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Welcome

Receive the children with reverence
Educate them with love
Let them go forth in freedom

– Rudolf Steiner

Dear Parents,

On behalf of the entire Faculty and Board of Trustees I extend a warm welcome to you and your family as we start the school year. We are happy that you have chosen Ashwood Waldorf School, and we want to work closely with you to make this time rich and rewarding for you and your child. We sincerely hope that this handbook will answer many of your questions about the school. Our purpose is to present our history, describe the curriculum, outline the everyday workings of the school, and offer guidelines for functioning well within the Ashwood community. Please keep this handbook in a secure place for future reference.

– Jody Spanglet
School Director



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Office Hours

8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
8 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. Thursday (Early Dismissal – Faculty Meeting)

Handbook artwork by Toki Oshima

Ashwood Waldorf School Mission Statement

Ashwood Waldorf School is an early childhood through eighth-grade learning community based on the insights of Rudolf Steiner and imbued with a deep reverence for the spiritual nature of the human being.

We provide a balanced and rigorous education, integrating academics with the arts, nature, and social values. In an atmosphere that encourages respect for oneself, others and the environment, we build a foundation for lifelong learning and adaptability, fostering inner strength and preparing children to thrive in a changing world.

We are a school that values responsible decision-making, diversity, meaningful relationships with our community, and the stewardship of the environment. Our work is supported by a dedicated parent body. Surrounded by the natural beauty of mid-coast Maine, Ashwood students learn and play, both inside the classroom and out-of-doors, growing each year in their appreciation for seasonal rhythms and the world around them.

Background

History and Philosophy

Ashwood was founded as an initiative of several families in midcoast Maine interested in Waldorf education. The first kindergarten was launched in 1986 in Lincolnville Center with the expansion of a small cabin near the Silverio residence on Proctor Road. A second kindergarten class opened in Rockport in 1990. This became the site for the main Ashwood campus in 1991 when a multi-aged first-and-second grade class ushered in the grade school program.

Ashwood is a fully accredited member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), is incorporated under the laws of the State of Maine, and is also accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The early childhood program is licensed by the Maine Department of Human Services and is an accredited member of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America.

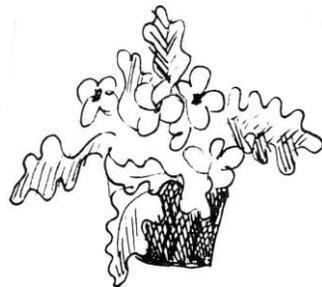
The international Waldorf movement began in Germany in 1919 when Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner founded the first Waldorf school. There are currently more than 1,000 Waldorf schools in approximately 60 countries, including 160 schools in the United States. Waldorf education is not only a pedagogical system, but also an art – the art of awakening the inherent potential, or what is actually there, within the human being. Waldorf students are educated in recognition of their spiritual nature and in rhythm with their physical, mental, and emotional development.

Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy

Waldorf education is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian-born philosopher, artist, scientist, and teacher. Steiner offered penetrating insights into a broad spectrum of human endeavors based on a spiritual vision. Steiner called his work anthroposophy (Greek for “wisdom of the human being”) or spiritual science. He emphasized that faculties lie dormant in the human soul, which, if properly nurtured, can lead to knowledge of spiritual reality, to self-knowledge, and to a new understanding of the world. He described a path of self-development using clear thinking, acute observation, refinement of feeling, and transformation of the will.

Waldorf education strives to educate children “towards freedom.” This can be confusing to parents because Waldorf classrooms are highly structured and intentionally organized. What freedom means in the Waldorf context is that through the careful training of thinking, feeling, and the will life of the child, the adult that emerges will have developed the capacities to purposely shape their own destiny. This can be understood as the potential to make meaningful choices based on clear and heart-warmed thinking, have the capacity to imagine new ideas and then implement initiatives, and the endurance, patience, habits, and inner balance to actively form one’s life instead of merely responding to one’s circumstances.

Anthroposophy is not taught to students. In the words of Rudolf Steiner, “It is not our intention to teach growing human beings our ideas, the contents of our world conception. We are not aiming at education for the sake of any special dogma.” Anthroposophy does, however, inspire the Waldorf method of education: what is taught, when it gets taught, and how it is taught. At Ashwood, the faculty is engaged in a continuing study of the work of Rudolf Steiner, both individually and in the weekly faculty meeting.



CORE PRINCIPLES OF WALDORF EDUCATION

By the Pedagogical Section Council of North America (January 2013)

Waldorf Education can be characterized as having seven core principles. Each one of them can be the subject of a life-long study. Nevertheless, they can be summarized in the following manner:

1. **Image of the Human Being:** The human being in its essence is a being of spirit, soul, and body. Childhood and adolescence, from birth to twenty-one, are the periods during which the Spirit/soul gradually takes hold of the physical instrument that is our body. The Self is the irreducible spiritual individuality within each one of us, which continues its human journey through successive incarnations.
2. **Phases of Child Development:** This process of embodiment has an archetypal sequence of approximately seven-year phases, and each child's development is an individual expression of the archetype. Each phase has unique and characteristic physical, emotional and cognitive dimensions.
3. **Developmental Curriculum:** The curriculum is created to meet and support the phase of development of the individual and the class. From birth to age 7 the guiding principle is that of imitation; from 7 to 14 the guiding principle is that of following the teacher's guidance; during the high school years the guiding principle is idealism and the development of independent judgment.
4. **Freedom in Teaching:** Rudolf Steiner gave curriculum indications with the expectation that "the teacher should invent the curriculum at every moment." Out of the understanding of child development and Waldorf pedagogy, the Waldorf teacher is expected to meet the needs of the children in the class out of his/her insights and the circumstances of the school. Interferences with the freedom of the teacher by the school, parents, standardized testing regimen, or the government, while they may be necessary in a specific circumstance (for safety or legal reasons, for example), are nonetheless compromises.ⁱ
5. **Methodology of Teaching:** There are a few key methodological guidelines for grade school and high school teachers. Early Childhood teachers work with these principles appropriate to the way in which the child before the age of seven learns, out of imitation rather than direct instruction:
 - ~ Artistic metamorphosis: the teacher should understand, internalize, and then present the topic in an artistic form.ⁱⁱ
 - ~ From experience to concept: the direction of the learning process should proceed from the students' soul activities of willing, through feeling, to thinking. In the high school the context of the experience is provided at the outset.

- ~ Holistic process: proceeding from the whole to the parts and back again, and addressing the whole human being.
- ~ Use of rhythm and repetition.

6. Relationships: Enduring human relationships between students and their teachers are essential and irreplaceable. The task of all teachers is to work with the developing individuality of each student and with each class as a whole. Truly human pedagogical relationships gain in depth and stability when they are cultivated over many years. They cannot be replaced by instructions utilizing computers or other electronic means. Healthy working relationships with parents and colleagues are also essential to the wellbeing of the class community and the school.

7. Spiritual Orientation: In order to cultivate the imaginations, inspirations, and intuitions needed for their work, Rudolf Steiner gave the teachers an abundance of guidance for developing an inner, meditative life. This guidance includes individual professional meditations and an imagination of the circle of teachers forming an organ of spiritual perception. Faculty and individual study, artistic activity, and research form additional facets of ongoing professional development.

ⁱ A note about school governance: while not directly a pedagogical matter, school governance can be an essential aspect of freedom in teaching. Just as a developmental curriculum should support the phases of child development, school governance should support the teachers' pedagogical freedom (while maintaining the school's responsibilities toward society).

ⁱⁱ The term "artistic" does not necessarily mean the traditional arts (singing, drawing, sculpting, etc.), but rather that, like those arts, the perceptually manifest reveals something invisible through utilizing perceptible media. Thus a math problem or science project can be just as artistic as storytelling or painting.

School Administration

Faculty: Teachers and Administrators

Waldorf schools are administered by the Faculty, who maintain the integrity of the school through the understanding of Waldorf education in the light of Anthroposophy. Teachers are responsible for the pedagogical endeavors of the school. Administrators are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the school, communication, enrollment, development, public relations, and finance. Faculty meetings take place after school every Tuesday and Thursday at Ashwood. The meetings include artistic and pedagogical study, committee meetings, reports, and discussions of items concerning the day-to-day business of the school.

Faculty Leadership Structure and Responsibilities

Committees of the Faculty

Leadership Council

Chair: Jody Spanglet, School Director/Faculty Chair
Members: Marianne Bockli (Early Childhood)
Jeremy Clough (Grade School)

Administrative Committee

Chair: Jody Spanglet, School Director
Members: Tamara Cody, Business Manager
Sarah Ewing, Director of Fundraising and Administrative Assistant
Judith Soleil, Enrollment & Outreach Director

Early Childhood Administrative Committee (ECAC)

Chair: Marianne Bockli
Members: Marianne Bockli, Beth Lunt, Judith Soleil, Jody Spanglet

Full Faculty works together to deepen its understanding of Waldorf education in general as well as therapeutic possibilities arising from an anthroposophical understanding of the human being. The faculty is responsible for all day-to-day curricular and pedagogical operations of the school. In addition, the faculty builds and nourishes community within the school, by serving as the organizing body for the involvement of students, faculty, and parents (individually and as the PCC) in festivals, assemblies, and school service days.

Leadership Council holds responsibility for:

- Personnel decisions regarding all teaching faculty including hiring, with input from the Faculty, dismissal, evaluation, and mentoring.
- Programming decisions of the school: making final decisions concerning the formation of new programs, classes to be taught and by whom.
- Steering and communication: responsibility for facilitating clear communication between the different committees of the school including the mandate committees, the board of trustees, and the parent community council.
- Creating faculty agendas and meeting schedules.

The Administrative Committee meets regularly to facilitate good communication between each part of the school, to discuss, review, and improve upon the daily routine functions as well as new initiatives within the administrative realm of the school, and to expedite administrative projects. The administration also works closely with the board of trustees by executing, on behalf of the board, contractual, financial, facilities, marketing, development, enrollment, and legal functions.

The Grade School is responsible for all day-to-day curricular and pedagogical operations of the grade school.

Early Childhood is responsible for all day-to-day curricular and pedagogical operations of the early-childhood program.

Early Childhood Administrative Committee (ECAC) is responsible for the facilitation of all matters where there is an administrative as well as a pedagogical early childhood component.



Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is made up of members drawn from the Faculty, parent body, and community. The board oversees the legal and fiscal life of the school, with primary responsibility for fundraising and budget approval. Board meetings are held every month and are open by request, in advance, to the board president.

Board President: Betsy Morrell

Board Vice President: Annie Mahle

Other Trustees: Jody Spanglet, Barney Hildreth, Jacob Wienges, Nancy Harris Frolich, John Morin, Vicky Willey, Chris McBride

Parent Community Council

The Parent Community Council (PCC) has a long and varied biography, which has followed the needs of the school. All parents automatically become members of the

parent community council once their child is enrolled. The PCC elects committee chairs and class representatives to steer its work. The role of the PCC is:

- To provide a forum for the discussion of school-wide issues;
- To foster communication that strengthens the school community;
- To initiate and organize parent education;
- To welcome new families;
- To support the social life of the school through community-building events.

The mission of the PCC is to be an organization that supports, educates, and connects the parent body to the rest of the school. It works in tandem with the Faculty and the Board of Trustees to help create a healthy community. The PCC has a representative who meets with the school director and board president monthly, sharing reports from each group and steering agenda items among them. The PCC has a faculty representative at its meetings. Working in this manner allows all three legs of the school's leadership to work together to embrace the needs of the community as a whole. Each class is asked to have one or two PCC representatives who attend monthly meetings, help organize various PCC sponsored events, serve as a liaison between their classroom and the PCC, and coordinate volunteers as needed. All parents are invited to attend PCC meetings and to participate in decision-making and committee work of the Council.

The PCC agenda is published in the school newsletter, the *Leaflet*, prior to each meeting. Minutes are kept at each meeting and published in the following *Leaflet*. Each meeting has a designated facilitator.

Class Parents

Class Parents are selected, informally, by the teacher in each class. Outgoing class parents are asked to mentor incoming ones. A class parent helps to connect parents and class teachers and provide support for both by:

- Communicating with the class teacher at least once a month;
- Acting as a resource for the class teacher. For example, by helping with scheduling and planning of class events;
- Activating the class phone tree as needed;
- Coordinating class participation in school work days, festivals, and other events;
- Helping to coordinate parent drivers for class field trips.

Parent Communication with Faculty: Teachers and Administrators

Ashwood Waldorf School is administered by its faculty. At its core, Waldorf education is committed to maintaining teachers' pedagogical freedom within the classroom, to every extent possible. This is why there is no principal or headmaster at Ashwood. Running a school collegially requires that members of the faculty communicate directly with one another. Open and honest communication between and among colleagues is a fundamental social responsibility of our system, and we require all who work here to voice any issues or concerns to the school director and/or the leadership council

Direct communication between parents and the Faculty is equally important to the smooth running of the school. This is an area that requires effort from the entire community. It is important that parents familiarize themselves with the administrative structure of the school, as well as with the procedure for handling a communication breakdown. The following list shows the areas of responsibility for general inquiries and the contact person for each area. If you are unsure about who might handle your specific question, please feel free to contact the School Director, Jody Spanglet.

- Policy and Procedure: Jody Spanglet, school director
- Enrollment Questions: Judith Soleil, enrollment and outreach
- Outreach, and Community Events: Judith Soleil
- Financial Inquiries: Tamara Cody, business office manager
- Classroom/Pedagogical Inquiries: class teacher
- Building & Grounds: Tamara Cody
- Development and Fundraising: Annie Mahle, board development chair
- All Other Board-Related Inquiries: Betsy Morrell, board president

Note: Pedagogical inquiries should be taken directly to the teacher involved. In addition, class teachers should be kept informed of any issue that impacts any child under his or her care.

In accordance with the Family Education Records Protection Act, parents have access to their children's records at any time during regular school office hours.

Conflict Resolution

The mood of the community is as important as the mood of the classroom. Positive, cooperative attitudes will enable the Ashwood community to meet and transform challenges in a way that honors and benefits all. If we consistently seek what is positive in the working of the school, problems that arise will become opportunities for growth and change. Conversely, negative, critical attitudes build barriers and divisions; these guarantee that challenges will weaken the school and harm individuals.

When a conflict arises, we encourage direct communication among the individuals involved. Our entire staff wants to work through any issues that may arise and is committed to helping to find positive solutions to problems. If individuals reach an impasse and need help keeping the process moving, the procedure outlined below should be used.

Procedures for Addressing Concerns Raised by Parents

Parents who have concerns about any aspect of their child's school experience are asked to voice those concerns directly and in a timely way to the child's teacher. It is important that the meeting to discuss the matter be scheduled for a time when both parent(s) and teacher can devote their full attention to the concern brought forward. At the time of scheduling, the parent(s) should make clear to the teacher the essential nature of the concern. That way, the teacher can prepare for the scheduled meeting in a

professional, reflective manner. The school encourages teachers to schedule these meetings as soon as it is convenient for both parties. The teacher will inform the School Director when such a meeting takes place. Parents are likewise welcome to let the School Director know the nature of their concern and that they are meeting with the teacher.

In more cases than not, this one meeting will resolve the issue. However, if the meeting's outcome is not satisfactory to either or both parties, school policy requires a second meeting, this time with the School Director, and, if either party wishes, a mediator present. The mediator must be someone with whom both teacher and parent(s) are comfortable.

Should the issue remain unresolved after this second meeting, the School Director will then take whatever measures seem warranted, practical, and promising. These measures will vary with each case, but in all cases will include a clear step-by-step process for resolving the matter amicably. The school expects of its teachers, and of parents as well, a reasoned civility throughout this process. Our mutual goal is to resolve a concern in a manner that benefits the child.

Sometimes parents may be confused or in disagreement with one of the school's policies or procedures. Ashwood's teachers, administrators, and Board of Trustees maintain an open-door policy on all matters. There is always someone to listen to your concerns, and, while the school may not be able to meet every expectation and hope, we can guarantee that all parental feedback will be heard, addressed, and brought to the attention of the leadership of the Faculty and/or Board of Trustees based on the nature of the concern.

We understand that it can be difficult to bring a concern about your child's teacher forward. Building honest social relationships and working through conflict is, perhaps, the most significant challenge facing individuals in our times. While the leadership of the school will always give each parent an open and kind-hearted listening ear, in order to move beyond listening and into problem-solving, the discussion will always need to include communication between the parent and the teacher. Help will always be made available to facilitate these conversations.

Inclement Weather

To avoid confusion, please note that when SAD #28 is canceled, Ashwood Waldorf School is canceled as well. When SAD #28 is delayed, Ashwood Waldorf School is delayed as well. Ashwood makes independent weather-related decisions concerning early-release days and times. Early dismissals are confusing due to a host of factors, including that SAD #28 closes its individual schools at different times and has a different weekly early-release day than Ashwood. Because of these variables, Ashwood makes independent emergency early-release decisions. In these circumstances we make every attempt to contact each family individually either by speaking with each parent personally at drop-off, calling each family, and/or sending out an all-school e-mail.

The easiest way to know when school is canceled or delayed is to determine whether SAD #28 is. In addition, however, Ashwood school cancellations and late start days are announced on WCSH6 and the Knox County Village Soup website, as well as on 102.5 FM, and WMTW News. When possible, an all-school e-mail will be sent for school closings and delays, but when power outages occur, or Internet service is down, this is not possible. Please note that the school answering machine can be unreliable and school closings will **not** be announced on the answering machine. Parents may choose to sign up for automatic text messages on the WCSH6 Storm Center website, <http://www.wcsh6.com>. We respect each family's individual decision about whether to attend school on snowy days when school is in session. Please use your own discretion when making this decision.

Arrival and Departure of Students

To ensure safety, please drive slowly on campus at all times and observe all signs. Please park only in designated areas and supervise children as they cross the parking lots and driveways going to and from cars. We ask that parents use the footpaths provided and teach their children to do so as well; walking behind cars in the parking lots is especially discouraged.

To protect our school and children, **we require that all parents complete a student information form** listing the names of all persons who are authorized to pick up the child from school. Please contact the office to update this form as necessary.

Anytime a child is to be picked up by someone whose name does not appear on this parent-approved list, parents must contact the office to give special permission. The specially approved driver must then identify himself or herself to the teacher before taking the child. Under no circumstances will children be released to unauthorized adults.

Parents on campus during the school day and all visitors to the campus must come to the office to check in. Please do not direct visitors to a classroom, to the playground, or to an individual child. As our school continues to grow, so does our exposure to the world at large. With increased consciousness as adults, we can continue to care for our children safely.

Under no circumstances should a child who will be or has been absent for the day be on campus for any reason. In the event a sick child must be brought along at drop-off and pick-up times, please have him/her remain in the car.

School rules must still be observed on campus outside of school hours. Children must be supervised by their parents before and after school hours at all times. Please note that children must wear shoes on campus at all times, unless they are participating in a teacher-directed activity where the teacher has specified that students may remove their shoes.

Arrival and Departure Times

The opening of each school day is a special moment for the teachers and children at Ashwood Waldorf School. When morning exercises are interrupted by a late child, it affects the whole class. It is essential to the well-being of the children and their classes that students arrive on time. It is equally important that the students be picked up promptly at dismissal time. Waiting to go home is hard on children, and teachers can't provide supervision after regular hours. If you will be delayed, please call the school office as soon as possible so that the office can let the teacher know. Any child remaining after 3:30 will be brought to the office and the parent will be charged a late fee for emergency care.

Early Childhood

Ashwood's early childhood program starts at 8:30 a.m. If children arrive before 8:15 a.m., parents must stay with them in the outside play area. If your child arrives after 8:30 a.m., please come to the office with your child so that attendance records can be corrected.

The early childhood program has options for either noon or 1:00 p.m. dismissal. We ask that you please make every effort to pick up your child on time. Children can become stressed and anxious when the other children have left and their parent is late.

Parent/Child Program

Parent/Child classes begin at 9 a.m. and end at 11:00 a.m.

Arrival for Grades 1-8

Children should arrive between 8:15 - 8:25 a.m. to begin Main Lesson promptly at 8:30 a.m. For the convenience of our parent body, children may arrive as early as 8:05 a.m. and be placed in the care of the teacher on-duty at the playground by the lower loop, short-term parking area. There is no fee for this service. Students may not enter the buildings until the bell rings at 8:15 a.m., without specific permission from the child's class teacher for a specified reason.

If your child arrives after 8:30 a.m., **please bring your child to the office** so that s(he) can be placed in the care of school staff. Once you bring your child to the office s(he) will be given a late slip to bring to class. All teachers will require this slip in order for the child to be admitted to the classroom. A late child is asked to approach the classroom, knock on the door, and wait to be admitted

Once the school day has begun, please do not enter your child's classroom. Anything delivered after 8:30 a.m., such as lunches or musical instruments, should be brought to the office.

Dismissal Options for Grade 1

We support first graders in their transition to a full day of school by providing various

dismissal options. Up until the December vacation, parents may choose to pick up their first grader at 1 p.m. Parents may also choose for their child to stay for the entire school day. Any parent choosing early pick-up should inform the teacher at the beginning of the school year. Parents should only occasionally pick up their child early, after discussion and the consent of the class teacher, as this causes confusion to the child and the entire class's sense of rhythm and security.

Dismissal of Grade School

Dismissal is at 3:15 p.m. **except on Thursdays**. Teachers will remain with students until 3:30 p.m. in order to allow reasonable leeway for parents who are running late.

Beginning at 3:30 p.m., any student who has not been picked up will be brought to the office. The office will attempt to contact the parent. The administrative assistant will care for the child until the parent arrives. Parents will be charged for this service automatically via FACTS, and will receive an electronic receipt of payment within 30 days. Families who make a one-time annual tuition payment will receive a mailed invoice for this service.

Ashwood students sometimes participate in extracurricular activities after school, such as sports or music lessons, that necessitate that the student leave school prior to 3:15 p.m. Ashwood accommodates this need, when necessary, by allowing students to leave school at 2:50 p.m. with the approval of the class teacher. Students are responsible for making up work and collecting assignments given during this last period of the day. Class teachers will recommend the best way for the student to meet these obligations on a case-by-case basis. This privilege is only allowed to continue if the student is able to complete their work and the loss of school time does not become detrimental to the student's life at school. We ask parents to help their children by promoting an attitude that success in school takes precedence over non school-related, extra activities.

Thursday: Early Dismissal Day for All Grades

Thursday is an early dismissal day. All grades leave school at 1:00 p.m. This allows for a weekly Faculty Meeting that takes place from 1:30-5:00 p.m.

The school day ends at dismissal time. Children are released directly into the custody of the adults responsible for them and not onto the playground. If at all possible, please make alternate arrangements if you are unable to pick up your child promptly.

Attendance: Absence and Tardiness Guidelines

In the Waldorf school each lesson block is a carefully designed, complete unit of study. Given the breadth of the curriculum, even a few days of absence can adversely affect your child's education; the rhythm is disrupted, social dynamics change, and a substantial amount of educational experience is lost. Because the pedagogy is based on the experience of human-to-human sharing of information between teachers and students, it is difficult for work to be "made up" or completed at home, away from the classroom setting. Therefore the faculty has established the following guidelines:

- Please inform the school office before 8 a.m. if your child is going to be absent or tardy for any reason.
- We encourage parents to keep children home when they are overtired or recovering from an illness.
- We encourage parents to schedule regular doctor and dentist appointments after school hours.
- Continued tardiness and/or absence, for reasons other than illness are considered inexcusable by Ashwood Waldorf School.
- If your child has missed or is late for 15 days, then the teacher will contact the school office and a conference will be scheduled with the parents, the teacher(s), and the school director. The purpose of the meeting will be to develop, in partnership, a plan to support the student's regular and on-time arrival at school and to support the student's academic development.
- If the plan is not successfully followed, then the student's progress and advancement to the next grade will need to be further discussed with the class teacher and the Leadership Council in partnership with the child's parents.
- When making plans for extended vacations keep in mind both what is best for your child as well as for your child's class. Please support regular attendance at school.
- The school doesn't hold its teachers responsible for providing work for students who take family vacations during school days or for providing special help in catching up with work that has been missed during such times. Teachers will let parents know what the student has missed and parents will be asked to make private arrangements for their child to learn the concepts s(he) has missed during such absences whenever possible.
- If unavoidable or special circumstances require a child to be absent for more than the normal school vacation time, parents are requested to submit a written request for the child's absence to the class teacher at least two weeks in advance. The class teacher will respond to parents after the Faculty has reviewed the matter.

Early Childhood Program

Introduction

As *kindergarten* literally means "children's garden," the Ashwood early childhood program functions to "grow" thriving children. Each child is allowed to unfold, like a well-rooted plant, in a nurturing environment that respects his or her pace and needs. With this positive beginning, the child may mature into a strong, vibrant, and balanced person.

The school day unfolds within spaces of simple beauty and a warm, loving atmosphere created by each teacher and caregiver. The curriculum, based chiefly on the importance of imitative play, offers each child daily opportunities to develop his or her own initiative through creative play. Many activities also bring the children together for a group experience.



Young children's imitation of what is meaningful and true in life constitutes their play, their real work, and their way of learning. By honoring this principle, Waldorf schooling provides young children with an ongoing experience of active participation in their school-time world. This prepares the children, in the best possible way, to engage fully and successfully during future school years.

The Teacher

In our early childhood program, the teacher builds a bridge between home and school. The teacher strives to be worthy of imitation and to create a naturally rich environment in an atmosphere of purposeful activity.

The Program

In the first stage of human development, from birth to age six or seven years with the change of teeth, children enter with their whole being into everything around them. The young child is especially attracted to all that moves, and the child imitates what is seen: the activity of parents and others who are closely related, and all that is contained in the immediate environment. The child learns to stand erect, to walk, to speak, and to relate to others by imitating those around him or her. Habits acquired by learning through imitation become very deeply rooted in the whole nature of the person.

As Waldorf educators, Ashwood's early childhood teachers believe that a child's imagination is the source of original and creative thinking later in life. The Waldorf early childhood curriculum is designed to engage the imagination of the young child, to develop his or her inner picturing abilities, to nourish the feeling life of the child, and to encourage rich, imaginative play.

Early Childhood Day

Each morning the children experience a repeated rhythm, which becomes familiar and nurturing.

Free play: Shortly after the children arrive, there is a time for imaginative play (undirected) or artistic activity (set up by the teachers beforehand). Waldorf philosophy maintains that the qualities we value in adulthood are fostered here: creative and flexible thinking, inner conviction, self-discipline, personal freedom, and self-knowledge.

Snack: A nutritious snack consisting of items such as crackers, rice cakes, soups, cereals, homemade bread, cheese, popcorn, raisins, and fruit is served.

Cleanup: In an atmosphere of cooperation, all playthings are returned to their places.

Circle time: We gather as a group and act out stories using verses, songs, and games. Through the circle's content, the children experience the current seasons – including weather, festivals, the ways of animals, and nature's cycles of growing and resting. They also learn to enjoy the sounds and rhythms of language.

Quiet/Rest time: Each class has a short quiet time from 5-15 minutes long, during which the children rest quietly. The teacher may sing lullabies or play a kinderharp during this time.

Outdoor play: Each day the children and teachers go outside in all weather. In our woods and yard, the children run, play, tend the garden, rake leaves, sculpt snow, and experience nature in all of her seasons. Time spent outdoors fosters the children's joy, physical development, and sense of belonging to the universe. The children store up unconscious impressions, and surprisingly detailed observations of the world, which they will later experience scientifically.

Story time: The children listen as the teacher tells a fairy, folk, or nature story. Often, current story elements weave into circle time and the children's play to nourish their imaginations.

Lunch: Our early childhood program includes an optional lunch hour from noon until 1:00 p.m. Students are asked to bring nutritious, low- or no-sugar foods, without additives and preservatives. We ask that parents refrain from sending their child with peanut products in consideration of those with dangerous allergies. The children leave school by 1:00 p.m., filled with the richness of the day.

Extended Day Program

The Extended Day program is available for children attending the early childhood program. Afternoons in the extended day program are very simple. We work to create a relaxing, home-like atmosphere with lots of outdoor play. The afternoon session begins at 1:00 p.m. at the close of the morning program. Parents may pick up their children at 3:15 at the grade school pickup area. Please call the office if you are unexpectedly delayed. Any child remaining will be brought to the office and the parent will be charged a late fee for emergency care.

Parent/Child Program

This is a gentle and nurturing program for children ages 18 -36 months and their accompanying caregiver. The morning begins with a quiet welcome. The children engage in creative play with simple and natural toys provided as tools for their imaginations. Some handle silk scarves or seashells, ride hobbyhorses, or busy themselves in a child-sized wooden kitchen with stove, pots, pans, and a table and chairs. Still others choose to play with hand-knit farm animals, felt rabbits, or soft, handmade dolls. The blocks, fashioned from pieces of tree limbs that have been sanded smooth, retain their organic shapes. A play stand draped with cloth becomes a cozy home.

Children include adults in their play according to their fluctuating needs. Those parents not engaged in child-led play may work on a simple craft project provided by the teacher or help with snack preparation. Together, the parents and teacher may discuss a reading from a handout or a book received as part of the program. At cleanup time, everyone helps to put the room in order. Next, group circle activities delight the children through repetition of seasonal songs, nursery rhymes, and finger plays. A simple story is told, enlivened by handmade puppets and with silk scarves setting the stage.

Snack time is steeped in ritual, with the use of child-sized cups, cloth napkins, and a natural centerpiece gracing the table. A candle is lit and a simple blessing is offered, thanking the earth for our food. Snacks consist of nutritious, organic whole foods and herbal teas that the children help to prepare.

The morning ends with a walk through the woods on one of our trails, culminating on the playground for time to climb and swing. A goodbye song in a circle completes the morning. Each week the same flow of activities takes place so that even the youngest children observe the weekly rhythms and begin to participate as part of the larger group.

Early Childhood Parent-Teacher Communication

Two individual **parent-teacher conferences** are scheduled during the school year, in late autumn and in spring. The conferences are an opportunity for parents and the teacher to share impressions and concerns about the child as well as to build a continuing picture of each child and his or her experiences in life.

Each class has scheduled **parent evenings** (usually three or four per year). Parent evenings are a very important part of your child's education at Ashwood. This is your opportunity to learn how your child is spending his or her days, and to deepen your understanding of Waldorf education. It is also a valuable way to form relationships with the other parents in the class, many of whom you will be sharing a long parenting and educational journey with. **We expect at least one parent from each family to attend the parent evening.** Of course, there will be some circumstances that prevent either parent from attending. In those cases we ask that you kindly inform your child's teacher in advance of your anticipated absence.

Parents who have participated in parent evenings report that the information received during these meetings was of invaluable assistance to them in understanding and learning to better meet the developmental needs of their young children. Teachers also provide literature and lead discussions to deepen parents' understanding and application of Waldorf philosophy.

At the end of each year the teacher writes a report describing the curriculum and the child's development throughout the year.

Teachers can be contacted at home by phone or through email during their posted hours, or messages can be left for them at the school's office. Teachers welcome

comments and questions and look forward to working with parents throughout the school year.

In accordance with the Family Education Records Protection Act, parents have access to their children's records at any time during regular school office hours.

Clothing

Children of kindergarten age have not yet developed the temperature controlling ability that enables them to make decisions about the appropriate clothing for the day. It is our responsibility as adults to ensure that the children are adequately dressed. Our classrooms are kept at a healthy indoor temperature, so that active bodies don't become overheated. Therefore, the children need long sleeves at almost all times and should keep a sweater with their extra clothing at school. Along with the sweater, each child should have (marked with the child's name):

- a pair of simple, well-fitting slippers
- a complete change of clothing for emergencies (socks, underwear, pants, and shirt)

Ashwood students go outdoors every day through the seasons. It is of utmost importance that the children are dressed appropriately and warmly. We also ask that children not wear garments with neon colors, strong graphic designs, animal representation, or media images. We have found that those can be distracting as well as over-stimulating. Because we bake, paint, play in the mud, climb, and jump, sturdy clothes for active children are in order.

Toys

Each early childhood classroom is developed carefully to support the work and play life of the children. Highly formed toys with one role are less conducive to imaginative play; thus, our emphasis is on natural, simple toys that lend themselves to easy transformations according to the child's imagination. Over a period of time the child will discover many possibilities for each object.

It is natural for children to wish to show friends things that are precious to them. It is our experience, however, that bringing toys or books from home can create difficult situations. We therefore request that the children not bring such items to school. Some children may wish to bring a small blanket, stuffed animal, or doll to school to help in the transition from home. Such objects can wait in the child's cubby during the morning.



Festivals in the Early Childhood

Celebrating the seasonal festivals is an important part of the Waldorf school. In Ashwood's early childhood program, we celebrate festivals with gusto. While some are observed by the broader school community (see the "Festivals at Ashwood" section), others belong solely to the younger children. We learn select songs and bake special treats, we engage in thematic activities, and we explore each occasion during story time. The chosen festivals reflect the natural year as we experience it in Maine.

At the end of September we celebrate Michaelmas, an autumn festival associated with harvest time. As days grow shorter in November, we make lanterns for Martinmas. Thanksgiving often includes a Native American story. We illuminate our space with candles for the Garden of Light and make a winter garden. The return of spring and the season of rebirth are celebrated in late March or early April. For May Day, we wear flowered crowns and dance around a maypole adorned with colorful ribbons. The end of the school year is marked by a bridge crossing celebration as we move into summer.

We encourage family participation in many of these festivals and will keep you informed.

Birthdays in Early Child Program

Birthdays are important occasions and in the early childhood program we invite each birthday child's family to join us in our celebration. The child is honored at story time with a birthday story that creates a vivid picture of his or her own birth and growth. In its simple pictorial beauty, this reassuring and satisfying story answers many of the child's questions and wonderings in a way that is suited to his or her imagination. The teacher and children then offer a small present. Sometimes the birthday child brings simple little gifts for the other children – shells, feathers, shiny stones, flowers, or handmade treats – so that the birthday is a celebration of sharing and giving as well as receiving.

First Grade Assessments

Each year the faculty conducts a group assessment, for all children who turn six prior to June 1. This assessment is done each year as part of the transition to first grade. The assessments take the form of playful games, and are intended to gauge fine- and gross-motor development, the ability to cross the midline, dominance of eye, ear, hand, and foot, visual and auditory memory, and other milestones of child development.

When all of the assessments have been completed, the faculty discusses their observations. They review each assessment and determine their level of confidence concerning each child's transition to first grade. The first grade assessment is also designed to help the incoming first grade teacher to get to know the strengths and challenges of his or her new class, in order to prepare for their grade school journey together.

Parents will be notified prior to the date of the assessment. We ask that parents not discuss this with their child, since the child will not be aware that they are being

assessed. You will not be informed of any details of the assessment unless the faculty wishes to discuss the option of your child remaining for another year in Kindergarten. However, you are always welcome to call your child's teacher if you would like to discuss details of the assessment.

Assemblies at Ashwood

First Day of School

Ashwood marks the first day of the grade school in September with a special Rose Ceremony. The entire school population gathers to greet children, teachers, and parents and to welcome the new first grade children. Family and friends are invited to join in this celebration. Students will be dismissed directly following the Rose Ceremony. Families are invited to bring lunch and picnic at the school that day.

Friday Gatherings and Assemblies

On Fridays, the grade school regularly gathers, either for all-school-games, for a short presentation of some of its current artistic and circle work, for a class open-house to display to student work, or to celebrate a seasonal festival. Parents are welcome and encouraged to come to these assemblies and early childhood classes often attend as well. A calendar of these assemblies will be available on the on-line calendar.

Graduation

The graduation of our eighth graders marks a special moment, both for these individual students and their families, as well as for our school community as a whole. All of the grade school children participate in this special commemoration and all parents are strongly urged to attend. Graduation is on Saturday afternoon, following the final day of school. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend this special event.

Winter and End-of-Year Assemblies

Twice a year, just before December break and at the end of the school year, the Ashwood community gathers in a large assembly space off campus. Each grade school class presents a sampling of its recent endeavors in the performing arts. Parents, family members, and interested members of the surrounding community are warmly invited to share in this celebration. We encourage parents to bring guests who might enjoy the performance. We ask that children dress up for assemblies in attire that is nicer than their everyday clothes. For further guidance, see the section entitled "Dress Code."

The faculty feels strongly that taking photographs during assemblies is detrimental to the performances. For the sake of all concerned, we ask that parents please refrain from photographing and/or videotaping during assemblies. Teachers may arrange for a photography session at dress rehearsals or after the assembly.



Birthdays in the Grade School

Each class acknowledges a birthday child in its own way. For the teacher, a birthday provides an opportunity to reflect on a child's special gifts, strengths, and growth during the past year. A shared snack from home generally accompanies a birthday celebration through the grades. Birthday celebrations will vary from class to class and may change from grade to grade.

Class Photos

The school arranges for photos to be taken each year in the autumn.

Clothing



Please see the following section entitled "Dress Code" for guidelines on appropriateness.

For students of all ages, warm clothing for daily outdoor play is extremely important, as students will go outside for recess in all but the most extreme weather. Strong, secure, non-slippery footwear is necessary for safety at school. The children need coats (or raincoats), mittens, hats, and boots for cold or rainy weather so that their experience of nature and the elements is a rewarding one. Please keep in mind that body heat escapes most rapidly from the head and neck. When in doubt, make sure your child has more than enough clothing.

It is difficult to keep up with the vagaries of New England weather, and children tend to dress for the moment. Extra clothing (a complete change of clothing is suggested) should be kept at school for accidents or emergencies. Dry socks, footwear, and a sweater or sweatshirt are strongly recommended. Each child should have a pair of soft-soled shoes for indoor wear; bare feet are not allowed indoors or out. Please label each item of clothing clearly and check the school office for lost and found items.

Dress Code

Ashwood wishes to have its students dress neatly, in clothes that fit properly and are appropriate for indoor and outdoor activity. Dress should be neither too formal nor too casual. It should be a "cut above" what children wear for lounging at home. Our students should be carefully groomed representatives of the school for visitors and the greater community.

Parents are asked to carefully consider how to use clothing, and other forms of personal grooming, to protect their child's modesty and innocence through childhood and adolescence and to ensure that the child's appearance does not create any distraction. In particular, the following types of clothing are not allowed at school: bare midriffs; shirts

or tops with necklines lower than two inches below the collarbone or with straps less than an inch wide; shirts with open backs; clothing with writing too large to be covered with a closed hand; clothing containing political or religious statements; skirts, shorts or dresses shorter than the tips of the longest fingers when hands are held at the side and shoulders are relaxed; tight leggings worn as pants; long sleeves that cover the hands; pajamas; torn, ragged, or stained clothing; hats, visors, and hoods worn indoors. Students' clothing must cover their underwear, including bra straps. Sheer or see through clothing must have dress code appropriate clothing underneath. Also unacceptable are extreme hair dyes or styles, face piercing, and tattoos (even "pretend" temporary kinds) or writing on the skin. Jewelry may be worn but must be removed for physical activities and/or if it causes distraction or impedes the students' ability to participate in activities.

While we embrace the fact that middle school students may want to explore their identities by experimenting with their appearance, we expect them to take into consideration, when choosing their apparel, that they are role models for the younger students. That being said, the following dress code privileges are accorded to students in the upper grades: subtle makeup and nail polish are allowed in seventh and eighth grades. Jewelry must be removed during physical activities. Any teacher, at his or her discretion, may ask a student of any grade to change or cover distracting clothing or remove distracting makeup or jewelry. In special cases, students may be sent home.

Ashwood students should always have two pairs of shoes at school: (1) indoor shoes that protect the floor and support the feet and do not slip off during physical activity (sneakers, for example); and (2) footwear that is appropriate to the current weather to be worn only outdoors. Please note that children must wear shoes on campus at all times, unless they are participating in a teacher directed activity where the teacher has specified that students may remove their shoes.

Additionally, there are special times during the school year when students are expected to dress more formally: winter and end-of-year assemblies, festivals, formal field trips, and Friday assemblies (performing class only). On these special occasions, we ask that students wear no T-shirts, sweatshirts, high heels, platform shoes, or boots. We suggest that boys wear collared shirts, with a tie; girls may wear dresses or skirts or slacks with appropriate tops. For the winter and end-of-year assemblies, blue jeans may not be worn by anyone; sneakers and athletic shoes are discouraged. If the weather dictates that children wear boots, they should bring along appropriate shoes to be worn indoors.

Expectations of Students and Adults at Community Events

Ashwood expects that its students, encouraged by their parents, will exhibit polite, respectful behavior and consideration of others at school events occurring outside normal school hours. Parents are responsible for monitoring their children's behavior at such events. This applies to students all through the grades. Children may not go into buildings or classrooms or take items out of them without the permission of the

appropriate faculty member.

Students are expected to sit with their parents when the class doesn't sit together with the teacher. At potluck events, parents are asked to take responsibility for their children's "potluck etiquette" to make sure they are being courteous, taking an appropriate amount of food, and waiting until the food is offered before helping themselves.

Expenditures

Individuals purchasing any materials on Ashwood's behalf need to get written approval from the school director before making the purchase. A check requisition form is available in the office. Receipts must be turned in within 30 days or by July 15th, whichever comes sooner.

Field Trips

When a class travels by car on a field trip, the teacher determines grouping and seating arrangements. The first adult to arrive should locate a spot to wait quietly for all groups to convene. The adult chaperones must stay with their groups and, if necessary, remind the children of field trip rules. No group of children should be left unsupervised. Upon the return to school, at least one adult must stay with the groups until the teacher arrives.

Behavior should be monitored in order to hold form with the group. Respectful and thoughtful behavior will be expected at all times. Off the school premises, the daily school rules regarding behavior, appropriate clothing, and items brought to school still apply. Please review the "Items Brought to School" section. Under no circumstances should alcoholic drinks be brought on any field trip, including overnight trips.

Food in the Grade School

Grade school children bring their own snacks and lunches to school each day. Snack time is scheduled from 10:30-10:45 a.m., and lunchtime is at 12:30 p.m. After a blessing, the children eat in their classrooms with their teachers. It is common for classes to have lunch together with one of the class teachers or with a specialty teacher. Wholesome, ample snacks and lunches provide your child with the energy to complete a day's work. Occasionally, candy may be allowed by teachers as a part of a special celebration. Otherwise, candy, gum, and soft drinks are not permitted at school.

Health Policies

Because Waldorf education is concerned with the whole child and finds a relationship between health and learning, you will find your child's teacher receptive to any

comments you wish to share about your child's health, illnesses past and present, sleeping and eating habits, stresses, and home-life rhythms.

Any child who is ill with an infectious or contagious condition or a fever must not be brought to school until the end of the infectious phase. If there is some question about your child's state of health, it is often better to keep your child at home. **If your child is ill and won't be attending school, please call the office at 236-8021 and leave a message by 8 a.m.**

We suggest that parents give their children at least one full day of rest at home after an illness. We ask that your child be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. When the child is well enough to do some work at home, parents of children in grades 4-8 should contact the class teacher to arrange for assignments to be sent.

Under no circumstances should a child who has been absent for the day be on the campus. We recognize that parents who have two or more children in the school may need to bring a sick child along at drop-off and pick-up times; in those cases we ask that the sick child remain in the car.

If the onset of illness occurs during school hours, the school will contact the parents to arrange for their child to go home. We ask that parents make arrangements to pick up a child needing to go home within one hour of receiving a call from the school office. If a child receives a minor injury during school hours, he or she will be sent to the office for first aid as needed. When a child receives significant first aid, an injury report will be filed in the office and the parent will be contacted.

Communicable Diseases

Teachers will send students to the office during the school day if they develop any symptoms that suggest illness such as:

- Unusual listlessness
- Excessively red or draining eyes
- Skin rash
- Persistent cough
- Persistent nausea, with or without vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent headache, stomachache, or sore throat
- Elevated temperature

Parents will be notified by phone of their child's illness and asked to make arrangements to have their child picked up from school.

Students with the communicable diseases will be excluded from school for the time periods required by law by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/>)

Head Lice

The child must be free of all lice and eggs before returning. All blankets, pillows, and articles of clothing that may have been exposed to lice should be taken home and washed thoroughly.

Medications Brought To School

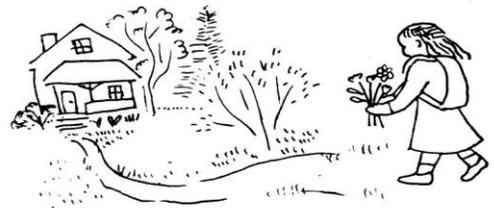
In order for children to receive medication at school parents must complete and submit to the school the Medication Authorization Form annually. If any new medications are added during the school year, a new form must be completed and returned to the school with the medication.

All medications at Ashwood will be kept in the school office and administered by our staff unless other arrangements have been made through the school. Students may carry and self-administer prescription medications with signed permission from their doctor and parent/guardian. A doctor's prescription or pharmacy label is required for all medications, including over-the-counter medications or herbal supplements.

Immunization Policy

Waldorf Schools around the world have focused on educating the whole child for nearly 100 years. With over 1,000 schools across 6 continents, we have a unique and broad view of childhood development and education. Across our 160 schools in the United States, we see a broad range of successful, healthy, well-adjusted students graduate and become productive members of society, their community and their families. This is the Waldorf legacy.

Part of that legacy has to do with a strong partnership with parents – one that encourages them to be well informed and to make thoughtful decisions about their children's education and school environment. As part of that, we encourage parents to consult their physicians to determine the best course of action relative to immunizations. We respect parents' decisions regarding immunization and health. While we follow the Maine statute on immunizations to the letter, we do leave the ultimate decision about immunizations to the parents. We do strictly enforce a *stay-at-home* policy for children who are sick.



Insurance

Ashwood Waldorf School carries student accident insurance for all enrolled students. This coverage includes field trips and supervised school-sponsored activities.

Homework Guidelines for Grades 4-8

Class teachers and specialty teachers may, at their discretion, assign homework. Students returning to school after an absence may be required to complete missed and/or additional home assignments.

Ashwood acknowledges that many parents enjoy working alongside their children on home-study assignments and encourages that practice for those who find it valuable. However, it is the school's intention that homework should fall within levels of academic challenge that allow the child to work independently. Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers if the child seems to require too much support.

Items Brought to School

Students should not bring obviously distracting or dangerous items to school. Some examples of these are candy, toy weapons, trading cards, video games, and sound systems. Anything flammable or weapon-like – including matches, lighters, and jackknives – will be confiscated. In general, toys and games should not be brought to school unless sanctioned by the class teacher for group purposes.

Sexually explicit material has no place in our school and will be immediately confiscated. If a parent becomes aware at any time that this type of material has been present at school, we ask that the class teacher and school director be notified.

Parent Meetings and Child Care

Unless childcare is specifically provided on campus during a school meeting, please do not bring your children when you attend parent meetings, parent-teacher conferences, school events, or when you come to volunteer. Ashwood cannot be responsible for unsupervised students on the grounds or in the classrooms. Children may not be present in classrooms outside of school hours without prior consent and the presence of the teacher.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring. Teachers are available to meet with parents at other times if either the teacher or parents have questions, concerns, or information that needs to be communicated. Please don't hesitate to contact your child's class teacher if you want to arrange a meeting.

In accordance with the Family Education Records Protection Act, parents have access to their children's school records at any time during school office hours.

Payment Dates, Late Payments, and Tuition Fees

Tuition makes up a vast majority of Ashwood's overall income. Virtually all of Ashwood's financial commitments are based on tuition income expected as a result of enrollment. When tuition payments aren't received, or are late in coming, the school's capacity to meet its financial obligations becomes threatened. If your family is experiencing unexpected financial hardship, we encourage you to call the school business office manager to discuss options for meeting your tuition obligations. Ashwood offers a low interest short-term loan program for families experiencing unforeseen financial challenges. This program is available to enrolled families with a good credit history and a clear way to pay back the loan.

If a family is one month payment in arrears (or the equivalent of such) the family will receive written notification that their enrollment at Ashwood has been placed on a probationary status that, if not corrected, will result in refusal of admittance for the child(ren). In each case the parents will be given a minimum of 30 days to become current with their payments. A detailed policy is included in the enrollment and contract package and is available upon request from the school office. Our business office is committed to upholding good business practices, which means working with families to ensure clear and open communication, and, whenever possible, seeking solutions to unexpected financial issues.

Pets

Please do not bring dogs (or other pets) onto the campus. If your dog is with you when you come to campus, please leave it in your vehicle. If you walk to school please don't enter the school grounds with your dog. Please get permission from the school office prior to bringing any animals onto campus or into the classrooms. There are many childhood allergies and fears that we must be mindful of as a community.

Middle School Student Cell Phone and Electronic Device Usage

With teacher permission, students may use the office phones to communicate essential information with parents during the school day. The faculty respects that students may want to bring electronic devices to school in order to have them available after the school day ends. In order to accommodate this need Ashwood allows students to carry their cell phones and other electronic devices, turned off, in their bags. This is seen as a privilege and a courtesy for the students not as an inherent right. Furthermore, students may not use their cell phones or other electronic devices on campus at any time. The consequences for violating this policy are as follows:

First infraction: The student is issued a warning and the device is taken by teacher. The

device will be returned to the parent of the student by the teacher.

Second infraction: The student will not be allowed to bring the device to school the rest of the term (September – January or January – June).

Third infraction: The student will not be allowed to bring the device to school for the rest of the year.

Student Conduct

Ashwood's Expectations

Ashwood Waldorf School is a community of students, teachers, parents, and friends all of whom support the school's efforts to provide a comprehensive and caring education centered on the intellect, the imagination, and the will. To ensure good progress toward that goal the school expects each Ashwood student to treat schoolmates and teachers with respect, with kindness, with thoughtfulness, and with open friendliness, and by so doing help to create an inclusive environment in which all can gain fully from, and contribute fully to, the Ashwood experience.

At Ashwood, rules and regulations are described as "expectations" because in the end it is relationships, not rules, which inspire and ensure appropriate behavior. The expectations ask students to live responsibly and with self-restraint. The choice to attend Ashwood represents a decision to respect these ideals and to be shaped by them. The Waldorf curriculum engages students across the grades in developmentally appropriate ways. As Waldorf teachers we believe that the curriculum, itself, is our most important and effective means of discipline. The children's enthusiasm and interest in the subject are the foundation for all classroom management. In addition to using curricular content, teachers use artistic gestures – music, painting, choral speaking, puppetry and humor – to establish and maintain an environment that is favorable for learning. Teachers also do their best to establish a predictable schedule that offers students the comfort of an established routine and a sense of rhythm within each lesson through the use of polarities, or contrasting activities: e.g., being still/being active, listening/speaking, creating strong colors/creating soft colors.

In spite of the effectiveness of curriculum-based practices, more explicit disciplinary measures are sometimes necessary. Whenever possible, teachers use positive feedback to encourage desired behaviors (e.g., a simple reward when the class meets a goal). Teachers also use "consequences" to discourage disruptive behavior. These consequences range from standing briefly behind one's chair, to "timeouts", to minutes taken off of recess in order to do a given community service task. In all cases, the teacher's goal is to remove hindrances to learning for the individual child and for the class.

The school takes into account that occasional lapses in acceptable behavior are normal in a young student population. Such isolated incidents – speaking out of turn in class, for example – are dealt with directly and immediately by the observing teacher and

usually do not require any action beyond the moment. Repetitive incidents of disruptive behavior – taunting or bullying, for example – or any extreme single instances of such behavior are a much more serious matter and do call for a formal response by the school. The school's response varies according to the grade level of the student(s) involved.

Procedure for Significant Misbehavior

Immediately following a single instance of especially disruptive behavior or upon deciding that ongoing misbehavior needs a stronger response, the teacher notifies the office and either the teacher, the school director, or another member of the leadership council telephones the parents to come and take the child home.

Should this occur one time the child will be allowed to return to school the next day and a conference will be scheduled with the parents, the teacher, and the school director within three school days. No record of this event will appear in the student's records.

Should there be a second occurrence of serious misbehavior the child will be sent home and not allowed to return to school until there is a conference between the teacher, the school director, and the parent. At this conference a plan will be created describing how the school and parents will monitor the child's progress. A subsequent meeting will take place explaining the plan and outlining the expectations to the child. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled within two weeks to review the child's progress. All documents will go into the child's permanent school records.

Should another occurrence of serious misbehavior take place all of the above will occur and the question of whether the child can continue to attend Ashwood Waldorf School will have to be addressed. A plan for how, and if it is possible, to help the child in question, while at the same time maintaining a healthy classroom environment, will be considered.

School Behavior Policy

Guidelines for unacceptable behavior

- Intentional physical abuse and/or threat of physical abuse
- Leaving classroom, activity, or school grounds
- Anti-social behavior
- Intimidation
- Rude speech, attitude, or behavior
- Taunting or hurtful teasing
- Persistent verbal abuse
- Persistent exclusion of another from group activity
- Interference with and/or destruction of school or personal property
- Lying
- Inciting or encouraging any of the above

Each of these behaviors requires a response appropriate to:

- The intensity of the behavior;
- The frequency of the behavior;
- An understanding of the individual(s) involved;
- The particular circumstances surrounding the incident.

These are the variables that determine the seriousness of the behavior and the school's response. In less serious cases some of these behaviors can be classroom management issues, which are handled directly by the teacher.

Upper Grades Procedure for Severe and/or Illegal Activities

Stealing, assault, sexual abuse, destruction of property, the possession and/or use of illegal substances, or any other illegal conduct that takes place on Ashwood's campus are considered not only serious infractions of student expectations, but also significantly impede the safety and health of the school environment and violate the trust of the entire community. Should such infractions occur, the parent will be immediately informed, the student will be sent home, and a suspension period will ensue. During this time the school will work with the family, and when appropriate, law enforcement officials, to determine the correct course of action. Each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis, but in every case the question of expulsion from school will be addressed.

Ashwood Waldorf School Upper Grades Disciplinary Policy for Extreme and/or Unsafe Behaviors

Prohibited Conduct at Ashwood Waldorf School

Students are prohibited from engaging in the following conduct on school property, while in attendance at school, or at any school-sponsored activity, or at any time or place that such conduct directly interferes with the operations, discipline, or general welfare of the school:

- A. Violations of state or federal laws.
- B. Possession, use of, or being under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, inhalants, or tobacco.
- C. Inhaling any toxic substance.
- D. Possession and/or use of weapons or of any object, although not necessarily designed to be a weapon, to inflict bodily harm and/or to threaten, intimidate, coerce, or harass another person.
- E. Violent or threatening behavior including, but not limited to, fighting, verbal or written statements, which threaten, intimidate, or harass others (including cyberbullying).
- F. Willful and malicious damage to school or personal property.

- G. Stealing or attempting to steal school or personal property.
- H. Lewd, indecent, or obscene acts or expressions of any kind.
- I. Leaving school grounds without permission.
- J. Any other conduct that may be seriously harmful to self, other persons or property.

Disciplinary Action

First Violation

If any of the above behaviors occurs at school:

1. The student will be brought to the office by a teacher.
2. The student's parent will be called, either by the teacher, the school director, or another member of the leadership council. The student will be sent home.
3. The leadership council will be informed of the situation immediately.
4. The student will be suspended from the school for a minimum of one additional day and a maximum of three weeks.
5. Before the student will be allowed to return to school a meeting will take place between the parents, the teacher, and the school director. The school may require the attendance of other trained personnel (such as a counselor, doctor, law enforcement official, etc.). During this time a detailed behavior plan will be created, reviewed, agreed to, and signed by the teacher, the parents, the student, and the school director. The plan will have specific goals, a time frame for meeting the goals, and any applicable consequences included in it. The plan will include a meeting within two weeks from the onset of the plan to determine whether the plan is working, whether it needs amendments, and for what period of time the plan will remain in effect.
6. There may be conflict resolution conversations with all concerned, led either by faculty or by outside trained personnel.
7. Therapeutic options for the student/family will be explored.

If state or federal laws have been violated:

- Law enforcement officials will be notified immediately.
- A minimum one-week suspension will ensue while the details of the situation are being worked out.
- Expulsion from school will be considered.

Second Violation

All of the above will apply with the exception of:

- The student will be sent home and will be suspended from the school for a minimum of three days and a maximum of three weeks.
- Therapeutic counseling options for the student/family will be recommended, and may be required, in order for student to continue to be enrolled.
- If the student behavior plan from the first violation does not include the possibility of expulsion, this plan will include specifications on possible expulsion from school.

If state or federal laws have been violated for a second time:

- Law enforcement officials will be notified immediately.
- A minimum three-week suspension will ensue while the details of the situation are sorted out.
- The process of expulsion from the school will be initiated.

Screen Use and Media

We ask that parents minimize their children's exposure to television, movies, video games, computers, and other electronic media. This is especially important on school days.

We believe that exposure to television and other media (including "quality" or "educational" programs) in early childhood seriously threatens the development of a child's imagination. For this reason, media exposure undermines a child's ability to receive what we have to offer. At the very least, we have found that children who are regular media consumers find it difficult to join in the mood of a class. Therefore, we ask families to protect their children from exposure to television, video games, movies, and computers.

There are many noticeable and well-documented effects of media on children. A growing body of recent research has cited effects such as shortened attention spans, reduction in children's ability to use their inner picturing capacities, decreased literacy, difficulty following directions, and even, in some cases, inability to play.

Our teachers are happy to work with you to offer support and suggestions for reducing and eventually eliminating your child's media exposure. We have found that when adults work together on this issue, it becomes less of an issue for students.

Student and Faculty Internet and Appropriate Use

At Ashwood Waldorf School computers, network, and Internet access are provided to support the educational mission of the school and to enhance the curriculum and learning opportunities for students and school staff. Students at Ashwood do not have access to computers and/or the Internet during the school day. Students are allowed to carry cell phones, but they must remain off and in their bag or locker at all times that students are on campus. Violation of the policy can result in disciplinary action outlined elsewhere in the school handbook.

Internet Safety

Ashwood Waldorf School uses filtering technology designed to block materials that are obscene or harmful to minors, and child pornography. The school administrators have

the ability to monitor Internet use at the school. Although Ashwood Waldorf School takes precautions to filter Internet accessibility, and children are not given access to WIFI at school, Ashwood cannot reasonably guaranty the prevention of all instances of inappropriate computer and Internet use by students.

Tuition Assistance Program

Ashwood Waldorf School makes an annual commitment of moneys from the budget, including gifts received, to fund our needs-based tuition assistance program for grade school families and for five-day dearly childhood families. Each family requesting assistance must apply annually by completing and returning an application that is processed through Tuition Aid Data Services (TADS) and then reviewed by Ashwood's tuition assistance committee, an independent committee comprised of qualified members of the midcoast community who are not current Ashwood parents, trustees, or employees. All documents and forms are handled in complete confidence. The committee, taking into account all of the information from each family, together with the budgetary needs of the school, makes a final allocation of tuition-assistance awards. The business manager acts solely as a liaison with the committee by answering questions, providing documentation, and communicating with applicants.

Tuition assistance forms are available in the office, on-line, or can be e-mailed or mailed by request. If you have any questions about the process, please address them to the business manager.

The Ashwood Leaflet

A newsletter is published online that includes timely communications and updated calendar events. The deadline for submitting articles, announcements, and ads to the office is Monday at 9 a.m. the week of publication. Short classified ads are accepted from Ashwood parents and Faculty, as space is available. Submissions should be sent by e-mail to jsoleil@ashwoodwaldorf.org.

Wellness and Safety



We require that parents submit a student information form for each student in case of emergencies. This includes parents' home and work telephone numbers and an emergency number for someone responsible for the child when parents cannot be reached. The form must be submitted to the office no later than the first day of school. It is important that the office be promptly informed of any changes.

Withdrawals and Late Entrances

Enrollment is made for the entire year and school expenses are budgeted accordingly. Therefore, no reduction in tuition is made for absence due to illness or vacation. Tuition for children enrolling after the start of the school year will be prorated from the date of entrance.

One month's notice is requested prior to withdrawal from any Ashwood program. After conversing with the teacher, parents should give notice in writing to the School Director of their intention to withdraw their child. Once the school year has started tuition is due for the remainder of the school year whether or not the child attends Ashwood during that period.

Curriculum

Three Phases of Growth in the Child

The Waldorf curriculum is coordinated with the three phases of growth and development through which all children pass, albeit not always at the exact same age, before reaching maturity. The first period extends from birth to age seven. During this time, children learn through imitation, absorbing not only the words and gestures of those around them but the moral climate as well. The second period, around age seven, begins when the child realizes new power through the forces of imagination and memory. The third period begins at puberty, when the child experiences physiological changes, increasing independence of thought, and turbulent emotions.

The curriculum reflects the idea that each child's development retraces the history of civilization. The child learns to read after learning to write just as reading in human history followed the development of notational systems. By third grade the children are more able to participate in the practical aspects of life, and so the curriculum revolves around the Old Testament, farming, and house building. A growing interest in social development in fifth grade leads children into a study of ancient civilizations and issues of government. As children reach the seventh and eighth grades, they learn to think more abstractly through the study of algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, and cause and effect in history.

Early Childhood

The early childhood programs are based on the conviction that imitation of what is meaningful and true in life is the most important activity for strengthening and nurturing the young child. The early childhood programs provide a warm, homelike atmosphere and an opportunity for children to learn through imitation and activity. Play is a child's real work and way of learning. Fairy tales and other stories, regular creative activities, sharing of tasks, individual activities, and group play are balanced in the rhythm of the day. The rhythm of the week is carefully planned to provide a routine that the children can rely on – for example, bread baking occurs each Friday and painting each Monday.

Early childhood is the time for the child to live in his or her imagination. The children become engaged in creating houses from cloth, performing puppet shows and plays, and building with wood. It is also the time to develop social skills with playmates and teachers; the children learn to listen, to share, to be helpful, and to respect one another.

Circle time, a time for singing games, verses and poems, nature stories, drama and beautiful seasonal songs, is also a part of the early childhood experience. All circle activities are learned through imitation and through the rhythm of words, music, and movement. We work toward the integration of the whole being of the child, right down to the fingers and toes. Quiet time and a snack give everyone a chance to relax and breathe out before rousing outdoor play. The final part of the morning is a story or puppet play presented by the teacher before the children say good-bye.

Grade School Day

Each class teacher has his/her own way of beginning the day: the morning verse, singing, recitation, and recorder playing. Academic work is concentrated during morning hours when children are most alert and receptive. After the main lesson, the remainder of the day is divided into four periods that are taught by class teachers and specialty teachers.

Main Lesson

Each morning, one of the principle academic subjects – such as English, history, geography, science, or math – is taught by the class teacher for two hours in three- to four-week sessions. The concentration achieved in the main lesson block allows each subject to be pursued in depth and with continuity. Subjects such as English and mathematics, which need frequent practice, are taught both in main lessons and in regularly scheduled skills classes.

Students put great care into creating their own main lesson books rather than using conventional textbooks. Students carefully write and beautifully illustrate a book for each subject. A main lesson book on chemistry, for example, may include quotations from early chemists or philosophers, poetry, and detailed lab reports.

Language Arts

The language arts program includes speech, handwriting, reading, grammar, spelling, composition, creative writing, theater arts, and world literature. These elements are both woven through the entire curriculum and emphasized in specific blocks.

The reciting of rhymes and telling of stories in the early childhood program form the beginning of the language arts program. The children's enthusiasm for drawing leads naturally to writing.

In first grade, the children begin with writing, and out of this activity they learn to read. The poems and stories that they have heard now become a part of the material for writing and reading. By the end of second grade, the children make the transition from reading what they have written and illustrated in their main lesson books to reading

aloud from a text.

Compositions in the early grades are guided by the teacher. This guidance provides the children with the capacity to develop their own creativity in language and writing skills in the upper grades.

Mathematics

Numbers are introduced in first grade. The young children explore the qualitative aspects of numbers, such as oneness, duality, and threefoldness, as well as the quantitative. They learn addition, multiplication, subtraction, and division in many ways, such as by stamping and clapping rhythmically, by walking geometric patterns, by playing number games, by hearing stories, and by drawing.

Progressing through the grades, the children master the basics of arithmetic and then go on to work with fractions, ratios, decimals, and percentages. Algebraic concepts are introduced in seventh and eighth grade.

Geometry is included in the curriculum in a wide variety of ways. In first grade, the children walk straight lines, circles, triangles, rectangles, and pentagons before beginning to draw them. Freehand geometrical drawing becomes more refined in sixth grade through precise geometrical constructions using compass, straightedge, and protractor. Seventh and eighth graders create complex geometrical forms and proofs.

Included in the study of mathematics are the history of number systems and biographies of the world's great mathematicians.

Science

In first grade, nature stories present the natural world in imaginative pictures that foster a love and reverence for the earth and its creatures. The children experience the seasonal rhythms and gifts of the earth within the nurturing setting of Ashwood and its protecting forest. In third grade, the children study farming, housing, and measurement. The fourth grade science curriculum broadens to include the study of the human being and the animal. The fifth grade focuses on botany.

In the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, science studies focus on careful observation. Physics, chemistry, astronomy, mineralogy, meteorology, anatomy, and physiology are taught. Scientific concepts arise from the experience of the phenomena itself: for example, from music, students are led into the world of acoustics; from color and painting, they are led to optics. Heat, electricity, magnetism, mechanics, hydraulics, and meteorology are areas for further practical experimentation. Biographies of the great scientists complete the curriculum.

Specialty Classes

Specialty classes include French, handwork, strings, chorus, movement, woodworking, drawing, painting and sculpting. Many of these subjects are taught by specialty teachers who work closely with the class teacher so that the children experience the curriculum as an integrated whole with one lesson or activity enhancing another.

Foreign Language

The study of foreign language begins in first grade. Children develop a good ear and feeling for language by reciting poems, singing songs, and playing games characteristic of the culture from which the language comes. Reading and writing of foreign language begin in third grade, along with a systematic study of syntax and grammar.

Music

Music is an integral part of the Waldorf curriculum. The choice of music in the main lesson reflects the subject of concentration for the current block or the mood of the season. Music touches and nourishes the soul, enriching the child's inner life. It is especially important in the upper grades, helping to balance the effects of adolescence. Singing begins in the early childhood program and continues through the eight grades. The class teacher introduces wooden pentatonic flutes in the first grade. A pentatonic scale is a simple five-note scale that is easy to sing and has a dreamy, ethereal quality appropriate for young children. In third grade, children move from the pentatonic flute to the soprano recorder.

In fourth grade recorder instruction continues and the violin is also introduced as a whole-class activity with a specialty teacher. In fifth or sixth grade, students join an ensemble of strings and recorder players. Ensemble work continues through the eighth grade.

Families are responsible for the cost of renting or purchasing an instrument as well as the cost of highly recommended private instrument lessons. The cost of flutes and recorders is included in the annual tuition.

Handwork and Forming Arts

Handwork classes are taught through the grades. The children's power of concentration awakens as they learn to knit and crochet and later to sew and embroider. Handwork develops discipline, exercises the will, and builds skill.

The forming arts include clay modeling and woodworking. The children experience the joy of working artistically with form and substance.

Movement

In the younger grades, imaginative play and active non-competitive games form the essential part of the movement program. String games build fine-motor skills. More formal sports begin in the middle grades and may include basketball, volleyball, softball, and cross-country skiing. Children in the fifth grade participate in a Greek pentathlon with fifth grade students from other Waldorf schools in New England and Quebec. This year's curriculum includes learning to throw javelins and discus, sprinting, long jump and wrestling.

Artistic Activity

Artistic activity permeates every aspect of the curriculum. Children have the opportunity to experience a sense of accomplishment when they create something useful and beautiful with their own hands. Drawing with crayons or colored pencils and writing with beautiful penmanship are integral parts of main lesson work. Watercolor painting and modeling with beeswax or clay supplement this work.

Educational Support

We recognize that some children need educational support and assistance beyond what is offered in the classroom. Parents and teachers work together to identify the student's needs and the resources, which may include remedial tutoring and occupational or other therapy that will provide extra assistance and support to the student. Families are responsible for paying and arranging for these services.

Curriculum Through the Grades at Ashwood

Activities recurring throughout the grades: form drawing, French, handwork, music, painting, physical education, recitation, singing.

Grade 1

Fairy and folk tales, nature stories
Introduction to the alphabet and writing
Introduction to reading
Arithmetic: elements of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division
Handwork: knitting
Pentatonic flute

Grade 2

Fables, animal stories, legends of saints
Reading, writing, spelling
Introduction to elements of grammar
Arithmetic: continued work with the four processes, multiplication tables
Handwork: knitting
Pentatonic flute

Grade 3

Old Testament stories
Study of practical life: house building, farming, food, shelter
Reading, writing, grammar, cursive writing
Arithmetic: place value, long multiplication, measurement
Handwork: crocheting
Introduction to string instruments
Soprano recorder with possible introduction to violin

Grade 4

Norse mythology
Reading, grammar, beginning composition
Arithmetic: fractions, long division
Local geography and history
Study of human beings in relation to animals
Handwork: cross-stitch and embroidery
Soprano recorder and introduction to violin

Grade 5

Ancient Civilizations of India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece
Arithmetic: decimals
North American geography
Botany
Grammar, composition, literature
Handwork: knitting with four needles

Strings and recorder ensembles

Grade 6

Roman and medieval history

Composition, grammar, literature

Arithmetic, geometry (ruler and compass constructions)

Business math (ratios, percentages)

Physics, astronomy, mineralogy

South American or European geography

Handwork: stuffed animals or dolls

Strings and recorder ensembles

Grade 7

Renaissance, Reformation, Age of Discovery

Composition, grammar, literature

Arithmetic, algebra, geometry

European, African, or South American geography

Physics, inorganic chemistry, human physiology

Handwork: felting

Strings and recorder ensembles

Grade 8

Revolutions: a historical perspective, modern history

Composition, grammar, literature

Arithmetic, algebra, solid geometry

World geography

Physics, organic chemistry, human anatomy, meteorology

Handwork: machine sewing

Strings and recorder ensembles

Morning Verse for Grades 1 - 4

The Sun with loving light
Brings brightness to my day.
The soul with spirit might
Pours strength into my limbs.
In sunlight shining clear
I reverence, O God,
The strength of humankind
Which Thou so graciously
Has planted in my soul.
That I may love to work
And learn with all my might.
From Thee come light and strength;
To Thee rise love and thanks.

Morning Verse for Grades 5 - 8

I look into the world
In which the sun is shining,
In which the stars are sparkling,
Where stones and stillness lie,
Where living plants are growing,
Where animals live with feeling,
Where humans within their souls
give dwelling to the spirit.

The world creator weaves,
In sunlight and in soul-light,
In world space there without,
In soul depths here within.
To Thee, Creator Spirit,
I turn my heart to ask,
That blessing and pure strength,
For learning and for work
May ever grow within me.

Festivals at Ashwood

Waldorf education is rooted in the Christian tradition but does not seek to teach a particular religious view. Rather, the human spirit in each child finds its universal expression in seasonal festivals celebrated through story and artistic presentation in assemblies and celebrations, and in the classroom.

Students from a wide range of religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are welcomed at Ashwood, and differences are honored. The curriculum itself provides many opportunities to share religious traditions and particular festivals in the classroom. If you are interested in celebrating special holidays within your child's classroom, we encourage you to talk with your child's teacher.

Children love preparing for the festivals by decorating, baking special treats, learning special songs, and more. Nature stories and thematic tales help bring the deeper significance of each season to the children in a pictorial way.

Michaelmas

Michaelmas is celebrated on September 29th. Saint Michael is an archangel mentioned in the Bible, the Apocrypha, and the Koran. He appears as a spiritual figure and protector of humankind, inspiring strength, courage, and will throughout history. The motif of a conqueror of the dragon is echoed in stories of Apollo and the serpent, Krishna and the demons, and Saint George and the dragon.

Michael overcoming the dragon is an image of courage and of keeping at bay our own dragons of fear, greed, thoughtlessness, and apathy. Michael's qualities of courage, compassion, and steadfastness can be an inspiration to us all.

In school the children hear stories about the brave knight who overpowers the dragon with his sword of light. The entire grade school community celebrates Michaelmas with a pageant and an all school hike up Mount Battie.

All Hallows' Eve

All Hallows' Eve is celebrated with pumpkin carving and a special lantern-lit walk through a magical forest pathway filled with wondrous characters. There are stories for children of all ages, cider, and a snack. This activity takes place at dusk at Ashwood Waldorf School and is open to the public.

Martinmas

The Lantern Walk, or Martinmas, is a quiet and simple festival with European roots in the story of Martin of Tours, a fourth-century soldier who sacrificed his own cape to keep a beggar warm. We experience the change of season by lighting lanterns made in class to carry on a silent walk through the dark woods. Martinmas is observed by the Early Child Program and grades 1 and 2, in the early evening during the beginning of November.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a time of giving thanks for nature's blessings and for the freedom that marks our heritage. It is celebrated in different ways in each classroom through stories, songs, and activities. It is often the theme of an assembly.

Garden of Light

The Garden of Light is a simple and beautiful festival celebrated in December in a room or wooded area lit by the glow of just one candle. The candle rests upon a stump placed in the center of a large spiral pathway edged with evergreen boughs, crystals, shells, and golden stars. Music sets a mood of peaceful anticipation. One by one, the students journey to the center of the spiral, light their own unlit candles, and place the lit candles on the golden stars lining the path. When all students have completed the journey, the space is aglow with candlelight. This celebration reminds us that, at this darkest and coldest time of year, our own inner lights serve to bring light and warmth to the world.

Saint Nicholas Day

On December 6th, Saint Nicholas visits Ashwood. True, he is usually unseen, but we know of his visit by the nuts and oranges he leaves behind for the children.

Christmas

Christmas is not only a festival of Christendom; in ancient Egypt and in Asia, thousands of years before the Christian era, we find that a festival was celebrated on the days now dedicated to the celebration of the birth of Christ. Wonderful fire festivals in the northern and central regions of Europe in ancient times were celebrated among the Celts. What were they celebrating? They were celebrating the time when winter draws to its close and spring begins. The days grow shorter and shorter up to the time when we celebrate the Christmas festival and when our forefathers celebrated it in another form. Then the days begin to lengthen again, and the light of the sun celebrates its victory over the darkness.

"In all religions, the Christmas festival has been one of confidence, of trust and of hope, because on this day it was felt that light needs must prevail; out of the seed planted in the Earth something will spring forth which seeks the light and will thrive in the light of the coming year."

— Rudolf Steiner

May Faire

The May Faire is a joyful, colorful celebration of spring. We welcome the arrival of spring with an all-school community gathering that includes singing and dancing around the Maypole.

Parents and Ashwood

Ashwood encourages parent participation in the life of the school. Not only do parents provide most of Ashwood's financial support, they offer time, skills, and creative ideas as well. Volunteer activities, from assisting reading groups to chaperoning field trips, provide a great help to classroom teachers. Parents are nourished in turn by parent evenings, teacher meetings, lectures, and workshops. These offer a rich source of information about the pedagogical and philosophical background of the school.

Rhythm and Home Life

A key element of Waldorf education is rhythm: the rhythms of the day, the week, and the year, including the seasons and festivals. Simple rituals help to mark the rhythm of the school day: the lighting of a candle at story time, a blessing at snack time, a good-bye circle or song. A rhythmic home life harmonizes with the school experience, strengthens the child, and makes life easier for the whole family. Regular times for meals, chores, play, homework, and bed help build a rhythm and lead to healthy child development.

In the words of Caroline von Heydebrand, a kindergarten teacher in the first Waldorf school: "Nothing makes a child so wild and nervous as capriciousness on the part of grown-ups. Children are full of deep trust, and when they can rely on a wholesome ordering of their daily life the basis is provided upon which the moral life as an adult can freely and quietly unfold."

For a number of books that elaborate on this topic, please see the "Reading List" at the end of this handbook.

Class Meetings

The class teacher holds at least four parent evenings a year, an important way for parents to meet one another and to discuss questions about their children's education. Attendance is very important for building the healthy communication needed between parent and teacher for the support of the child in the classroom. The agenda for these meetings includes curriculum presentations, discussions of issues currently facing the children at school and at home, and arrangements for class trips, plays, and other special events in the life of the class.

Responsibility for Children at School Events

Accidents are more likely when adults are not fully conscious of children's actions. Parents must remain aware that they are specifically responsible for their children at all special and after-school events, except when teachers are with the children as a class.

Fundraising

As members of our community, parents, along with Faculty, the Board, and friends of Ashwood, are asked to participate in fundraising activities. Each year a substantial

amount of Ashwood's operating budget is generated through fundraising events.

In addition to special events, the school sends out an Annual Appeal letter each fall. Because tuition traditionally does not cover the cost of education at an independent school, we rely on voluntary gifts to the Annual Appeal to sustain program growth and to ensure the ongoing health of our school. Funds raised by the Annual Appeal pay for the day-to-day necessities of Ashwood life that spark and sustain the joy of learning.

Our fundraising efforts become all the more successful when school community members take the initiative to invite a family member to an event or share the name of someone who may be interested in supporting Ashwood through the Annual Appeal. By broadening our donor base, we enable others to become involved in our school and to witness the wonders of Waldorf education.

The willingness of our school community to support these initiatives is greatly appreciated. Families are encouraged to make financial contributions at a level they feel they can afford. Contributions of time and expertise are highly valued and accepted with gratitude.

Donations to Ashwood Waldorf School are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. Please check with your personal accountant for details.

Parent Community Council (PCC)

Each class has at least one elected representative to the PCC. Every parent or guardian is welcome to serve as an alternate to the class rep or as a community representative to the council. Everyone in the school community is welcome to attend. A notebook in the office contains copies of PCC bylaws and meeting minutes. Please see the "Parent Community Council" description in the School Administration section for a more detailed description.

Parent Participation on Committees

Another type of active involvement at Ashwood is through membership on one of the Board-led committees that serve the school and help maintain its vitality. Committees perform many essential functions in the operation of the school and provide opportunities for interaction with other parents, Board members, and Faculty. Anyone interested in serving on a committee is asked to contact the School Director or the Board President. Specific skills and qualifications may be required in order to join a particular committee, but we will find a good committee fit for all parents interested in participating.

Reading List

Below are suggested titles for adult reading about Waldorf education. Some of these may be borrowed from class teachers or the school library.

Adolescence

Educating the Adolescent: Discipline or Freedom – E. Gabert
The Younger Generation – R. Steiner
All Grown Up and No Place to Go – D. Elkind
Between Form and Freedom – Betty Staley
On the Threshold of Adolescence – Hermann Koepke
Thirteen to Nineteen – J. Sleigh

Early Childhood

The Disappearance of Childhood – N. Postman
The Incarnating Child – J. Salter
Childhood: A Study of the Growing Soul – C. von Heydebrand
Parenting a Path Through Childhood – D. Coplen
Phases of Childhood – B. Lievegoed
The Young Child: Creative Living with Two- to Four-Year Olds – D. Udo de Haes
Brothers & Sisters – K. Koenig
You Are Your Child's First Teacher – Rahima Baldwin Dancy

Early Childhood Education

Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk – D. Elkind
Rudolf Steiner Education & the Developing Child – W. Aeppli
Teacher, Child, & Waldorf Education – W. Aeppli
Kingdom of Childhood – R. Steiner
The Motherly & Fatherly Roles in Education – E. Gabert
Early Childhood Education & the Waldorf Plan – E. Grunelius
The Way of the Child – S. Harwood
The Recovery of Man in Childhood – A. Harwood
The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon – D. Elkind

Fairy Tales

The Wisdom of Fairy Tales – R. Meyer
The Uses of Enchantment – B. Bettelheim
Wisdom in Fairy Tales – U. Grahl

Festivals and Family Life

Festivals with Children – B. Barz
Celebrating the Festivals with Children – F. Lenz
Festivals, Family, & Food – D. Carey and J. Large
The Children's Years – S. Cooper, C. Fynes-Clinton, and M. Rowling
The Christian Year – E. Capel
Lifeways: Working with Family Questions – G. Davy & B. Voors, Eds.

Rudolf Steiner

The Essential Steiner – R. McDermott, Ed.

Encountering the Self – Herman Koepke

Toys and Play

The Doll Book: Soft Dolls & Creative Free Play – K. Neuschutz

The American Boy's Handy Book – D. Beard

The American Girl's Handy Book – D. Beard

Toymaking with Children – B. Muller

Painting with Children – B. Muller

Pentatonic Song for Nursery & Kindergarten – E. Lebret

Journey Through Time in Verse & Rhyme – H. Thomas, Ed.

Children at Play: Preparation for Life – H. Britz-Crecelius

TV

What to Do After You Turn Off the TV – Frances Moore Lappe and Family

Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television – J. Mander

Unplugging the Plug-in-Drug – M. Large

Who's Bringing Them Up? – M. Large

Amusing Ourselves to Death – N. Postman

Waldorf Education

Education as an Art: The Rudolf Steiner Method – H. Barnes and N. Lyons

Creativity in Education: The Waldorf Approach – R. Querido

School as a Journey – T. Finser

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

The Education of the Child – R. Steiner

The Four Temperaments – R. Steiner

Education Towards Freedom – A. Klingborg and F. Carlgren

Teaching as a Lively Art – M. Spock

Waldorf Education: A Family Guide – P. Johnson Fennert and K. Rivers

Sources of Books, Toys, Supplies, and Equipment

To explore or purchase books, toys, art supplies, and anything Waldorf, the following web sites will lead you to many other sites of interest:

www.whywaldorfworks.org

www.anthropress.org

www.waldorfinthehome.org

www.bellalunatoys.com

