a timely manner
- supporting the school through fundraising and volunteering

### Tuition Payments

- RWS uses FACTS Management Company for managing tuition payments.
- Parents may enroll in annual, biannual and 11-monthly payment plans, using either ACH or credit cards.
- For Information about FACTS, contact the Operations Manager.
- RWS expects that parents will meet their contractual obligations in a timely manner.
- The school is willing to work with a family who is experiencing financial difficulties to accommodate a justified exception to the usual payment plans.
- If a family is experiencing or expecting financial difficulties, they should contact the Operations Manager.

### Tuition Adjustment

Richmond Waldorf School is committed to socioeconomic diversity, and Tuition Adjustment is available for families with financial need.

- Applications for tuition adjustment are evaluated separately from the admissions process after a contract for enrollment has been accepted.
- RWS utilizes SSS (School and Student Service for Financial Aid) to make an initial estimate on the family contribution. The Tuition Adjustment Committee uses estimate information as a guide to make award decisions.
- The Committee also uses the Waldorf School Tuition Adjustment Form and a copy of your filed previous year federal income tax return, including copies of W-2s, 1099s, and any attached schedules.
- Tuition adjustment applications are confidential, viewed only by Tuition Adjustment Committee members, and are managed by firm deadlines.
- For information about tuition adjustment, contact the Operations Manager.

## **Fundraising & Community Service**

- Like all private schools, RWS depends on fundraising to supplement tuition income.
- We expect that every member of the RWS community will support our fundraising efforts to the best of their ability.
- The fundraisers at our school are coordinated by the Development department with help and advice from the Development Committee.

## **Annual Giving**

- The Annual Giving Campaign is a yearly effort to raise the funds needed to help bridge the gap between tuition income and operating expenses.
- This Campaign is our largest fundraiser and supports all programs at RWS.
- Traditionally, 100% of the Board and faculty contribute to the Annual Giving Campaign.
- We seek a similar commitment from parents.
- A high percentage of parent participation to the Annual Fund signals school health to donors and other organizations.

## **Community Service and Volunteerism**

Richmond Waldorf School relies on the generous participation of our community. There are many opportunities for parents to help throughout the year. Working together for the betterment of our school strengthens our community, and when we volunteer, we model important values for our children.

Some service opportunities are one-time commitments that involve helping out with a single event or task. Others, like chairing an event or serving on a committee, are more involved and span a longer period of time. Finally, many volunteer jobs are the responsibility of an entire class, like setting up tables or baking goodies for a festival.

## **IV. LOGISTICS**

### **Hours of Operation**

Office	8:00 am to 3:15 pm
Early Childhood	8:15 am to 1:00 pm
Grades	8:15 am to 3:15 pm
Aftercare	1:00 pm to 5:30 pm

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

#### **Arrival**

- Classes begin at 8:15, so students should plan to arrive at around 8:05 in order to have plenty of time to get ready for the day.
- An adult should accompany children in the early childhood program and in grades 1 – 3 to their classrooms.

### Dismissal

- On normal school days, Early Childhood children are ready to be dismissed at 1:00 p.m. and Grade School students at 3:00 p.m.
- Students wait to be picked up at designated areas.
- The Social Service Form on file for each student lists all parties allowed (or not allowed) to pick up the student.
- Parents should inform the teacher or front office manager in writing if their child is being picked up by anyone other than the usual pick-up person.
- The school cannot release a student to anyone other than the usual pick-up person without a note, even if that individual is on the authorized pick up list.

### Early and Late Pickup

- If your child is scheduled to leave school before afternoon pick-up time, please inform the teacher during morning drop-off or phone the Front Office.
- Your child will wait in the Front Office to be picked up.
- Sign your child out in the book in the front hallway as you leave the building.
- Children who are not picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal will be taken to Aftercare and parents will be billed.

### Aftercare

- Aftercare is provided for children in Early Childhood (1:00-5:30) and students in the Grades (3:00-5:30) Mondays through Fridays on whole school days.
- Aftercare modified hours are announced for those days when school is dismissed early.
- To reserve a space for your child, fill out a contract and submit it to the Front Office Manager.
- Aftercare Contracts may be found in the bottom right hand corner of the parent mailboxes at the bottom of the stairs.
- Drop in care is also available when space is available.

### **Weather Closings and Delays**

The Operations Manager decides whether school should be closed or have a delayed start due to inclement weather.

- When school is delayed or closed, we will update the main telephone message.
- You may call the school at 804-377-8024, extension 0.
- We will use Constant Contact to email school closing information, send text messages and voice broadcasting, update the school calendar, and update the weather scrolls for Channels 6, 8, and 12
- On any day that the school has a delayed opening due to inclement weather, it is possible that Aftercare or Extended Care will close early and that After school or evening activities and events may be cancelled.
- Inclement weather make-up days are built into the school calendar.
- Except under unusual circumstances school closings do not impact the number of instructional school hours.
- Any questions regarding the school closing status should be directed to the Operations Manager.

## **Attendance**

### Absence

- If parents know that their child will be absent, they should notify the Class Teacher in advance.
- If a student is absent, parents should notify the Front Office by 8:15 a.m. by calling 804-377-8024, extension 0
- When the student returns to school, parents should provide their child's teacher with an explanation for the child's absence.
- When an extended absence is anticipated due to illness, family emergencies, travel plans, etc., parents should speak with their child's teacher in advance.

### Tardiness

Every effort should be made to get students to school on time so that they can participate fully in the life of the class community and benefit from the educational program.

- If you know that your child will be arriving late, please notify your child's teacher.
- If you are running late, please call the Front Office at 804-377-8024, extension 0.
- If a student arrives at school after 8:15, he/she should stop by the Front Office for a late slip.
- Students who are late wait quietly in the hall until 8:30, when their teacher will open the door.

### Repeated Absences and/or Tardiness

- If a student is repeatedly absent or tardy, the Class Teacher may request a conference.
- More than 15 absences or tardies in one year may result in extra work being assigned or summer school being required.

## **Personal Belongings**

### Lost and Found

- Labeling all clothing and school materials insures that personal belongings will be returned to their owner.
- If something is lost and found, it will be placed in the Lost and Found Basket located on the first floor of the building near family mailboxes.
- We ask that families check the Lost and Found Basket regularly.
- All items left longer than one month will be donated to charity.

### Forgotten items

- If you need to bring any items for your child during the day, please identify whom they are for and leave them in the Front Office
- The Front Office Manager will ensure that your child receives his/her belongings in a timely manner.

## **Dress Code**

Clothing is part of the classroom environment. The dress code is designed to create an atmosphere conducive to learning by focusing attention on the children and not on their clothing. The faculty reserves the right to decide if dress and appearance constitute a distraction. If a child is not dressed appropriately, parents will be called to bring a change of clothing before the child is permitted in the classroom. Parents and students are expected to abide by the decision of the teacher.

### General Principles

- Proper school attire promotes self-respect and a positive attitude.
- Students should wear clothing that is clean, neat, modest and suitable for the activity and the season.
- Clothing should be well fitted – not so large or long that it extends over hands or feet or overly short or tight.
- Clothing may not have tears, holes or unfinished edges (such as cut-off jeans).
- Natural fibers that breathe such as cotton, wool and linen are encouraged.

### Clothing for Playing and Working Outdoors

Children play and work outside every day so they should bring or wear appropriate gear.

- For wet weather: a raincoat – with a hood or a hat – and boots
- For cold days: a warm coat, hat, mittens or gloves, leg coverings
- For snowy days: same as above plus boots
- For transitional days: layers that can be adjusted
- For hot sunny days: sunscreen or a sunhat.

### Change of Clothes

- Early Childhood through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade children should keep a bag with a complete change of clothes in school, including extra pants, shirts, underwear and socks
- All articles left at school should be labeled with the child's name.

## **Specific Guidelines**

### School dress

Students should wear

- Clothing that is clean, neat, and in good condition.
- Clothing that is suitable for school activities, for the weather and the season.
- Clothing that is free of images, words, and logos, except for RWS insignia. Brands and trademarks should be unobtrusive.
- Clothing that avoids extremes—not too long or short; too tight or loose; too bulky or skimpy\*.
- Clothing that is modest and does not call undue attention to the child's body\*\*.
- Shoes that are functional for all activities, indoor and out\*\*\*.
- Hair styles and jewelry that avoid extremes, are not distracting, and do not interfere with the student's ability to participate fully in the program.
- Students in Grades 6 – 8 may wear make-up and nail polish and dye their hair in natural shades. These should avoid extremes and not be distracting.

### *Specifics:*

- \* Waistbands should be above the hips; pant legs should not touch the floor, and shirt sleeves should not extend beyond the wrists.
- \*\*Shirts should have at least 2" of fabric at the shoulder, should cover the upper body, and should cover the midriff area when arms are extended up.
- \*\* Hemlines on shorts or skirts should reach the child's fingertips when the child's arms are held against the leg
- \*\*Pants or leggings that reveal underwear or skin must be worn with dresses, skirts, shorts, or an extra layer.
- \*\*\*No platform, battery lit, roller-skate or backless shoes; no flip-flops, clogs, or shoes with heels over 1" .

### Assembly Dress

For school assemblies and celebrations (festivals) students should wear the following:

All Grades: Knee-length or longer skirt, dress or dress pants / trousers (no jeans) with a dress blouse or collared shirt; dress shoes (no backless shoes or heels more than 1")

- Grades 1-5: dress shorts are acceptable, a tie is encouraged
- Grades 6-8: full-length pants, full button down shirt and tie required for boys.

### Concert Dress

For musical concert performances on and off campus:

White Dress blouse or button down shirt and tie for boys and girls who wish; black dress pants or knee-length or longer skirt. Dress shoes, black preferred, heels no more than 1" .

## **V. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### Immunizations

- New students must have a healthy child visit and submit a form no more than 60 days old within 30 days of enrollment.
- Health forms listing current immunizations and signed by a physician must be submitted.
- The school must receive an updated record yearly, through age six.
- If a child is not immunized, a religious exemption form must be signed by parents, notarized, and returned to the school.

### Illness

- Richmond Waldorf School does not have facilities to care for children who are ill.
- If your child is not well enough to participate fully in the program, please keep him/her at home.
- If your child becomes ill while at school you will be called to take him/her home.
- Children must remain at home for at least 24 hours after a fever breaks or after vomiting.

- Please keep in mind that even when a child seems better at home, the effort of participating in a school day may be too much for someone recuperating from an illness.
- Any child who contracts a contagious illness must be kept at home until he is no longer contagious.
- Please inform the Front Office Manager of any contagious illness.
- Children with Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) will be sent home.
- If your child is found to have head lice or nits during the school day he or she will not be sent home but *must* be undergo lice and nit treatment and removal before returning to school the next day. Please see CDC recommendation regarding lice treatment: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/lice/head/schools.html>
- If there is a health issue that could affect the school community, you will be informed by the school.

### **Medications**

- If your child is taking medication, please inform your child's teacher and alert him or her to any potential side effects.
- RWS staff is not permitted to administer any internal medication without written parental permission.
- If your child requires medication while at school, please bring the medication in its original container to the Front Office and complete a medication administration form.
- If your child requires medication during the school day, it must be administered by school personnel.
- Please see the Front Office Manager for a form granting permission to administer medication.
- In order to keep all of our students safe, we ask that medications **never** be sent to school in a child's lunch box or backpack.

### **Field Trips**

- All classes take Field trips to enrich the children's experience of the curriculum.
- Other than local outings, parents receive permission slips to be signed.
- Volunteer parent drivers provide transportation for field trips.
- Copies of the vehicle operators' licenses and insurance cards must be provided to the school 5 days prior to leaving the school grounds with the students.
- All children must be properly restrained in the car.

### **Playground Rules**

We all work hard to make our school a safe place to work and play, and this extends to the playground areas. We request that all adults supervising children on our playground enforce these rules.



### **Monkey Bars**

- More than one child may use the monkey bars at a time as long as they are moving in the same direction.
- Early Childhood—an adult must be present

### **Balls**

- Balls may be used by Grades students only for faculty approved games
- Balls or other objects may never be thrown at people unless in the context of an approved game
- Balls are for throwing games only unless otherwise authorized by a teacher

### **Bamboo poles / wood / sticks**

- Poles, wood, and sticks are to be used for building only
- They are to be kept near the bushes in the Northwest area of playground.
- No running with poles or sticks

### **Swings**

- Two children on a swing are only allowed during Early Childhood recess.
- No side to side swinging or twisting of swings
- No sitting on crossbars of swing set

### **Sandbox**

- Sand stays in the bounded area
- No throwing or eating of sand
- No running with sand tools
- All tools are to be put away before going inside
- Digging in designated areas only

### **Play Structures**

- No jumping from top platform
- No climbing from top platform (Early Childhood)

### **Shed**

- All tools and toys must be put away at end of a recess period
- No climbing on top of the shed
- Tools are only for use when working in mulch pile or sandbox or for gardening or other teacher assignments
- No running with tools in hand

### **Fence**

- No climbing or standing on fence or gate
- No running into fence

### **Trees**

- Children may climb designated climbing trees only and only up to height markings
- Children must be able to climb trees without assistance from stumps or friends

### **Supervision**

- It is the ongoing job of the faculty to oversee playground safety. The teachers will make every effort to see that the children obey the rules listed above and provide appropriate supervision to lessen the chance of student injury
- We ask that parents do the same when supervising play on the playground

### **General**

All play is inclusive unless exclusive games are authorized by a teacher. Students are free to reinvent play areas and structures with the start of each recess or play period. No "holding over" of creations or spaces from period to period

### **Rules for Play Outside of the Playground, Grades 5-8**

- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade may play outside the fence every day after Spring Break and Fridays leading up to that.
- Teacher supervision required along 49<sup>th</sup> Street and Westover Hills Blvd., especially when balls are in play
- One ball in play at a time in the gravel lot
- Teacher supervision needed in basketball hoop area, four square area (when applicable), "forest" and grassy side of church when occupied by students
- All students may play on the playground, but upper grades teacher supervision is required.
- Kicking games are allowed.
- All play is inclusive unless exclusive games are authorized by a teacher.
- Students are free to reinvent use of play areas with the start of each recess or play period. No "holding over" of creations or spaces from period to period.

### **Missing Child Policy**

- As soon as a child is reported missing the entire RWS staff will be alerted.
  - All available staff will immediately initiate a search.
  - If the child cannot be found, the parents and the police department will be contacted immediately.
  - Virginia Social Services is contacted within 24 hours if the child is not found.
- When the child is found, the same parties are notified.

### **Allegations of Child Abuse**

- Any RWS employee who receives a report of alleged child abuse or has reason to suspect abuse as defined in the Code of Virginia (63.2-100) is required to report the allegation to the Child Protective Services (CPS) office where the alleged abuse took place.
- RWS employees are defined as mandated reporters (63.2-1509).

### **Safety Drills and Emergency Response Plan**

- Fire drills are conducted regularly so that the children learn to exit from the building in an expedient and safe manner.
- Shelter in Place drills are also conducted regularly so that children learn where to go and how to respond to unforeseen emergencies.

- A copy of the *RWS Emergency Response Plan* is kept in the Front Office.
- In the event of a natural disaster all children will be moved to safe locations designated in the RWS Emergency Plan.
- Teachers will stay with their class until the danger is over.
- A schematic drawing outlining the exits is posted in each classroom.

### **Insurance**

- Church Mutual Insurance insures Richmond Waldorf School. Student Accident Insurance Company offers optional additional individual insurance.
- The school's insurance covers children, parents and visitors while at school as well as while away on school trips.

## **VI. PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

As stated in our Values, We believe that open, clear and direct communication is critical for maintaining a supportive and productive educational community. This is most important in the communication between parents and their children's teachers.

### **End-of-Year Report** (for students in the Grades)

- The year-end report contains three parts: a *Curriculum Overview*, a *Narrative*, and *Rubrics*.
- *Curriculum Overviews*, written by class teachers and specialty teachers, outline the content of the subjects.
- The *Narrative Report*, written by the class teacher, strives to give a complete and accurate description of the child personally, academically, and socially.
- The *student description* includes work habits, ability to listen and to contribute, oral and written work, rhythmic work, etc. It may also describe highlights of the student's year, areas of challenge, and artistic work.
- The *social description* includes the student in relationship to adults and to peers, both during structured and unstructured times.
- The *rubrics* give a succinct picture of the child's work in language arts, mathematics, and—for the upper grades—all specialty subjects.
- Rubrics have an area for comments by class and specialty teachers.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled over the course of two days in the Fall and again in Spring. Parents are sent a link to sign up for conferences and for childcare during conferences.

- Parent-Teacher conferences are designed to strengthen the parent-teacher relationship and their ability to work together for the benefit of the child, to share teacher evaluation of the child, and to set goals for the child's further progress.
- At the conference, parents are asked to share how the year is going from their perspective and if there are any pressing issues.
- At the fall conference, teachers solicit information from the parents about the student's adjustment to the new grade and school year; in the spring, they give a progress report of the current year's work.
- During these conferences, teachers speak about their expectations for the class and how the specific child meets or does not meet those expectations,

and will hand out rubrics of how the student is doing in Language Arts and Math.

- The final conference of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade includes a brief review of the entire school experience in discussion form by both the parents and the teacher.
- Conferences are an ideal time to review students' challenges and to discuss remedial plans.
- Specialty teachers may request conferences with parents, especially if there are concerns.
- Class teachers may also suggest specialty teacher conferences to the parents.
- Because these conferences promote the parent-teacher partnership, both parents should attend whenever possible.

### **Homework Policy**

At Richmond Waldorf School, we try to keep the homework load manageable so that students and their families have time for other interests and activities. In our view, homework provides students with opportunities to

- Practice their academic, musical and practical skills
- Complete assignments begun at school
- Strengthen their work habits
- Develop individual initiative
- Develop a sense of responsibility

Homework is not intended to be burdensome or to interfere with family life, and parents who are concerned about their child's homework load or experience are encouraged to discuss it with their child's teachers.

### Types of Assignments

Homework requirements and assignments change throughout the elementary school years.

- In Grades one and two, there is no formal homework.
- In these grades, "home work" consists of participating in family activities such as meal preparation, chores, etc.
- In Third Grade, some projects may be assigned and children are required to practice their instruments.
- In Grades Four and Five, homework also consists of practicing academic skills as necessary.
- In Grades Six through Eight, homework may also include independent projects and preparation for dramatic and musical performances.

### Time spent on Homework

- The total time a student spends on homework should not exceed approximately 10 minutes per grade level per school night (e.g. up to forty minutes in 4th Grade).
- Except for reading and extended projects, homework will not be assigned over weekends, holidays or vacations.
- Teachers will communicate homework expectations and directions to students and their families.

## **Media Guidelines**

### **TV, Movies, Internet, Computer Use, Social Media, & Cell Phones**

Richmond Waldorf School is dedicated to nurturing children's capacities for clear thinking, compassion, and purposeful action. It is our experience that these capacities develop best through warm human interactions, artistic endeavors, and meaningful tasks. They are strengthened by contemplation, exploration, and enthusiastic experiences in the natural world that engages all the senses.

Electronic media present children with strong, ready-made images, which do not require active participation on the part of the viewer, and therefore, tend to numb the imagination and interfere with creativity and thought processes. These media also often present children with a pessimistic view of human nature and a distorted view of human relationships.

#### **Television/Videos/Movies**

As adults, we have developed filters for the barrage of electronic stimulation that we encounter each day, but this is not true for children. Many educators, both inside and outside of the Waldorf movement, have observed that television and video viewing can have detrimental effects on students' ability to learn and to relate. Children who engage in these activities are frequently unable to interact with their classmates and to adults in a creative and harmonious manner.

The faculty therefore strongly urges you to minimize or eliminate television and video viewing by your children. *If you do permit your children view television or movies, we ask that you to limit this to non-school nights and to exercise parental oversight.*

#### **Computer/Video Games**

Children benefit from activities that include meaningful social encounters and an experience of nature. Although children may find computer, video and Wii games fascinating and fun, they are poor substitutes for active and creative play and other healthful activities. While these types of games may seem to develop the ability to think and respond quickly, they tend to narrow a child's capacity to think clearly, to consider emotional and social implications and to follow through on tasks. The Faculty therefore strongly urge you to minimize or eliminate gaming by your children.

#### **Cell Phones/Social Media**

Developments in online cell phone technology have changed the way many of us relate to one another and to the world. While adults have the maturity and experience to be able to view the online world with perspective, children do not. Children find it difficult to resist the addictive quality of the online experience, and they can easily encounter harmful content. Cell phones, which serve as portals to the Internet, can also engage children in inappropriate experiences. Even social media, with their seeming benefits of helping people connect with one another, are subject to many types of abuses.

The Faculty therefore strongly urges parents to minimize or eliminate children's online activities and use of social media and to actively monitor those in which their children do participate. *If cell phones must be used, we encourage parents to limit text messaging to essential communication.*

### **Student Electronics and Cell Phone Use**

Students are not permitted to use cell phones or electronics on campus or during any school sponsored event. Students are not allowed to carry any non-phone, electronic device on campus or during any school sponsored event.

If parents find it necessary for their child to bring a cell phone to school, it must be turned off and stored/secured where the phone will be completely out of sight. RWS assumes no responsibility for the phone. If a student needs to make a call while on school property, he/she should request permission to use the front office phone (or request to use the supervising adult's phone).

If a student is found using a cell phone on school property, the phone will be confiscated and the student's parents/guardian will have to retrieve the phone.

## **VII. STUDENT CONDUCT**

### A Caring Community

Richmond Waldorf School values a safe, inclusive environment where students can work and learn together. We seek to help children develop moral and social consciousness by teaching them self-discipline, awakening their awareness of others, and strengthening their capacities to act and interact effectively. Our *Code of Conduct* is designed to support these goals.

At RWS, adults share the responsibility of socially responsible conduct—interacting with respect, goodwill and constructive communication. By cultivating a healthy community, we can serve as a model for our children and enrich their growth and learning.

### Code of Conduct

Students at Richmond Waldorf School have the following rights:

- To be treated with respect
- To have personal property treated with respect
- To have a safe, supportive learning environment

To insure those rights, students are expected to abide by the following code of conduct:

- To treat others with respect in word and deed
- To treat personal and school property with respect
- To support responsible conduct by others

Our code of conduct is in effect at school, school events, and during school-sponsored trips.

While RWS is not directly responsible for students when they not at school, the school will determine whether and how to address out-of-school behaviors that affect the class or school community.

## Discipline

Because children need to learn to conduct themselves appropriately, discipline is part of everyday school life. Children learn to behave properly under their teachers' guidance and through reinforcement, reminders, and redirection.

Teachers in a Waldorf school have full authority over discipline in their classrooms, and each has his or her individual style. Teachers will keep parents informed about their approach to discipline, and parents are encouraged to ask their child's teachers if they would like to know more and to inform them if there are circumstances in the child's life that may result in misbehavior at school.

## Serious Misconduct: Inappropriate and Aggressive Behavior

Serious misconduct is behavior that goes beyond expected improper behavior in degree, persistence, intent, and the effect it has on other students. Examples of serious misconduct include

- Physical injury: Pushing, hitting, biting, scratching, pinching, spitting, etc.
- Verbal injury: Demeaning, insulting, taunting, shouting; etc.
- Written, drawn or gestural expressions which are bothersome, distressing, provocative, threatening, vulgar, obscene or violent
- Damage or destruction to school or personal property
- Theft or the threat of theft
- Disruptive behavior: interrupting or arguing with a teacher; sarcastic or rude behavior or speech; refusal to follow instructions; excessive conversation, noise or activity; idleness or unresponsiveness, etc.
- Possession and/or use of forbidden items: Materials that are obscene, vulgar, violent or pornographic; weaponry or otherwise dangerous items; tobacco, alcoholic beverages or other controlled substances

## **Bullying**

Bullying is defined as hostile behavior that is targeted at an individual, is intentionally harmful, is persistent, and demonstrates a relational imbalance of power. Any form of inappropriate or aggressive behavior – physical, verbal, gestural; in writing or images – that meets these criteria will be determined to be bullying. Additional forms of bullying include but are not limited to:

- Sexual bullying: unwelcome physical contact; sexually abusive comments; stalking; homophobic victimization
- Emotional bullying: exclusion; ignoring; intimidation; inciting others to bully; demeaning; taunting
- Racist bullying: racial insults, jokes and gestures; graffiti and racist insignia/badges; circulating racist literature
- Cyberbullying: via electronic media; internet, including but not limited to, email, posts, chat rooms; cell phone calls and text or image messages; camera, web cams, and video.

It is important to note that some bullying behaviors can be within the scope of normal child development yet may not be construed as bullying. Some examples of behaviors that do not meet the criteria in the definition are:

- Teasing or joking that isn't intended to hurt
- Impulsivity
- Behavior or statements meant to be complimentary
- Automatic reactions to various forms of injury.

### Reporting and Classification

Reports of serious misconduct may be made by students, parents, or staff member to the child's primary teacher or the Early Childhood or Grade School Chair who will investigate the incident, make a determination, and communicate with the family.

Serious misconduct can be classified in three levels according to seriousness or recurrence. These behaviors are described and dealt with as follows:

Level One: Serious or repeated infractions of the code of conduct.

Level Two: More serious misconduct than Level One or repeated misconduct that indicates that remediation has not been successful.

Level Three: More serious misconduct than Level Two or repeated misconduct that indicates that remediation has not been successful.

### Process

*Level One:* Within 24 hours of the incident being observed or reported, the teacher will inform the parents of the students involved, fill out the necessary forms, and meet with the Early Childhood or Grade School Chair to review the incident. If there are issues regarding student safety, the Operations Manager will be informed.

Within a week of the incident being observed or reported, the teacher will meet with the student's family to discuss the situation and to review plans for remediation. The teacher and parents will continue to monitor the situation and to meet as necessary. The teacher will keep the Section Chair informed about the situation. Depending on the circumstances and type of misconduct, the Section Chair may require another teacher to observe in the classroom and to provide a written report.

The forms and reports generated by this process are kept with the student's school file but the school will decide whether and how these are shared with anyone other than the family and the RWS faculty.

*Level Two:* The parents are informed by the primary teacher or the Section College Chair and the student is suspended from school while the College Chair and the teacher will make a determination regarding the seriousness of the misconduct. The College Chair will share relevant information with the parents of other students involved where state and federal privacy laws and regulations allow.

Before the student is readmitted to school, the student's parents need to meet with the primary teacher and the College Chair to discuss the situation and to agree on a course of action.



Level Three: Same as Level Two except that the student is suspended from school until the matter is discussed by the Faculty College, which will determine whether and on what terms the student may return to school. Before the student is readmitted to school, the student's parents need to meet with the primary teacher and the College Chair to discuss the situation and to agree on a course of action.

Possible Courses of Action for Levels Two and Three include:

- Probation: Terms will be established under which the student may remain at school.
- Leave of Absence: The student's enrollment may be suspended for a period of time.
- Dismissal