Nelson Waldorf School

PARENT HANDBOOK 2026-27

Nelson Waldorf School
3648 Silverking Ski Hill Road Nelson, B.C. V1L 6N2
Phone: (250) 352-6919
www.nelsonwaldorf.org

VISION

Education at Nelson Waldorf School inspires a love for learning and cultivates a lifelong sense of purpose and self-worth in our students, empowering them to positively impact their communities and the world.

MISSION

The mission of the Nelson Waldorf School is to:

- Provide an education that supports each child's natural development through scholastic excellence and a comprehensive and holistic program, awakening a love for the natural world, developing concrete capacities and, on a deeper level, supporting their social, emotional, and spiritual development.
- Enliven and enhance the social cultural life of our school and community.
- Build and maintain authentic relationships with the Nelson and greater Kootenay community.
- Share human and material resources in a wider field of service through affiliation with the regional and international Waldorf Education movement, to further the work started by Rudolf Steiner.

PURPOSE

The purposes of the Nelson Area Waldorf School Association are to:

- Enlarge public understanding and appreciation of the principles and philosophy of education developed and expounded by Dr. Rudolf Steiner.
- Found/assist centers of learning based on said principles and Philosophy.
- Cooperate with other learning institutions regarding the above purposes, particularly with other Waldorf Schools and with the local school Board

Administration Team

Executive Director – David Russell-Loewen
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Principal - Marcelo Porto Goncalves
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Executive Assistant and Registrar – Rinkoo Saji
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Facilities Manager –Carter Fox

Finance Manager – Richard Thomas

School Hours

Child Care Centre Programs (ages 2.5-5)

Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Extended Care from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Kindergarten

Monday to Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Classes 1-9

Monday to Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Friday 8:30 a.m. – 1:10 p.m.

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Nelson Waldorf School

Introduction

Welcome!

The Nelson Waldorf School is pleased to welcome all parents (new and returning) to another school year. This handbook is meant as a reference to answer basic questions and queries about NWS. It also contains up-to-date contact information of our administrative team and what can be expected in the education of your child as they embark on this journey of learning at our school.

The Nelson Waldorf School recognizes the importance of building community with all registered families and prides itself in the inclusion of parents in our day to day classroom activities, meetings, festivals, events, and regular social gatherings. These are important ways we connect and share in our school community experience. We are looking forward to sharing the joys of the yearly festivals and working alongside parents to create an inclusive, diverse and fun-filled experience for all students.

Thank you for your ongoing support and your care in following the school's rules and policies outlined here, as we hold your children in the heart and richness of the very best education we can offer.

NWS Background

The Nelson Waldorf School is part of a growing, worldwide group of schools, known as "Waldorf" or "Steiner" schools that embrace the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925).

Waldorf education, which has been around for more than 100 years, is based on a developmental approach, addressing the needs of the growing child. It views education as an art that educates the whole child – the head, the heart, and the hands.

The Nelson Waldorf School started in 1982 as a kindergarten class in a living room in Nelson. Since these small beginnings, many dedicated hands have helped to build the thriving Nelson Waldorf School of today.

Values and Beliefs

The goal of Waldorf (Steiner) education is to enable young people to go into the world with a sense of their own unique destiny, able freely and confidently to give direction and purpose to their lives.

Learning with Purpose

Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf Education, believed that life is infused with higher purpose and meaning. We honour and respect this core spiritual nature of each individual and of all life and infuse this in our teaching.

Educating the Whole Child

Our aim is to foster a child's lifelong love of learning. We strive to meet the needs of the whole child: the realms of thinking, feeling, and willing or doing — head, heart, hands. We meet these through a balanced curriculum and by challenging students academically, artistically, and physically. The care, effort and thoughtfulness experienced by the child, as well as the concepts and facts learned, bring meaning and value. We follow a pedagogy that meets each child's uniqueness in developmentally appropriate stages.

The Teacher as Mentor and Role Model

Teachers strive to teach with imagination, to make use of creative skills and talents, and to be active learners in the subject areas they teach. Class teachers, in teaching the same class of children for a cycle of time, build a strong relationship with each child. This allows the teacher to recognize the child's full potential, enabling the child to flourish.

Community and Diversity

Our school is a community with the children at the center. We value and welcome diversity in all areas that include: cultural, spiritual, economic, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Everyone is respected for individual gifts and differences. Supportive and respectful relationships are valued amongst adults and are modeled to the children. We see that the children benefit from parents and teachers striving together in support of Waldorf education and learning in a school environment that is respectful, safe, caring and orderly.

Collaboration

We value the opportunity to use collaborative decision-making in the adult realm wherever possible. The faculty, administration and board of directors work together and make decisions using concensus whenever possible. Each person's contribution is valued and considered because we believe consensus decision-making leads to outcomes that are greater than the sum of the contributions.

Curriculum Overview

The Nelson Waldorf School is a an associate member of the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and offers an integrated and developmental Waldorf curriculum that prepares students to successfully meet the challenges of a changing world. NWS is also a Group One Independent School in the province of British Columbia and meets all Ministry of Education requirements and the BC curriculum.

The following is a broad outline of the content of the Main Lesson, grade by grade. **Indigenous Knowledge and Learning Principles** and **Nature/Outdoor education** is integrated into the curriculum throughout the grades, through field trips, stories and guest speakers. Each year classes also put on a **play** related to their curriculum.

Class One

In Class One, fairy and folk tales underpin the experiential and phonetic introduction to letters; form drawing, which lays a foundation for handwriting; reading, approached through writing; qualities of numbers; and the introduction to the four processes in arithmetic.

Class Two

In Class Two, students hear fables, legends and stories of saints and heroes from different cultures as they continue their academic work in writing, reading and the learning of cursive writing. In arithmetic, they learn place value and how to borrow and carry(regrouping).

Class Three

In Class Three, students work with the ancient stories of the Hebrew people. The study of practical life/sustainability includes farming, gardening, shelters/house building, wool spinning and weaving, cooking and baking. In mathematics, skills involving measurement, time, and money are learned, as well as long division and multiplication. Grammar and composition now enter the curriculum and so does recorder playing.

Class Four

Class Four students hear the epic tales of Norse Mythology. Zoology, local geography and map-making as well as local history of First Nations peoples and early settlers are central to this year's themes. Fractions are added to earlier math skills. In handwork, they learn cross-stitch embroidery. The year-end trip for this grade is often to historic Fort Steele, often accompanied by a visit to the Ktunaxa Interpretive Centre.

Class Five

Class Five students study the history and mythology of the ancient cultures of India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece, as well as the geography and history of Canada. In the sciences, students study botany and in math, are introduced to decimals. They learn to knit with four needles, play three-part recorders (alto, tenor, and soprano) and start woodworking classes. They participate in a Waldorf Olympiad with other regional Waldorf schools, often at Camp Squeah in Hope, B.C.

Class Six

After a class trip to Blue Lakes to develop group and leadership skills, Class Six students are ready to embark on a diverse curriculum. In addition to in-depth Physics lessons covering sound, light, heat, static electricity and magnetism, the students study geology, Roman and medieval history, astronomy, geometry, and business math (percentage, interest, ratios and proportions). The year typically ends with a multi-day bike trip.

Class Seven

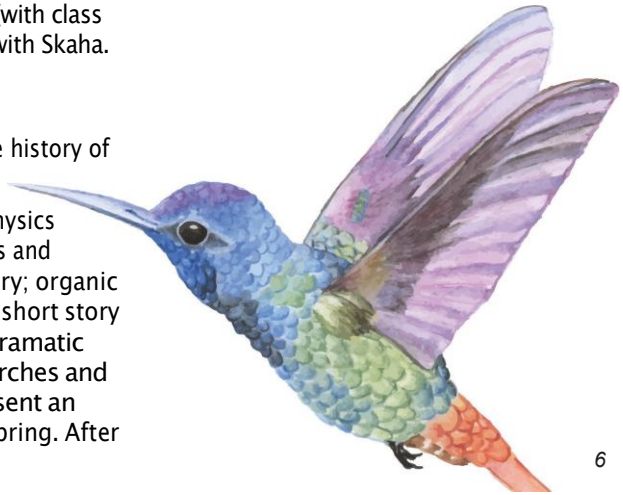
In Class Seven, students begin more specialized math lessons, developing algebra and geometry. The Main Lessons include inorganic chemistry, human physiology (health and nutrition) and physics (mechanics), creative writing, and geography and history of the Renaissance. The gifts and contributions of indigenous peoples – including environmental stewardship – and the cultural/historical legacy of colonialism on indigenous cultures are studied, in depth. The class seven trips include Blue Lakes in the Fall (with class 6) and a Climbing adventure with Skaha.

Class Eight

Class Eight students study the history of revolutions; world geography; anatomy (human skeleton); physics (electricity, steam, pneumatics and hydraulics); algebra; geometry; organic chemistry; meteorology; the short story genre; as well as epic and dramatic Poetry. Each student researches and works with a mentor to present an independent project in the spring. After years of theatrical experiences together, Class Eight puts on a major dramatic production, such as a Shakespearean or other elaborate play. Their class trips include a High Ropes course and a year-end trip with a focus on a strong group experience, either culturally or environmentally.

Class Nine

The Class Nine year has very different structures and expectations. As the first year of high school, students are asked to devote a day per week on collaborative and individual passion projects. These are designed to strengthen and develop interpersonal and personal skills that will serve them in their transition into the public system and in later life. Class nine also has a strong focus on outdoor education, and sustainability. They devote one day a week to this endeavor and learn valuable skills and certifications for surviving and adventuring in the outdoors. Their curriculum includes art history, comedy and tragedy, colonial history and human biology.



Festivals

Seasonal festivals renew our awareness of the rhythms of the year and foster the children's relationship to the world into which they grow. Many festivals are celebrated during the school year. Certain festivals may be observed differently according to the grade and teacher and others are celebrated only in the Kinderhouse or by individual classes associated with the historic and cultural period of their curriculum.

The whole school also gathers for regular assemblies, performances, and class plays that span history and world cultures.

The following events are subject to change from year to year but represent a general picture of the yearly festival life of the school.

Michaelmas

This festival focuses on strengthening our will forces and taking up new initiatives, as we enter the days of the year with less sunlight. The younger classes present a traditional play about St. George taming a dragon that is harassing the villagers. Dwarfs forge a sword of light, made with meteorites sent by Archangel Michael in the courageous quest to offer a deed of light to the villagers. This festival also actively involves the whole community's will forces in a community work party to prepare the school grounds for winter.

Halloween

This festival originates from the Celtic New Year celebration, Samhain, as the season moves into the darker, inner wintertime of the year's cycle. The children enjoy pumpkin carving, sharing their costumes, and the Halloween Journey. With great gratitude to the parent organizers, the Halloween Journey takes place on Halloween night, when the veils between worlds are thinner and one can see into the Magic world. On this journey, small groups of children and parents are guided on an enchanting non-scary passage along a pumpkin-lit path past various scenes and characters. This is a silent journey that holds a mood of reverence to better witness the magic of this autumn night.

Festivals of Light

At the beginning of the Winter Season, the youngest children in the school (Kindergarten to Class Three) walk through an Advent spiral garden, where the children get to experience a mood of quiet and darkness which parallels their experience of nature at mid-winter. In a darkened room, filled with the sweet scent of cedar boughs, they hold their unlit candle and walk towards the large glowing candle at the center. One at a time, they light their candle then turn outwards to find the spot where they wish to place it within the spiral. In so doing, they bring their own light into the darkness, and light the way for the next child. The room gradually fills with light. In cultures all over the world people celebrate festivals of light at the darkest time of the year. This celebration marks the beginning or advent of our Festivals of Light, which include Hanukkah, Christmas, Solstice, Diwali and other light festivals from around the world.

Winter Faire

In the darkest time of the year, when candles and fairy lights remind us of our inner light, the school hosts the Winter Faire. This event is a joyous and warm community celebration involving the wider Nelson community and fundraising for the whole school. This day the school is transformed into a Winter Village with a bakery, candle dipping room, the cookie kingdom, a "Children Only" store, wool works room, cafes, the Silver King Artisan Market, winter crafts, music, and much more.

Carnaval

The school celebrates Winter Carnaval with activities and traditions from Quebec and other French speaking cultures.

Lunar New Year

The school celebrates Lunar New year with activities and traditions from cultures that use the lunar calendar.

Earth Day

Many people walk and bike to school for Earth Month and the community renews and expands active commitments to living Earth Day every day in our lives, at home and at school. Celebrations vary year to year.

Mayfest

Mayfest celebrates the sun's return and the earth's renewal of all its wondrous colours and life. In the grade school the children make flower garlands, present class dances around the Maypole and enjoy strawberry shortcake. The Kinderhouse hosts a celebration for young children with the wider Nelson community engaging in activities such as nature crafts, flower garland making, a puppet show, Maypole dancing, etc.

Daily Rhythm

Rhythm is a fundamental principle of all life. Humans experience the rhythm of the year in the cycle of the seasons, the rhythm of the month in the cycle of the moon, and the rhythm of the day in the passage from darkness to light.

For children to come to school rested and refreshed, teachers encourage parents to maintain a calm, orderly rhythm for going to bed in the evening and rising in the morning.

Teachers also ask that special consideration be given to Sunday evening. The Main Lesson given on Monday mornings lays the foundation for the week's work. It is requested that families plan weekends to allow for some "settling in" time on Sunday and a commitment to no media on this evening.

Daily School Rhythm

Each morning begins with a two-hour Main Lesson taught by the class teacher. The teacher engages the students with a variety of approaches: scientific, literary, historical, artistic and imaginative. Each student creates a record of main lesson work in books that are filled with compositions, observations, maps, diagrams and illustrations. These colorful Main Lesson books are carefully crafted by the students, with attention to detail and artistic presentation. They are a unique element of Waldorf education.

The rest of the days for each class includes a snack and lunch, outdoor recesses, and five daily periods for subject lessons and track classes. Thus, the rhythm of the day creates the necessary breathing to foster learning with the heads, hearts and hands.

Snack and Lunch Time

Children clear their desks, wash their hands and bring their food to their desks. The children say a blessing together before eating, and eat inside, sitting down. Weather permitting, upper grades students can eat outside if they are seated. Children are given extra time to eat as needed.

Recess

All students are expected to be outdoors at recess and are required to have proper outdoor wear appropriate to the season. There are times when indoor spaces are provided with supervision, such as intramural activities in the gym or quiet games rooms.

Closing of the Day

Students tidy their desks and complete classroom chores, say a closing verse and goodbyes. Then then follow their teacher, or walk themselves, to the lower field for pickup. Many students also use the school's afternoon bus service, which runs daily.

Late Pickup

Any student not picked up by 3:25 pm Monday-Thursday or 1:25 pm on Fridays will be brought to the school office to await for their parent/guardian's arrival.

Supervision

Supervision is provided from 8:10 – 8:30, during both recesses, and from 3:10 – 3:25 at the end of the day.

After School Bus Service

Bus Registration

- Bus service is after school only (no morning service)
- Every registered student is automatically registered for the bus, as the bus is used for field trips and possible emergency services.
- Yearly subscription or Passes must be purchased to ride the bus – no cash rides.
- Children can also pick up a pass from the office and parents will be invoiced.

Bus Rules

- Students must always follow the directions of the bus driver.
- Students are not to detract from the safe operation of the bus.
- Students are expected to sit quietly and cannot change seats during the ride.
- Students are not to interfere with another student.
- Rude or vulgar language is not acceptable.
- No food items are to be consumed on the bus.
- Large bulky items are not allowed on the bus including hockey and other large sports equipment.
- Smaller equipment such as skates, and skateboards must be contained in a sturdy closed bag or backpack.
- **Electronic devices/phones must remain in closed bags or backpacks, and used only for emergencies**.

Bus Schedule

Monday to Thursday the bus leaves the school at 3:15 pm.

On Friday, the bus leaves the school at 1:15 pm.

The full schedule and timed bus stop locations can be found on the NWS website.

Code of Compassion

At the Nelson Waldorf School, we regard every human being not only as a citizen of the world but also as a soul and spirit-being living in accordance with inner laws that manifest in the physical world. As educators, our task is to form an orderly school life out of which children can cooperatively unfold their individual gifts, free themselves from hindrances and grow outwardly independent and inwardly strong.
With this as our common view, we recognize that a positive, wholesome learning environment requires the well-intentioned collaboration between faculty/staff, parents and students.

Code of Compassion

The Code of Compassion sets the tone and guides the intention of our interactions with each other at school, and describes the behaviours that we expect from each other. Every year, the teachers and students renew their commitment to our Code of Compassion by working to enliven its principles.

'SCHOOL' Code of Compassion

S	Share fairly
C	Communicate with care
H	Help build trust
O	Offer respect to all
O	Openly welcome everyone
L	Listen with interest

We expect all those who are a part of the NWS community – faculty, staff, students, and parents – to be familiar with the Code of Compassion, and to follow its principles when interacting with the community.

School Rules

Respect for self, others and the learning environment is expected of all students. In addition to the norms of respectful behaviour and language necessary to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of all our school community members, students are expected to demonstrate respectful consideration for all school property.

- Stay on school grounds and abide by the playground rules.
- Bring a healthy snack/lunch.
- Leave at home: candy, chocolate, gum, toys, video games, electronic devices (including Fitbit and smart watches) and music devices. These items can be confiscated.
- Follow the Dress Code (outlined next)
- Wear indoor shoes in the classrooms.
- Bikes, scooters, rollerblades and skateboards are to be walked on school grounds. Riding/skating is not permitted on school grounds at any time (either during or after school hours)
- Keep cell phones/smart watches in backpacks and do not bring them out or look at them during the school day.

NWS Policies

Dress Code Policy

NWS endeavours to keep the following guidelines as simple and logical as possible so that you may find your own "middle path," one that balances your family's values and preferences with those of the school's learning environment. These guidelines adhere to 4 important values:

Safety:

- Proper, closed-toed footwear must be worn at all times on school property;
- Small, studded jewelry is allowed in Middle School grades. Larger jewelry must be removed at the teacher's discretion if it is deemed unsafe;

Functionality:

- Clothing should allow students freedom of movement without concern for clothing falling off or exposing undergarments;
- Hats and other head coverings are allowed, but may be asked to be removed in some classes/activities at the discretion of the teachers.
- Nail extensions are only allowed in grades 7-9, and must allow for full participation in all lessons.

Physical Warmth:

- Students should be dressed properly for the weather conditions each day, and should have a spare set of clothes at school at all times;

Freedom From Pressure:

- Large brand logos, offensive language, drugs and alcohol, advertisements, and depictions of violence are prohibited;
- Subtle makeup and nail polish are permitted in classes 7/8 only;
- Subtle hair highlights are allowed in classes 4-8, full hair dye is permitted in classes 7/8 only.

Teachers may ask that students wear specific clothing for field trips, festivals, recitals or other school events.

Infringements to the Dress Code do not require removal from the classroom or a loss of class time as a disciplinary consequence.

Media Policy

The Nelson Waldorf School is committed to supporting the development and maintenance of media-reduced, age-appropriate environments for children who attend our school.

Underlying this commitment is a firm belief that electronic media affects child development, regardless of the content. Children's need for creative play and their ability to create images from within is suppressed by electronic media content.

Based on this commitment to healthy experience, the Nelson Waldorf School prefers and encourages all children from Kindergarten through Class 5 to be media-free, especially on school nights.

Children in Classes 6 to 9 are encouraged to be appropriately limited during the school week (Sunday evening-Friday afternoon) in their exposure to media including television, video games, phones and internet (i.e., videos, social media, games, movies, etc.)

Furthermore, in accordance with BC Policy, students will not be allowed to use cell phone or other personal digital devices during school hours, unless special permission is granted. Families wishing for their child to bring their phone or smart watches to school for after-school use, must complete the school's Cell Phone/Smart Watch Permission form and abide by the policy. Phones at school must stay off during school hours and may only be used next to the designated pick-up supervisor at the end of the day.

The Nelson Waldorf School recognizes that the challenges presented in the course of achieving these goals may be substantial and that they may vary significantly from family to family. With this in mind, NWS is prepared to work with parents and guardians to develop practical, collaborative solutions.

Photo and Video Policy

Whether at a school play, festival, or other school event where parents are included, parents are asked to turn off and put away personal devices and enjoy the live performance. Please adhere to the following guidelines regarding photography and videography:

- Indoor ceremonies, performances and festivals will be recorded by a designated school photographer. Content will be available to parents, as appropriate.
- At class plays, photography may be allowed only during dress rehearsals by a designated photographer. Official photos will be available for parents by email.

Social Media Policy

The Nelson Waldorf School participates in social media on Facebook and Instagram. Each year, parents will be asked to complete a media permission form to allow NWS to post photos of their child on social media.

General Playground Expectations & Rules

- follow the Winter Recess Safety Rules
- Observe the boundaries of supervised play areas at all times
- Follow the Code of Compassion
- Follow the direction of the supervisors
- All students go outside at recess unless supervised elsewhere by a teacher
- Walk, don't run, on stairs
- Stay inside the stair railings
- No sliding on railings
- Use sticks as tools, not weapons
- No throwing, hitting, threatening or running with sticks, rocks or playground material
- No pushing, hitting, shoving, tripping or wrestling
- No foul language
- No food on playgrounds, in hallways or outdoor walkways

Social Inclusion

NWS teachers work with their students daily to create respectful relationships. In support of deepening existing practices, our school has worked with the Social Inclusion Approach brought to us in 2008 by Kim John Payne, educator and consultant, who is respected worldwide for his work in justice without blame, building self-esteem and helping children deal with conflict and social issues.

We understand that conflict is a normal part of life and offers opportunities to learn about each other and ourselves. Conflict is one catalyst by which we grow as social beings, and how we handle conflict affects our relationships and our sense of trust and safety within our school.

The Nelson Waldorf School is committed to healthy social relationships between students, teachers and all members of the school community. All incidents of harmful behaviour – including bullying, teasing and gossiping – will be dealt with immediately using the Social Inclusion Approach. Serious or Severe incidents will also trigger the Discipline Policy and Protocol.

Social Inclusion Process

When an interaction of bullying or teasing behaviour between students, or between an adult and a student is observed/discovered, the class teacher(s) of the student(s) involved should be notified immediately. The Student Support teacher or Principal can also be approached. Teachers will meet with the students named right away to discover what is going on. Often other students will be met with to gain a broader understanding of the incident(s).

Students will be given opportunities to problem-solve and reconcile, with the focus on the well-being of each individual. Follow-up meetings may occur to ascertain the solutions have worked.

Bullying Behaviour is Persistent, Prolonged and Deliberate and Includes:

- Excluding others, intentionally ignoring or leaving someone out;
- Physical aggression such as pushing, poking, tripping, spitting, hitting and throwing things at another;
- Verbal aggression such as put downs, name calling, teasing, threatening, insulting, swearing, gossiping, spreading rumours and lying;
- Emotional aggression using tone of voice, eye-rolling, avoiding;
- Damaging, disrespecting or stealing property;
- Ganging up;
- Intolerance of differences of race, creed, nationality, abilities, sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Making someone else do any of the above actions;
- Doing any of the above actions by text or online (cyberbullying).

Bullying behaviour is often done with intention to harm. A feature of bullying behaviour is that there is often a power difference, either perceived or real between the two parties.

Communications

How we communicate with each other is of critical importance for our success as a community and school. Holding respect and curiosity when speaking with one another is essential, especially in difficult situations. At no time is aggressive or disrespectful language acceptable by any party in any communication and/or meeting at the school. The following guidelines are in place to help support healthy communication in all realms. The Principal and/or Executive Director are responsible to supports all community members adhere to this policy.

Communication with your Child's Teacher

Waldorf parents and teachers share a special partnership in the nurturing and development of the children in their care. Regular communication and meetings, as-needed, with the teacher, help strengthen this partnership. Teachers encourage parents to share their insights, questions and goals regarding their child's development. Please email your child's teacher to request a meeting or leave a message at the office.

Teachers will share with their parents their office hours, during which, short in-person meetings (pre- arranged) or phone calls can be arranged. For longer conversations and items of a sensitive nature please request more time from the teacher.

Conversations with Teachers at School

Arrival and departure times are not adequate times to have a conversation with a teacher, other than inclusive conversations that are appropriate for the ears of all parents and students. Please arrange a meeting time with the

Emails and Texts

Teachers do not use email or texts for discussion about your child. This is an agreement made by all faculty and staff. We ask parents to also use email this way. Real communication occurs when we are in a dialogue together.

Teachers use email only to arrange individual meetings, class meetings, distribute class newsletters and scheduling, class information and sign-up lists. If you need to cancel a meeting at the last minute, please call the office.

Class email lists are used exclusively for school and class-related communication and business and are not for private conversations, addressing behaviour corcerns or resolving disputes.

Meeting as Adults

If the parent(s) and the teacher are meeting as adults to discuss adult matters, please leave younger siblings at home. These conversations are not suitable for young ears. Infants are always welcome, at your discretion.

Parent/Teacher & Student-Led Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are conducted once per year for classes 1-5 to exchange information about the progress of each child and to set mutually agreed upon goals. These conferences are held to discuss the development and well-being of each child. They are an essential part of the school's assessment and reporting. Classes 6-9 have two Student-Led Conferences per year. These conferences provide the opportunity for the students to show their learning and work to their parents and share their goals for the following months.

Communication in Relation to Education

Social health and a positive, creative living and learning environment are the guiding motives for our school policies and rules. A healthy social life is dependent on the cultivation of social responsibility based on individual insight, and sound observation and listening skills.

Teachers to Parents Communication

Teachers will hold Parent Meetings at least once each term. These meetings have a clear agenda, circulated in advance, and may report on curriculum, class dynamics, events, field trips etc. *These meetings are not the appropriate forum for resolving individual concerns.*

Class newsletters are sent monthly to parents throughout the year. They provide families with updates on class activities, and when appropriate, reenforcing pedagogical rationale.

Beyond the conferences, individual parent-teacher meetings are scheduled when needed to support specific situation. Each teacher provides class parents with communication guidelines on how to best arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

Question/Concern or Complaint?

Questions/Concerns are those enquiries for which one seeks clarification, support or further information.

Complaints relate to matters about which one wishes to register dissatisfaction or a higher level of grievance. Complaints must be written down and signed. The School takes complaints seriously and is committed to comprehensive follow-up.

Procedure

1. Go directly to the child's teacher
2. If unsatisfactory, go to the Principal
3. If you are not satisfied, please contact the Executive Director
4. If you are still unsatisfied, please contact our Ombudsperson

Attendance

Children must be ready at 8:30 am for morning greetings. Classes 1–3 gather with their teacher on the lower field between 8:25 and 8:30 am. Classes 4–9 enter at the classroom door between 8:25 and 8:30 am, and are ready for instruction at 8:30 am.

Consistent late attendance compromises the ability of the school to deliver your child's education. If a child is arriving consistently late, the teacher or the Principal will arrange a meeting or phone conversation to discuss ways to help the student arrive on time.

Drop-off and Pick-up

All parents are asked to use the lower parking lot for normal drop-off and pick-up. The upper parking area is for **staff only** and, as a fire lane, cannot be blocked by non-staff vehicles. Furthermore, traffic in the staff parking needs to be limited to a minimum since students cross this area with frequency.

Late Arrival Procedures

Students arriving late or leaving early must arrive and depart from the school via the main office. All late arrivals and early departures must be notified by our office staff.

For younger children (grades K–3), Parents must come to the School Office to sign them in. Older students (Grades 4–9) can sign themselves in when late.

These procedures ensure that any child marked absent on the morning attendance, who arrives late, is accounted for. This is very important in the event of a fire drill, actual fire or other danger.

Please endeavour to make sure your child is not late. Chronic late arrivals will be followed up first by your class teacher, and then by the Principal or an administration member.

Early Departure or Child Leaving Sick

All parents picking their child up early must drive up to the lower parking lot and come up the main stairway to the Front Office. Your child will be waiting for pick-up in the First Aid Room (next to the front office).

Please ensure that the office staff is aware of your presence and your child's departure.

Children are not permitted to wait unsupervised or be picked up at the lower parking lot during the school day; they must be checked out and picked up at the School Office. The school is liable for situations that may arise such as a bear or cougar danger, unknown falls, etc.

If a child who was in attendance in the morning does not report to class after lunch/recess and no sign-out slip has been completed at the School Office, our search procedure will be implemented to locate the *missing* child. Please recognize the magnitude of inconvenience this procedure would cause the school if it was done unnecessarily.

Absences

All our absence procedures are regulated by the Ministry of Education requirements of being a Group One Independent School.

Daily absences – are to be reported to the School Office. The office is where attendance is recorded.

- Parents must call or email the NWS Office prior to 8:30 am ***each day*** of your child's absence.
- Messages can also be left the night before if you anticipate your child will not be attending school the following day.
- All absences are to be reported by the parent directly to the School Office. It is not enough to inform the teacher, though it is advisable that you copy any absence information to the class teacher as well.
- If your child is marked absent and a phone call has not been received by the Office, the secretary is legally required to phone or email and attempt to confirm your child's absence.

Short-term absences – up to five (5) school days

- Planned absences of up to a full school week (5 days) must be discussed with the teacher.
- Parents must also send an email to the school office info@nelsonwaldorf.org stating your child's absence dates/time frame and reason for absence.
- In the case of illness, parents are to email the school with a statement and timeframe of absence due to sickness after their child returns.

Long-term or extended absences – more than five (5) school days.

- If the absence will be beyond 5 school days, an arrangement with the teacher and Principal/Executive Director *must* be made to ensure your child's education is being held and continued in their absence.
- Please arrange a meeting with your child's teacher and the Principal to discuss any planned absences of length, well in advance of the departure date.
- Parents must follow this by sending an email to the School Office at info@nelsonwaldorf.org stating the details of your child/ren's absence dates/time frame, reason for absence and what education arrangements have been made with the teacher.

Healthy School

The Nelson Waldorf School teachers and staff work diligently to keep themselves and the students healthy. Families too have a large role to play in the community's health. You can find the Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan and other health guidelines on our website. We will let parents know of changes by sending out all-school announcements and posting the updates on our website.

Please familiarize yourself with the guidelines and help support the health of our students and staff.

First Aid – Emergencies

All returning and new parents/guardians are required to complete the medical information form each year, including the names of two emergency contacts for their child. These contacts will be notified if a child is sick and the parents/guardians cannot be reached. Homeopathic remedies may be used if parent/guardian permission has been documented. Our staff is trained to deal with first-aid emergencies, however, should your child require medical assistance, she/he will be taken to the hospital by ambulance.

Head Lice Protocol

The Nelson Waldorf School follows the lice management practices and guidelines of Interior Health.

The collective goal of the NWS community is for nit-free classrooms. The best way to eliminate the cycle of re-occurrence is for every family to help and support this goal.

Parents are requested to report any lice occurrence to their child's teacher so the parent body can be alerted. Parents are requested to follow the guidelines of treatment on the Interior Health website.

Parent Council

The NWS Parent Council (PC) is a community building organization serving as a vehicle for full parental involvement in the life of the school community. The Parent Council actively supports the work of the Board and faculty on behalf of our children, and contributes to the intellectual, physical and social climate of the school community.

To this end the purpose of the Council is:

- To promote the education and wellbeing of NWS students
- To encourage parent involvement in the school
- To invigorate and organize volunteer efforts by parents in such a way that nourishes, respects and protects the volunteers
- To contribute to a sense of community within the school and between the school, home, and larger community, by organizing and supporting activities for students and parents
- To provide educational opportunities for parents that deepen their understanding and appreciation of Waldorf education.
- To facilitate practical improvements in the school grounds and activities, by contributing funds and labour
- To provide a forum for parents to communicate and discuss issues
- To serve as an advisory group to the Board and faculty, reflecting to them the ideas and concerns of the parent body
- To provide financial support for the goals of the Council, as determined by the membership. The Parent Council determines where to allocate funds it has collected through fundraising activities in support of the school and its community. Special project funds may be expended in conjunction with the Board and faculty.

Each year, the specific endeavors of the organization are identified and generated by parents.

Structure and Membership

All parents of children enrolled at NWS are General Members of the PC. General Members can be involved with the NWSPC in a variety of ways, including:

- attending meetings;
- taking on active roles in activities and projects;
- bringing suggestions and concerns to the exective group;
- proposing fundraising opportunities or other ideas.

Participation

Fundraising

Families are encouraged to participate in fundraising events throughout the year, including:

- Attend seasonal school-wide or community-wide events such as the Winter Faire, Halloween Journey
- Support the grocery card fundraiser
- Support other school and class fundraisers (e.g, turkeys, bulbs and flowers, dried fruit and nuts, bottle drives, coffee houses, silent auctions, bake sales, large plays and concerts etc.)
- Consider contributing to the annual NWS Giving Campaign and/or making a tax-deductible charitable donation to the NWS at any time
- Think creatively about other non-monetary ways to contribute to the financial health and growth of the school through contributions of time, particular skills or donations (e.g., donations to silent auctions or giving materials, food or particular items needed in the school and at school events)
- Be an ambassador for NWS in your community and social circles and encourage new families to consider a Waldorf education
- Complete financial agreements and pay tuition and supply fees in a timely manner

Community Building through Participation

We hope that parents will individually explore how they are inspired to offer their time, skills, gifts, thoughts, food, creativity, organization, etc throughout the year and throughout different stages of their child's journey in the school. Each contribution is unique, valued, and enhances the whole; many hands make light work.

Class Volunteer Opportunities

- Class representative
- Classroom set up and beautification
- Volunteering in the classroom
- Class plays and costume making
- Class field trips chaperones/drivers
- Ski day chaperones/drivers
- Potlucks
- Supporting practical arts in the classroom (e.g., weaving, blacksmithing, archery, leather work)
- Class curriculum events

Seasonal Celebrations Volunteer Opportunities

- Halloween Journey
- Winter Faire
- Kinderhouse Mayfest