

PARENT HANDBOOK 2026 - 2027



South Shore
**Waldorf
School**

Education of the Head, Heart, and Hands

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We are delighted to the 2026/27 school year, and to our vibrant school community!

What follows will acquaint you with the day-to-day life of the school and introduce you to some of the ideals of our school community. If you have any questions or concerns about what you read here, please do not hesitate to contact your class teacher or the administration.

For a more in-depth view of the school see [SSWS Governance, Policies and Procedures](#).

1. Our School

SSWS Vision

We are a diverse and growing community that acts as a beacon for Waldorf education in Atlantic Canada, inspiring us to live with integrity, creativity, and in rhythm with the Earth.

SSWS Mission

We nurture each being through wholistic education, cultivating strength of will, thoughtful inquiry, and the joy of intentional effort. We foster each child's sense of wonder and reverence, support their love of learning, and empower them to thrive as compassionate citizens within the school community and beyond.

The South Shore Waldorf School and Kindergarten Association

Since 1997 the South Shore Waldorf School Association has been registered with Nova Scotia Joint Stocks as a not-for-profit Charitable Organization. The Association includes all those who have children currently enrolled in the school, the faculty of the school, and all friends who have expressed the desire to support the school.

The Association holds an Annual General Meeting each autumn. At this meeting, the Board of the school for the coming year is elected. It is composed of up to ten members from parents, interested community members, and includes two faculty members.

Board of Directors

The Board carries the long-term goals of the school at heart and is responsible for the legal and financial relationship within the broader community, the municipality, and the province. It acts as an overseer of school activities by including in each monthly meeting reports from Faculty, Administration, Parent Council, the Finance Committee, and any other active Committees.

Board meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month at 6:00pm and are open to parents, faculty, and friends (dates are listed on the school calendar).

Faculty

As a faculty-led school the Faculty oversees and directs not only pedagogical aspects of the school, but is also involved in administrative, organizational, developmental, and governance decisions. Faculty oversees

the school's curriculum development, pedagogical policy, program administration, faculty hiring and dismissal, professional development, and student admissions.

Every decision carried out by the Faculty is guided by their mission statement: *As teachers, we personally guide our students' interest in and knowledge of the world. Entrusted with this task, we freely commit in gratitude.*

Administration

The Administration is responsible for the necessary day-to-day business activities of the organization. It carries out the decisions and standing policies of the Board and Faculty and strives to serve the needs of the faculty, parents, and students. Its main functions include: reception, communication, enrollment, student records, marketing, finance, and facilities management.

Class Links and Parent Council

Class Links are parents who volunteer to help the class teacher communicate with parents and to bring parents' questions and concerns to their class teacher. It is best to have two Links per class.

Possible tasks may include telephoning parents on behalf of the teacher, helping to arrange field trips, and doing simple administrative tasks. But they also foster a sense of community among the parents of each class and can help identify and resolve issues and concerns raised by the teacher or by parents.

Ideally they represent their class on the Parent Council.

The Parent Council consists of parents who commit to serving as parent leaders for a specified period of time, usually one academic year. The purpose of the Parent Council is to:

- Promote the community of the school and facilitate a vibrant and positive parent/school relationship
- Support and educate parents
- Support the organization of fundraising events, festivals, and social events
- Offer input and advice to the school from parents' perspectives

AWSNA/WECAN

SSWS is an Associate Member of [The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America \(AWSNA\)](#) and a Full Member of [The Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America \(WECAN\)](#).

Last year we completed our AWSNA self-study in our continued drive to full membership. The year before, we completed our WE CAN self-study and passed with flying colours.

AWSNA's vision is to strengthen and nurture Waldorf education and to advance Waldorf principles worldwide. Their mission is to support the healthy self-development and thriving future of independent Waldorf schools and institutes in North America.

WE CAN's mission is to foster a new cultural impulse for the work with the young child from pre-birth to age seven. Based on an anthroposophical understanding of human development, WE CAN is committed to protecting and nurturing childhood as a foundation for renewing human culture.

2. School Programs

Waldorf education fosters high academic standards with an emphasis on how to think, not what to think. Our students are learning how to analyze problems, face challenges, and take initiative to turn their thoughts into meaningful actions.

The Waldorf curriculum facilitates the well-rounded development of children by engaging them in a wide variety of subjects using an interdisciplinary approach that complements their natural abilities and their age.

Kindergarten

Our Kindergarten provides a warm and loving home-like environment, organizing the school day within rhythmic active and restful cycles around free play, forest walks, storytelling, painting, drawing, crafts, and practical activities such as lunch preparation, baking, and setting up and cleaning up. It is open to full-time and part-time students. Students must be 4 years old by December 31 of their first year of Kindergarten, and will normally spend 3 years in the program if they start at age 3 or 4. For a more detailed description of the Kindergarten routine see Appendix A below. This year we are testing out a soft launch of a Pre-K program, with a small cohort of kids in the Kindergarten Program.

The Elementary School Program

Consisting of Grades 1 through 5, the elementary school program is anchored by a two-hour Morning Lesson that begins each school day. This Morning Lesson focuses on a particular subject (such as language arts, math, history, geography, or ecology) for a prolonged period of time lasting two to several weeks. The remainder of the day consists of forty-minute subject lessons, including French, art, music, movement, and handwork.

The class teacher teaches the Morning Lesson and several other periods in their students' day, while specialist teachers teach the various subject lessons.

Middle School Program

Consisting of Grades 6 through 9, the middle school program follows a similar structure to the elementary, with a two-hour Morning Lesson which focuses on a particular subject (such as language arts, math, history, geography, chemistry, physics, biology) followed by forty-minute subject lessons, including French, art, music, movement, and handwork.

Educational Support

The South Shore Waldorf School strives to provide excellent Waldorf education to all children entrusted to our care. However, we recognize that sometimes children have academic, social, or physical challenges beyond the scope of the classroom setting. We are dedicated to working with families to help them find the extra educational support their child needs in order to thrive.

We are currently pioneering a resource program at the school, and this year we are offering Clayfield as an art therapy modality. We also have dedicated time for one-on-one and small group tutoring set aside on Fridays.

Aftercare Program

The Aftercare Program provides care from 3pm to 5:30 pm on school days. The Aftercare Program offers an “outbreath” for children at the end of the day, facilitating craft projects, homework time, and indoor and outdoor play. Please pack an after school snack for your child(ren). Aftercare is billed monthly and requires advance registration. Last-minute aftercare attendance is acceptable if you contact admin as needed, provided there is room in the program that day. If children are not picked up at 3pm, they will be brought over to the aftercare building. Your family will not be charged if the child is picked up before 3:15, nor will they be charged if you sign up for aftercare but your child does not attend.

This year we are offering a 5% discount to those parents who can inform admin in September of what dates they will need for the whole year.

Through our Aftercare Program, we also offer daycare on PD days and parent-teacher interview days. Pre-registration is required.

There is no childcare for storm days. If school is canceled half-way through the day, a member of staff will be available to stay until children are picked up.

3. School Routines

School Hours

8:30am to 3:00pm Monday to Friday

The School Day

Grade-school students should enter their classrooms at 8:30am and are welcome to arrive at the school at 8:15am. Grade-school children may be dropped off at the door, but parents need to ensure that each child has entered the building.

Morning lesson begins at 8:30am. Snack and recess follow Morning Lesson from 10:30am-11:00am. The remainder of the school day consists of subject lessons. They include French, handwork, woodwork, music, art, physical education, and other lessons geared to the age and progress of the children. Recess and Lunch break are 12:30pm-1:20pm. The class teacher will provide parents with a copy of the weekly schedule.

Lunch and Snack

Please remember that we are a peanut-free school. Each grade-school child will require a nutritious lunch and one or two snacks, according to individual need. It is strongly suggested that children bring healthy food for lunch and snacks, and that containers are reusable. Please do not pack gum, candy, soft drinks, juice boxes, or items containing food colouring. For more detailed information on our food policy please speak to your child's teacher. If a student in your child's class has a serious allergy, the class teacher will inform you.

Grade School Curriculum

Daily Rhythm

In the Waldorf grades, the school day begins with a long, uninterrupted lesson called the Morning Lesson. One subject is the focus; the class deals with it in depth each morning for several weeks at a time. This long lesson—which may well run for two hours—allows the teacher to develop a wide variety of activities around the subject at hand. In the younger grades, lively rhythmic activities get the circulation going and bring children together as a group; they recite poems connected with the subject of the Morning Lesson, practice tongue-twisters to limber up speech, or work with concentration exercises using body movements.

After the morning's lesson, which includes a review of earlier learning, students record what they learned in their Main Lesson book. After Main Lesson comes snack and morning recess, followed by a shorter "run-through" lesson focused on skills practice in numeracy and literacy. Foreign languages are customarily taught from first grade on, and these lend themselves well to later morning periods. Afternoons are devoted to lessons in which the whole child is active: for example, handwork, music, or movement. Thus the day has a rhythm that helps overcome fatigue and enhances balanced learning.

The curriculum at a Waldorf school can be seen as an ascending spiral. As students mature, they are engaged by each subject at a new level. Through the Main Lesson, teachers lay the groundwork for a gradual vertical integration that deepens and widens each subject's experience and, at the same time, keeps it moving with other aspects of knowledge.

All students participate in all basic subjects regardless of their special aptitudes. The purpose of studying a subject is not to make a student into a professional mathematician, historian, or biologist, but to awaken and educate capacities that every human being needs.

Naturally, one student is more gifted in math and another in science or history, but the mathematician needs the humanities, and the historian needs math and science. The choice of a vocation is left to the free decision of the adult, but early education should give each student a palette of experience from which to choose the particular colours that their interests, capacities, and life circumstances allow.

If the ascending spiral of the curriculum offers a "vertical integration" from year to year, an equally important "horizontal integration" enables students to engage the full range of their faculties at every stage of development. The arts and practical skills play an essential part in the educational process throughout the grades. They are not considered luxuries, but fundamental to all practical, emotional, and intellectual growth and development.

Curriculum Overview

Below is a brief outline of what you can expect to be covered each year. At the start of each year, class teachers will provide families with an outline of the planned lesson block rotation. For further information, or details on the curriculum, please speak with your child's class teacher.

Grade One

- Pictorial, experimental, and phonetic introduction to letters.
- The qualities of numbers and introduction to division, multiplication, addition and subtraction.
- Mental arithmetic through experience
- Form drawing as preparation for writing and later geometry
- Speech, drama and recall
- Fairy and folk tales and nature stories
- Making needles and beginning to knit

Grade Two

- Nature legends and animal fables
- Folk heroes, saints, and trickster tales
- Place value and arithmetic with larger numbers
- Reading, writing, and elements of grammar
- Purling, shaping and gauge in knitting, basic crochet

Grade Three

- Cultural stories of separation, boundaries, and earthly survival to introduce history.
- Study of practical life: farming, housing, clothing
- Reading, spelling, original compositions
- Grammar, punctuation, and parts of speech
- Cursive writing
- Arithmetic: higher multiplication tables, weight, measure, and money
- Crochet, knitting, and sewing
- Pocket knives introduced and given to children who are ready

Grade Four

- Global stories of strong character, individuality, and consequences.
- Tenses and grammar
- Composition, letter writing
- Local history, geography, and map-making
- Study of the animal kingdom
- Comparative Zoology
- Arithmetic, fractions and long division
- Cross stitch, embroidery, and sewing

Grade Five

- Greek and Egyptian myths
- Ancient civilizations through Greek times
- North American geography
- Composition with reports and self-expressed opinion
- Grammar, spelling, reading
- Arithmetic: decimals, ratio and proportion
- Botany
- Four-needle knitting

Grade Six

- Roman and medieval history
- World geography
- Mineralogy
- Physics (acoustic, magnetism, optics and heat)
- Composition, grammar, spelling, biographies
- Arithmetic: interest, percentage, geometric drawing with instruments
- Astronomy
- Embroidery of slippers, stuffed animals, puppets, dolls and clothes for dolls

Grade Seven

- Speech and drama-romantic poetry and lyrical ballads
- Creative Writing – Wish Wonder Surprise
- Medieval and Renaissance themes
- Physics (mechanics)
- Combustion, physiology, nutrition
- Arithmetic: (negative integers, deriving Pi, geometry, business math)
- European history and geography (Age of Exploration and Discovery)
- Dollmaking, felting, woodworking
- Perspective drawing, veil painting, black and white shadow studies
- Singing and Orchestra
- Sports

Grade Eight

- Speech and drama: medieval works
- Creative writing: short stories and poetry
- Literature: study of genres
- English grammar: master the parts of speech and use them in appropriate ways.
- Algebra: fractions and decimal numbers; calculate advantages of simple machines and physics such as pulleys or levers
- Geometry: Euclidean geometry; calculate area of irregular geometric figures
- History: study connections between the American, French, and Russian Revolutions, observing similarities and differences, and exploring the lasting impacts of these events on today's societies

- Cyber civics and digital literacy
- Craft: machine sewing, knitting, woodworking, sewing by hand, dyeing
- Physiology: continue their study of senses and body systems and will begin to talk about the neurological aspect of sensory experience
- Organic Chemistry: explore organic chemistry through plants and food; prepare fermented foods
- Biology: photosynthesis and cellular respiration
- Physics: optics, mechanics, sound

4. School Life

Attendance

The Waldorf classroom is organized around a daily, weekly, and seasonal rhythm, and emphasizes the social development of your child. For this reason and in order for your child to fully benefit from the whole experience of the school, it is extremely important for your child to attend school regularly. Once your child is enrolled, the school has the responsibility to ensure that your child is attending school. In light of this, we have developed the following attendance policy:

1) Unexplained absences requiring a phone call from the school may require a meeting with the teacher.

2) Repeated, unexplained absences may result in dismissal.

3) Planned absences for non-medical reasons (e.g. vacations) need to be discussed with the child's teacher in advance. Unless special arrangements have been made with your child's teacher, your child's enrolment in the school will have to be reviewed if they miss more than 20 school days for non-medical reasons.

Absence, Late Arrival, and Early Departure

If your child is unable to attend school on any school day for any reason, please inform the school by 8:15am. You may leave a voice message at 902-624-0874 or email the Office at admin@waldorfns.org.

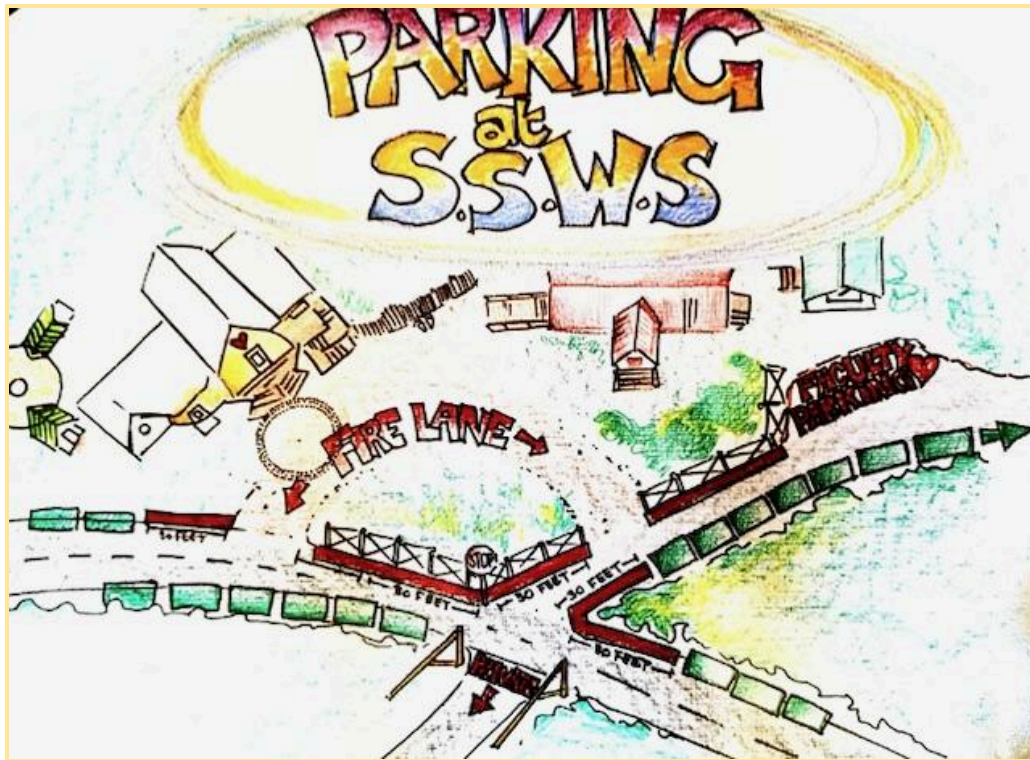
Should your child need to leave early in the school day, please ensure that the class teacher knows so the child will be ready. If a child will be arriving late, please contact the administration. All children should be picked up promptly at 3:00 pm. After 3:15 pm, children who have not been picked up will go into the Aftercare Program. Billing for aftercare will come from the administration following booking. Please notify your class teacher, the office, or the Aftercare Coordinator if someone other than your child's parents or legal guardian will be picking up your child.

A word about attendance and tardiness: bringing your child to school on time every day is very important and it is the best way to ensure your child's success. Students who arrive late or miss school days often feel that they have missed out on something and it can be difficult for them to find their way back into the group.

Transportation and Parking

There is no formal transportation system in place for the school. Parents are responsible for getting their child(ren) to and from school. Some families carpool. Please ensure you are adequately covered by your insurance if you participate in such an arrangement.

NOTE: There is NO PARKING in front of the fence at the front of the school. This is a fire lane. Please park safely along the far side of the road and kindly refrain from using or blocking the faculty and staff parking lot.



Media Policy

1) Rules

Please do not allow your child to bring electronic devices to school. This includes tablets, smart devices, cellphones, and cameras. Any phone or device arriving with students must be left at the office for the day. Students may not leave the campus to use phones or other tech.

It is requested that children not bring toys in general from home. We ask for your understanding and cooperation as we work toward creating an environment that fosters non-commercial, co-operative, imaginative play.

2) Rationale

The South Shore Waldorf School is dedicated to nurturing each child's capacity for creative imagination, independent thinking, and positive action. The school's efforts to foster students' healthy emotional development and meaningful relationships with their environment are often

undermined by their encounters with electronic media, which separate children from authentic experience. We are fostering an environment that develops imagination and physical awareness.

3) Exceptions

Students learn best to use electronic media as a resource and tool when these media are introduced after children have developed a rich experiential foundation. Media thus becomes a supplement to, not a substitute for, the richness of direct experience. Exceptions are when tech becomes a student support in the classroom.

For the rationale behind our Media Policy, please see Appendix B.

Use of School Phone

It is important that the school phone is available for incoming calls. Parents may use the phone for short, local calls. Children should only use the school phone for an emergency and with a teacher's permission.

The school's phone number is 902-624-0874.

Dress Code

Footwear and shirts must be worn at all times on school premises. The children spend time outdoors every day, so please dress them appropriately. Children should come with waterproof rain-gear and boots in autumn and spring, and snow boots, coats, hats, scarves, and mittens in winter.

Umbrellas are not permitted for safety reasons.

Children should have their core organs covered at all times. We recommend children wear wool or wool/silk base layers in colder weather.

All students should keep a bag with an extra set of clothes (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) hanging on their assigned hook. Please ensure that children have sturdy shoes for running and outdoor games. All children will need a pair of non-slip, non-marking shoes for exclusive indoor use. All items are to be marked with your child's name.

As we work to create a positive environment for both teaching and learning, we request your help in choosing appropriate and comfortable clothing. The following guidelines are provided to assist parents in ensuring that their children are appropriately dressed:

- Please ensure all clothing is free of logos, recognizable characters, and words. If you are uncertain if an image is of a "recognizable character," please discuss this with your class teacher.
- Children require a pair of flat soled indoor shoes (not slippers).
- Please ensure all clothing is mended and in good repair.
- Clothing should not interfere with daily activities. This may include overly flowing or long garments as well as bare legs.
- Any jewelry worn must not interfere with movement activities or be a distraction in class.

Pocket Knives

Pocket knives are introduced in grade three, at which time safe handling and proper use are taught. Children are allowed to bring their own pocket knives to school when they have demonstrated to their class

teacher that they understand how to handle one safely and have the maturity to work with one unsupervised during recess. Parents must agree and sign a permission form.

Professional Development (PD) Days

Throughout the year, faculty and admin will partake in PD Days for the purposes of.....There will be no school on PD Days, though there will be full-day childcare offered at a rate \$50/day. This year, in order to reduce the burden on parents, we have reduced the number of PD Days to 4, and have tried to schedule them at more strategic times so as to minimally interfere with the school calendar.

Field Trips, Special Activities, and Events

For all field trips, special activities, and events, permission slips are sent home with each child and must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to the school by the date specified. Volunteer drivers are arranged as necessary.

In order to volunteer at the school or on field trips, a Child Abuse Registry Search and Police Criminal Check must be submitted to Administration prior to the event. This can take several weeks to process, so if you are interested in volunteering please consider getting these done early in the school year. Contact admin@waldorfns.org to request the required documents.

Dogs

As much as we love dogs please do not bring them inside the kindergarten yard at any time. When dogs are on school property they must remain on leash, and under the control of an adult at all times. Owners must promptly remove any dog poop from the grounds.

Due to the large numbers of people who attend our events and festivals, no dogs are allowed on school property at those times.

Lost Items

A Lost and Found Box is kept inside the school front entrance. Please check promptly for misplaced articles. To minimize lost items, please label your child(ren)'s clothing and lunch containers. Unclaimed contents will be donated to charity at the end of each term.

Cleaning Products and Scents

In keeping with our commitment to respecting our environment, instilling kindness to animals, and safeguarding our students' and teachers' health, we use only natural and chemical-free cleaning products. We support the use of naturally-scented products such as beeswax candles and essential oils and ask that no synthetic scents be worn or used at school.

Separated Parents

In absence of a court order stating otherwise, South Shore Waldorf School will remain neutral in the event of any dispute between separated parents of any child(ren). The emotional wellbeing of the child(ren) is best served by a parental agreement shared with the school outlining responsibilities and permissions for arrival and pickup, and planned absences.

5. Student Health

Illness

If you will be keeping your student at home for any reason, please notify the school by calling 902-624-8074 or emailing admin@waldorfnb.org.

Our goal is to maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone. In order to achieve this, it takes all of us working in partnership to keep illness from entering our school. As parents and teachers, we need to watch for symptoms of illness in ourselves and the children. Students and teachers should stay home when sick.

Screening:

- Please screen for illness prior to arrival at school
- Faculty will observe for illness as part of normal routine in order to keep everyone safe
- Children who present with symptoms of illness will be sent home, following guidelines put forth by the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

It is the policy of the South Shore Waldorf School that children will not be permitted to attend if they are ill with a contagious condition, fever, or diarrhea, or other symptoms listed below.

All children attending must be able to participate in all parts of the program.

All parents of children who attend the school, employees, and essential visitors are also required to self-screen for symptoms of illness not limited to the symptoms mentioned below and asked to stay home when they are unwell.

In addition to the guidelines for illnesses above, children must be kept home, and treatment must be sought when any of the following occur:

- o Head lice
- o Pinworms
- o Pinkeye (Runny red eyes, thick mucus or pus draining from the eyes or nose)
- o Impetigo, Fifth Disease, Hand Foot & Mouth, or other undiagnosed rash.

If a student becomes ill while at school they will be cared for until arrangements for pick-up have been made. The parent or guardian will be called, either by the office or the child's educator, updated to the situation, and asked to pick up their child.

Accidents

An Accident/Injury Form will be filled out by a faculty member whenever a child is hurt. This report will outline the circumstances of the injury and any first aid that was administered.

A first aid kit is located in each classroom. Any time the class goes on an excursion, any emergency medications or devices that may be part of a child's medical plan will be placed in the emergency bag, along with the classroom's emergency forms, and will accompany the teacher who is holding the class. The teacher will also carry with them a phone for emergencies and will inform the office of their whereabouts. In any given year, more than half of our faculty are required to have valid First Aid.

Accident/Injury forms will be signed and dated by the faculty member completing the form.

In the event of a severely injured child, that child will be provided with immediate medical attention and parents/guardians will be notified immediately. Any child needing to go to the hospital will be transported there by their parents/guardians or ambulance. In the absence of the timely availability of parents/guardians, a staff member will go to the hospital with the child and wait until the parents/guardians arrive. Staff will not drive or have a taxi drive children to the hospital. If deemed an emergency that requires immediate medical attention, an ambulance will be called.

In the event that the child is taken to the hospital outside of parental/guardian supervision, the staff member who accompanies the child will bring the child's emergency form and any medications or medical devices that may be part of a child's medical plan.

At the time of the accident a member of the school administration will immediately call the appropriate agency (i.e. physician, hospital, poison control, ambulance, fire department).

In the event that the parents/guardians of the child cannot be reached, the child's emergency contact will be notified as soon as possible.

Immunizations

Immunizations and periodical tests are not given at the school. Please provide written notice to the administration of new immunizations to be added to health information records.

Prescription medication can only be given to the child at school if the parent has provided signed written instructions. Please ask administration for the necessary forms. Medication must come from a bottle labeled by a pharmacy or naturopathic doctor, with date, dosage, child's name, and physician's name. Non-prescription medication (Tylenol etc.) can only be given to the child if the parent has granted permission in their "Back To School" forms.

Peanut and Allergy Policy

We are a peanut-free school. No items containing peanuts are allowed, including but not limited to peanut butter, whole peanuts, and baked goods that may have come into contact with peanuts. Please be aware that peanut allergies can be life-threatening, so adherence to this policy is of the utmost importance.

If your child has an allergy, please ensure your class teacher and the office staff are aware of the allergy and its severity. This should be noted in your back to school form in Ravenna.

If your child's allergy is anaphylactic, please provide your class teacher with an epipen to use in an emergency. We keep an epipen on site for emergency use in the case of previously unknown allergies.

6. Parent Involvement

SSWS embraces the vision of a vital, engaged, and valued parent body. Parent participation in school life and parent educational opportunities help to deepen parent understanding of Waldorf education, which significantly enhances the school experience for students.

Parent involvement in the practical life of the school is therefore essential for both the school and for our students.

There are many ways in which parents can participate in school life. They can join the parent council, craft circle, board of directors, or one of the working groups like the fundraising committee. They can become a class link and/or volunteer to help organize a particular event or fundraiser.

Less formally they can share ideas, undertake practical jobs, and organize social events.

Other opportunities for parents to participate include classroom help, yard and building maintenance, assisting with events, and putting up event posters.

Many hands make light work, and there is always something to do! Ask your class teacher or one of our administrators if you are not sure how you can help.

Community Building Hours - Volunteer Commitment

Parent participation and volunteering are a cornerstone of the SSWS community. Our school community's strength is a direct result of the involvement of parents and friends.

In the 2013/14 school year SSWS instituted a new program to help encourage participation in building our wonderful community. We ask each family to make a commitment upon registration to a minimum of 2.5 community-building hours per month (30 hours per year per family).

It is because of the innumerable volunteer hours contributed every year that we are able to maintain a lower tuition than most other independent schools in the province.

Opportunities for Parent Study and Education

Various study and educational opportunities are provided by the school each year through lectures, workshops, and courses for parents and friends of the school.

These take place at the school and are intended to facilitate acquaintance with the theory and practice of Waldorf education. Notices are posted as these opportunities arise.

Suggestions for topics can be sent to admin@waldorfns.org, or talk to your class teacher or a member of the parent council.

The Borrowing Library

The school lobby houses a small library of books and periodicals relating to Waldorf pedagogy and similar educational and child-raising philosophies. Books can be found on the shelf next to the office.

Parent/primary caregiver engagement with the substance of the school's philosophy and pedagogy is strongly encouraged. We welcome you to take an active interest.

Questions and conversations related to Waldorf education and the anthroposophical understanding of child development are welcomed by all who teach, administer, and volunteer at the school. We encourage parents to inquire about study and reading groups, or to start their own.

7. Parent-Teacher Relationship

Class teachers maintain continuous contact with parents. A detailed written report of each child's progress and development is prepared for grade-school students at the end of each school year, and a smaller midterm report will be prepared in February. This report does not include marks or grades. Final exams are not given at the school (although the children may take quizzes or unit-tests in the upper grades). Parents are urged to consult the teacher when a question or concern arises.

All of our teachers are available to meet from 3-3:15 daily. Meetings outside this time can be arranged in advance by contacting the teacher directly.

Teachers will communicate with parents in person and via email throughout the year. They will monitor emails outside of class hours Monday through Friday. Please do not use social media as a communication tool with your teachers. For any urgent communication needs please email admin@waldorfn.org.

Parent-Teacher Interviews and Parent Evenings

Parent Evenings will be held throughout the year to bring awareness to parents of the work the students are doing in class. This year, Parent-Teacher interviews will be held on October 13 and March 5. Additional meetings can be requested.

Parents will be notified in advance and are strongly encouraged to take part.

Home Visits

It is a tradition among many Waldorf schools for class teachers to visit their students at home; we continue this tradition. The home visit usually takes place during the summer holidays and is especially important for new teachers or students before beginning a new school year.

Your teacher will contact you to set a date and time.

School Work

The grade school students' work is collected and taken home at the end of the school year.

Parents may see the work at any time by making arrangements with their child's teacher or during Parent-Teacher interviews.

End of Term Concerts and Class Plays

Concerts are held at the end of the fall term in December and at the end of the school year in June. Parents and friends are invited for an opportunity to observe work-in-progress from the various classes as well as some finished pieces.

Child Protection & Duty To Report

At SSWS keeping the children entrusted to our care is taken very seriously. All faculty, staff, board members, parents, and any other adults working with students in a volunteer capacity are required to

undergo a Criminal Records Check and a Child Abuse Registry Search. These checks must be updated every three years.

A set of clear regulations outlining the school's legal and moral responsibility for its students, together with the steps to be taken should an individual within the school community be suspected of child abuse, of any kind, are outlined in our [SSWS Governance, Policies and Procedures](#), a copy of which can be consulted in the office.

The Police Records Check and the Child Abuse Registry Search can take several weeks to process, so if you are interested in volunteering please consider getting these done early in the school year.

Information about Nova Scotia Duty to Report can be found here:
<https://novascotia.ca/coms/families/changestocfsa/Duty-to-Report.pdf>

8. Unexpected School Closure Days

There may be times during the school year when we have to close due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances. In the event that school is closed for any reason an email from SSWS Administration will be sent out to all parents as soon as possible; on storm days the Administration will send an email to all parents before 7:00 am.

When school is closed for any reason all other events in the school scheduled for that day are cancelled as well.

This is never a decision we take lightly, and we appreciate the support of our parents who are faced with an often difficult and last-minute situation once they hear of an unexpected school closure.

Storm Days

SSRCE updated their policy in February 2025. They will now close a Family of schools or all schools, depending on the local conditions. The Family of schools is based on which high school the elementary or middle school feeds into. For SSWS this means we are in the Park View Family. When SSRCE closes the Park View Family of Schools or all schools then our school will also be closed. It is important to note that some of our staff and families live in three other Families of schools. We may decide to close our school if these other families are closed.

The SSRCE has also implemented a late start policy, which will apply to a Family of schools, which we also follow.

There are a number of ways to find out if school has been cancelled:

- An announcement will be made on the SSRCE Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SSRCENS/>) by 6:00 am.
- An email from SSWS Administration will be sent out to all parents by 7:00 am; text messages will be sent to those parents who live more than 45 minutes from the school.
- Announcements will be made on CBC Radio, CKBW, and Hank FM by 7:00 am.

Our policy is to follow the South Shore Regional Centre for Education (SSRCE <https://ssrce.ca/>) storm day school closures. The reason we do this is because the SSRCE follows guidelines and recommendations from the NS Department of Transport (DoT), whose decision is based on the predicted road conditions at either the beginning and/or the end of the school day. It has nothing to do with the amount of precipitation, but rather safety for driving conditions.

Even when school is open, we always want families to make their own decision on whether the roads are safe enough to transport their children to school, especially those who drive quite long distances.

For more information on storm day school closures in Nova Scotia see *School Storm Days in Nova Scotia Discussion - 2009*.

If school is to be open our faculty and staff are almost all needed. Our substitution pool is quite small and unpredictable on any given day, and so the options are quite limited if those that work farther away were unable to make it to school or decide they shouldn't risk the roads. If we were open and only local teachers arrived for work we would not be able to operate in any semblance of what we believe is appropriate for our students and what is expected of a school day at SSWS.

Our ongoing assumption is that we will have 5 snow days each year, and we build those into our pedagogical schedules. If we have more than 5 snow days, we will offer one free day of March Break camp for every additional snow day (ie. 1 free day of childcare if we have 6 snow days, 5 free days of childcare if we have 10 snow days).

Closure for Other Reasons

In extreme weather conditions where the SSRCE has not cancelled school, and the administration and faculty feel that it is not safe for students, parents, and staff members to travel, they may cancel school. In this case an email from SSWS Administration will be sent out to all parents by 7:00 am and text messages will be sent to those parents who live more than 45 minutes from the school.

School can also be cancelled during a power outage, fire emergency, loss of drinking water, etc. If this occurs during the day the Administration will notify all parents immediately and will not leave the school until all children have been picked up by parents or authorized relatives or friends.

Community Arrangements

We understand it can be hard for many people to be flexible and find proper care for their children on such short notice. We know that so many families have both parents working outside the home, in some cases in large part to fund their child's Waldorf education, and when care cannot be arranged the impact on their work situation is also a tremendous difficulty.

We suggest that in each class some time is taken in the fall to identify families for whom last-minute childcare arrangements are especially difficult and see if there are other families in the class who may be able to help. The Administration is happy to facilitate this.

9. Community, Festivals, and Fundraising

In ancient cultures festivals were an integral part of community life marking the changes of the seasons and the calendar year. There is as much joy in the preparation and the anticipation of a festival, as there is in the participation in it.

Parents are invited to attend the school festivals listed below. Dates and times will be available on the school website, in the monthly newsletter, and in the full-year calendar available at the beginning of each year. Please check for any changes before the event in question.

Below is a list of the festivals usually celebrated by South Shore Waldorf School. We are a faith- and culture- inclusive school, and we welcome and encourage families to share their festivals with the school

community. If your family has an annual festival that is part of your cultural traditions not listed below, please speak to your class teacher about incorporating it into our festival life. We all benefit from the richness of our diverse community.

Rose Ceremony

As students transition from Kindergarten, they often experience trepidation and grief at leaving the warm embrace of Kindergarten. The Rose Ceremony, which celebrates the transition, addresses both excitement and grief. Grade one students have an extra day of summer vacation so that they are not lost in the all-school "first day" excitement.

On the second day of school the children in the first grade arrive after everyone else has gone into their classrooms. The children gather with their kindergarten teacher one last time in the kindergarten and they lead them into a beautifully decorated space where their families and new teacher are waiting for them. A harpist plays for them. They hear an archetypal story full of images and wonder about their journey through the grades. Then they meet their new friends in the oldest class and each child is given a flower. They cross through a bower and follow their teacher to their grades classroom for the very first time.

Michaelmas/Fall Festival

As part of our self-development we have been reimagining what our festivals mean for us here in Nova Scotia. The timing of Michaelmas and Truth and Reconciliation, as the days grow shorter and darkness encroaches, carry significance for us, and we have reimagined our festival in this light. We set up a series of gentle "trials" for our students. These activities will provide them with opportunities to explore their bravery, leadership, grace, inner strength, trust, and deeds of goodness.

Halloween Whispers

A magical evening celebration called Hallowe'en Whispers is organized by parents and teachers. Originally inspired by All Souls Day in Mexico and acknowledging those who came before us, the students create short musical vignettes that are performed in different spots in the forest. Parents, teachers and friends came together and shared delicious food, festive games and crafts and music. This wonderful celebration has evolved into a significant fundraiser for our school.

Lantern Walk

A festival celebrating compassion and inner light in the outer darkness of approaching winter. This festival invites us to follow the lantern light into the gathering darkness. As the dark nights become long and the air cold, our lanterns represent the light and warmth we wish to send into the world and carry in our hearts. This is one of our most beautiful and reverent events. The mood is one cultivating an inner quiet. We end the evening by sharing hot apple cider and bread, then quietly making our way home. Many families find this festival becomes their favourite of the year.

Advent

The four Sundays before winter solstice, Christmas, and Hanukkah are those leading into the darkest time of year, just before the turning point of midwinter. It is a time of anticipation, hope and promise, a time when

the light is carried within us. Thankfulness for the Mineral Kingdom (first advent Sunday), the Plant Kingdom (second advent Sunday), the Animal Kingdom (the third advent Sunday), and the Human Kingdom (fourth advent Sunday) can kindle in us strength of will. On the first advent Sunday the school community gathers to journey down a spiral evergreen path. The apple candle each child carries is kindled in the centre of the spiral and then the light is carried back out to be placed somewhere along the path.

Holly and Ivy

One of our major fundraising events, Holly and Ivy Fair is an annual seasonal festival and celebration with games, craft activities, live music, amazing food, puppet show performances, a silent auction and a handmade market.

Puppet Show and Tea

A fundraising event including a beautiful luncheon served by the older grades and a puppet show that will capture the imagination of all ages.

Mayfair

In ancient traditions, Mayfair was the celebration of the beginning of summer; it was a festival of flowers. Mayfair is good, festive fun and a reminder that warmer days are ahead. Our school is festooned with decorations and we gather as a community to play games, make music and merriment. The day is graced by the children dancing the Maypole and by onlookers clapping and singing along. This festival offers a warm, festive atmosphere, many children's activities, good food, and an annual plant sale along with a silent auction, puppet performance, live music and field games.

Use of Electronics at Special Events

We kindly request that no cameras or other electronic devices be used during school concerts, ceremonies, and presentations. Cameras and electronic recording devices create a distraction for children participating as well as for those in attendance. We like to encourage all who gather together to be present in the now of the event.

A designated photographer will take photos for posterity. Please contact the Administration if you are interested in volunteering as an event photographer, and/or if you are interested in obtaining the photos taken during an event.

Cameras are permitted at public events, such as Holly and Ivy and Mayfair.

Parent Supervision During School Events and Concerts

Parents are responsible for their children during school events. Please do not leave your children unattended.

10. Financial Accessibility

It has always been a foundational principle of SSWS to make attendance available for all families who value Waldorf education, within the limits of the school's resources.

SSWS is entirely self-funded and receives no government assistance. In an effort to keep tuition affordable and to make Waldorf education available to all parents and students who want it, the school community raises approximately 25% of the school's operating budget through its fundraising activities and donations.

All SSWS families benefit from low tuition because of our collective fundraising activity. If we did not supplement our operations budget through fundraising, we would need to increase tuition substantially.

We appeal to those who are able to contribute financially beyond their tuition fees to do so. This gift could ensure the attendance of a student who may otherwise be excluded. It is possible to make a targeted donation which allows you to direct how your support is put to use. We encourage you to consider a monthly donation. Since SSWS is a registered charity, a charitable tax receipt will be provided.

In addition, we ask that you consider talking to extended family members such as grandparents, godparents, aunts, uncles, and so on, about donating to the school.

Approaching businesses with which you are affiliated to make a donation of money and/or materials/services will also be much appreciated by the school, as will your discussions with anyone in your community who recognizes the need for a creative, healing, and holistic education and who will benefit from a tax receipt.

Work Credits

In order to help make Waldorf education more accessible, SSWS offers a number of cleaning, maintenance, and marketing work credit positions each year. If you have questions about what they entail, please contact Administration.

To apply for a work credit please complete the application form in the enrolment package.

Tuition Adjustment

The school does not have an established endowment that funds bursaries. All funding for the Tuition Adjustment Program (TAP) comes from tuition revenues, fundraising, and donations. The ability to offer families an appropriately assessed tuition level is affected by the number of applications received in a given year. The total TAP budget is limited to approximately 5% of the operational budget of the school year in which it is awarded.

If your family has any questions about applying for Tuition Adjustment please contact the administration.

Please see your enrolment package for the TA application deadline. Any applications submitted after the deadline will be reviewed when applications received within the deadline have been completed and will depend on remaining resources. Mid-year applications will be considered if resources remain.

Childcare Receipts

Every year, parents will receive a receipt for childcare expenses, which are tax deductible according to the CRA. This entails 20% of Grades expenses and 100% of Kindergarten expenses.

11. Communication

The school organizes all-community meetings twice per year, inviting parents, faculty, staff, friends, and board members to get together to discuss matters important to the whole community. These meetings are an opportunity to learn more about the workings of the school, including financial aspects, to participate in the planning process for the future, and to become involved in committee work.

Ravenna Student Management System

This is the online database we use to keep track of admissions, enrollment, attendance, student records, end-of-year reports, and tuition payments. Each parent will be provided with a sign-up link connected to your individual email.

Please do not hesitate to contact the administration when you have questions, concerns, or issues when using Ravenna.

Monthly Newsletter

A monthly newsletter is issued electronically by the office. It includes information about school events and its daily operation. It will be made available on our website or by signing up [on this page](#) to receive it by email. All parents are automatically subscribed to the newsletter, but can choose to unsubscribe.

Parent Evenings

Parent evenings are a key way for parents and teachers to engage with each other, and with fellow parents.

They are also an opportunity for parents to deepen their understanding of the exceptional and innovative aspects of Waldorf education that are enriching their children's school lives. Parent evenings focus on how the Waldorf curriculum relates and responds to the child's specific needs, abilities, and capacities at each stage of development. A relationship founded on mutual understanding between teacher and parent greatly enhances the child's ability to learn and develop.

For this reason, the school considers attendance at parent meetings a requirement. Please plan ahead to ensure that at least one parent or caregiver is able to attend each parent meeting.

You, your child, and your child's teacher will all benefit greatly from this commitment.

Email

Email communication is used for relaying routine information pertaining to school and class business and not for student-specific information, issues needing discussion, or concerns, complaints, disagreements, conflicts, or disputes.

We do not register concerns or complaints via e-mail or other electronic media platforms. Instead, use email to set up a face to face meeting to discuss concerns, as detailed in the concerns process below.

12. Student Behaviour

Code of Conduct

We recognize and welcome the unique gifts brought by each child we serve, and we are committed to supporting all of our students in their development. In doing so, we look for a positive approach to discipline. We believe in the central importance of healthy interpersonal relationships, and our connection to others is vital to a vibrant school community. Working through difficult situations together strengthens us not only as individuals, but the school as a whole.

For these reasons, we also do not tolerate hate speech, sexual assault, or physical violence within our school community.

Expectations

At the South Shore Waldorf School adults and children work with mutual respect and out of a shared sense of responsibility and dedication to the work of school. To this end the Faculty pledge to be leaders in the following rules and expectations for behaviour at school, expectations which equally apply to other adults at the school and the children themselves.

To ensure a positive learning environment **rules and expectations are communicated to the students in an age-appropriate way at the start of the school year and reviewed as needed.** These expectations include:

- Showing respect for yourself in your language and actions. This means you are true to yourself, safe, and positive about your accomplishments.
- Showing respect for others in your language and actions. This means you listen and follow the directions of teachers, peers, parents, and guests. It also includes being supportive of others' accomplishments, resolving conflicts satisfactorily, and helping others.
- Showing respect for the school environment in your language and actions. This means you contribute to the care of the classroom, its contents, school work, and the grounds of the school, and are an advocate for the physical environment in and around the school.

When Expectations Are Not Met

When a student's behaviour does not align with the vision and expectations of our school community, **teachers and parents must work together to find ways to support the student.** If the above expectations are not met the student will be given a natural consequence for inappropriate behavior, which may include repairing damaged items, staying close to supervising staff, or doing extra chores to contribute to the school in a positive way.

With behaviour that warrants more than in-the-moment correction the following steps are in place:

First occurrence: In the case of serious infractions (violence, leaving campus, using hurtful language, etc), the student will be spoken to and the parents will be advised of the behaviour by email before dismissal. It is recommended that the parents speak with the class teacher at dismissal.

Second occurrence: If the same behaviour occurs a second time the child may be sent to the office for a brief period. The teacher will email the parents before dismissal and ask to meet at dismissal to discuss the issue. Following this meeting a behavioural plan is created by the class teacher and parents, thus a plan is in place *if* a third occurrence happens.

Third occurrence: If the same behaviour occurs a third time the child will be sent to the office, the teacher will telephone the parents to inform them of the behavior and will also arrange a meeting to occur as soon

as possible to implement the behavioural plan already created. **It is imperative that the parents can support the teacher to elicit a behavioral change at school.**

Fourth occurrence: If the same behaviour occurs a fourth time the teacher will telephone the parents and the student must be picked up immediately. SSWS will evaluate our capacity as a school to support the child's behavioural needs and follow up with the parents in a meeting to assess the school's suitability. If it is determined that we cannot meet this child's needs, then we may require the family to find an alternative educational placement.

The above is a guideline for parents, students, and teachers.

However, if behavior warrants it, the teacher may take whatever appropriate steps they determine necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the student carrying out the behavior, other students, other adults in the vicinity, the school property, and the teachers themselves.

At the South Shore Waldorf School we want the standards of the school to be clearly understood by the parents. We ask that parents address discipline and behavior problems directly with their child's teacher, and teachers will address parents directly if there are concerns. If this does not bring satisfaction either one or both can engage the Concerns Process.

Bullying

Bullying is distinct from normal social conflict among peers. It is aggressive in nature and includes a perceived imbalance of power and repetitive threats.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to, a written, oral, or electronic expression, the malicious spreading of rumors or social exclusion, physical attacks, or threatening gestures. These are not tolerated in any form, nor is retaliation against any person who reports bullying or witnesses or provides information during an investigation. Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, at school-sponsored events, after-school activities and outside of school as it creates an unhealthy environment for an entire class and school.

When a complaint of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation is brought to the attention of faculty or staff, it is documented and an assessment as to what initial steps are to be taken to protect the well being of students and to prevent disruption of their learning environment while the investigation is being conducted. The school will notify the parents of all students reported to be involved immediately after a complaint has been made.

Once the school has determined to what extent the allegation of bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation can be substantiated the class teacher will determine what disciplinary action and/or remedial action is socially and developmentally appropriate for the age of the student(s) involved and how it will be implemented. The response students and parents can most likely expect is immediate dismissal from school of the aggressor(s) until a plan, satisfactory to all parties, is put in place. Suspension and/or expulsion are consequences of last resort.

Confirmed incidents are documented and placed in the child's file for reference purposes.

Bullying should not be confused with teasing, social disinterest, random acts of violence, or physicality and conflict among equals. While children will often tease or fight, this bickering, even when upsetting to one or both of the children involved, should not be confused with bullying. The dynamics of bullying are complex. We recognize that it takes a collaborative process between parents and teacher, indeed an effective partnership, to resolve and heal both the aggressor(s) and the target. It can include whole family and class solutions.

13. Concerns Process

Concerns and conflicts do not necessarily signal a crisis. They are a natural outcome of a community working together and they offer an opportunity for change and improvement.

A healthy social life is found when, in the mirror of each human soul, the whole community finds its reflection and when, in the community, the virtue of each one is living.

Rudolf Steiner, 1920

The school requests that all concerns and complaints be dealt with through the processes made available by the school rather than through informal discussions with those not involved. Please strive to communicate well, with honesty and integrity, to resolve a concern or conflict as soon as possible, and to focus on finding a solution with those directly involved.

It is our position that concerns and conflicts cannot be resolved unless all affected parties are involved. The process includes face-to-face communication between affected parties. Mediators are available to facilitate this: three Ombudspersons (listed below), a Care Committee, and outside professionals as a last resort.

There are two available options when you have a concern or are in conflict:

Step 1: Speak directly to the person about whom you have a concern or with whom you are in conflict.

Step 2: Contact one of the school's Ombudspersons about your concern or conflict.

Email Communication

Avoid expressing and trying to resolve your concern via email or other electronic platforms. You may email your concern to one of the school's ombudspersons, but only to register your concern and to begin the concerns process with the support of the ombudsperson.

Confidentiality

"In confidence" means that no one other than those involved in the Concerns Process will be informed about the concern. Those raising the concern and those whom the concern is about are always part of the process.

The Function of the Ombudspersons

Each Ombudsperson is a neutral community member who is at arms-length from the school but who knows the school well and is familiar with its values and principles.

The Ombudsperson can funnel concerns immediately into a solutions-oriented process, thereby

de-escalating conflict. They can also ensure that proper record-keeping and follow-up occurs so that the school can keep track of concerns, especially those that are repeatedly being brought forward.

Procedure

Parents or community members who may be uncomfortable directly approaching the person/people about whom they have a concern or with whom they are in conflict, may take their concern or conflict to one of the Ombudspersons. This is the case even for minor concerns or conflicts. The Ombudsperson will compassionately listen, sensitively facilitate communication between parties, and carefully guide them through the Concerns Process to a satisfactory resolution.

1. Receive concern via phone, email, or in person.
2. Have a face-to-face meeting with the person bringing the concern.
3. Listen compassionately and ascertain whether they want to continue to the next step or whether having their concern heard and recorded is sufficient.
4. Record the concern in writing and file it.
5. If they want to continue, offer to organize and attend a facilitated solutions-oriented face-to face meeting between the person with the concern and the person/people it implicates.
6. Take minutes of the meeting and file with the concern record.
7. If Step 5 does not lead to a resolution, pass the process on to the Care Committee.

Ombudspersons for 2026/27

Paula Cheal	paulacheal@zoho.com
Mary Knickle	quinte@ns.sympatico.ca
Kathy Lucking	kathylucking.lucking@gmail.com

Care Committee

The Care Committee is the next step in the Concerns Process if no resolution is found through an Ombudsperson. The Care Committee is an arms-length committee mandated to conduct mediation by offering compassionate listening and determining further concrete actions within already available school policies or procedures. It may call in help from professionals familiar with SSWS who have agreed to be contacted as necessary.

Care Committee for 2026/27

Donna Himmelman	donna@windyhilldevelopers.com
Paul Pickering	paulwpickering@gmail.com

Appendix A: Kindergarten Routines

School Hours

8:30am-3:00pm Monday-Friday

Rhythm of the Day

Kindergarten students may arrive between 8:30-9:00am. Parents are asked to accompany the children to meet their teacher in the morning.

Kindergarten mornings include a nature walk, snack, creative play, seasonal activities and crafts, including wet-on-wet painting and domestic activities such as bread-making followed by circle- and story-time. Afternoons include a quiet time and outdoor play.

Parents are able to come into the kindergarten yard to pick their children up between 2:45 pm and 3:15pm. At 3:15pm, children who are not picked up by their parents, or an authorized person, will be signed into the aftercare program. It is important that whoever is picking up the child(ren) lets the teacher know the child is “signed out” for the day.

Lunch and Snack

Please remember that we are a peanut-free school. A healthy snack will be prepared for the class each day. Parents are to provide a packed lunch. It is strongly suggested that children bring healthy food for lunch and that containers are reusable. Please, no gum, candy, soft drinks, juice boxes, or items containing food colouring. For more detailed information about our food please speak to your child's teacher.

Sharing Basket

You are asked to contribute a food item for your child to put into the sharing basket when they arrive each morning. It could be a carrot from your garden, an egg from your coop, or any store-bought vegetable or fruit: an apple, a potato, an onion, a stalk of celery. Organic is preferred whenever possible. Bigger items are also welcome, like coconut oil, olive oil, or butter. Children take great pride in contributing to the communal food basket.

Attendance and Absence

If your child is unable to attend school on any school day for any reason, please inform the school by phone by 8:15am. You may leave a voice message at 902-624-0874 or email admin@waldorfns.org.

The opening and closing days of each term are of great importance to the life of the school and to the experience of the child in the school. Please take this into consideration in the case of planned absences, such as family trips.

What Your Child Needs for the School Year

1. Please bring a small blanket and pillow from home for quiet time. There are some available if needed. Soft, natural fibres are recommended. The small pillow should feel soft and cozy. Blankets should be big enough to tuck in under feet and around the child's body.
2. Extra clothes, such as underwear, socks, a long-sleeved shirt, a short-sleeved shirt, and a pair of pants should be in a bag or small backpack that will be left on the shelf in the boot-room so it is available at all times. Please label this bag with the child's name, and if possible try to label as many clothing items as possible.
3. We go out in most weather so rain boots, rain coats, rain pants, and a warm sweater or jacket and hat should always be available. The child should have winter-appropriate temperature-rated winter gear, as well as extra mittens and socks.
4. It is important to label your child's coat, boots, shoes, etc.
5. Indoor shoes that are easy to put on and take off with good tread should be provided. Please remember these shoes need to be worn outside when we have a fire drill on a rainy or snowy day.
6. Please do not bring shoes that light up or that have logos on them. Please refer to the Dress Code section of this handbook.
7. A healthy snack will be served each day. Children bring a lunch from home. Please do not send candy, chocolate bars, pop, etc. Quiet time is after lunch so having less sugar helps make quiet time quiet.
8. Children should have a lunch box and reusable containers for sandwiches etc. to help cut down on packaging. Lunch boxes and your child's water bottle should be free of media images.

The Two Classes of Kindergarten

Our kindergarten program is unique in that it is 3 years long (for children who start from the beginning, which is 3 years 8 months at the youngest). This allows the child ample time to develop at their own pace, and be as ready as possible for Grade One without being rushed. There are two Kindergarten classes this year, and while the two classes are not typically divided strictly by age, this year we have a much younger cohort under Miss Katleyn, which includes some Pre-K children. This is considered a soft launch for a more robust Pre-K program coming soon, as part of our journey towards ECE licensing. If a child completes the full 3 years in the Kindergarten program, that means they will spend 2 years in one of the classes (could be either one).

Grade One Readiness and Importance

The kindergarten teacher will discuss Grade 1 readiness with the parents throughout the year at parent-teacher meetings. Physical, emotional, and social abilities are considered, as well as age and intellectual readiness.

For most children, the healthy entry-age into Grade 1 is 6 1/2 to 7 years. Some indications of readiness include: loss of baby teeth, appearance of 6-year molars, being able to verbalize their needs without crying or becoming distraught and angry; having good small and large muscle control; showing an interest in activities outside of free-play; showing an ability to carry a project to completion; listening to stories without interruption; clapping, walking, and skipping to a rhythm; and singing with the teacher.

Children entering Grade 1 are assessed for readiness again in September by the class teacher in conjunction with the kindergarten teacher. This assessment should be completed after one month. In unusual circumstances, a child deemed unready may be asked to complete a further year in kindergarten.

A second month of probation and observation might also be suggested if, for example, there has been a change in the home that may have affected the child's ability to adapt.

Adjustment Period

Following the initial interview between teachers, parent, and child, there is a six-week adjustment period before final acceptance. This may vary in special circumstances, and is a time of additional communication between school and home. Extensions to this probationary period may be requested in writing by either the parent or the teacher.

Kindergarten Behaviour

At the South Shore Waldorf School we take a positive, developmentally appropriate approach to behaviour and discipline. Students, as well as adults, are expected to show respect for others, themselves, and the school. This being said, young children are still learning social and communication skills and therefore adult guidance of behaviour is continually required.

Guidance of Behaviour in the Kindergarten

The kindergarten teachers at the South Shore Waldorf School work to create an atmosphere of warmth and comforting predictability for all children. The daily schedule creates a rhythm that balances activity and rest, indoor and outdoor activity, and free play in an imaginative and lively learning environment that meets the development of the young child. The teachers guide the children toward right action and help them develop self-discipline through redirection and positive reinforcement. Through nurturing guidance, role-modelling, and a consistent expectation of care and respect for others, the teachers create a healthy community of children in which all can grow.

Because young children learn through imitation, our teachers work to model correct behaviour to help them work and play in healthy peer relationships. The rhythm and routine of the kindergarten, along with clear expectations, help to create a calm and joyful atmosphere where children can experience success and pride in what they do. When a child is disruptive or displays aggressive or hurtful behaviour, the teachers work to address the problem within the classroom in subtle but effective ways. For instance, teachers may simply come closer to where the child is playing or bring the child to their side. Slowing down, listening, paying attention to the child's needs will, in many cases, solve the problem. Curative stories are often helpful when dealing with these behaviours. It often brings all of the class together.

If a child hurts another child, the teachers involve that child in righting their wrong. Often the Kindness Basket will be brought out and the child can care for their other classmate by helping with a band aid, ice pack, or tissue. This gesture of care-giving supports the young child in developing empathy and provides them with new habits that help navigate social dynamics.

If inappropriate, harmful, or disruptive behaviour continues, the child will be asked to stay with the teacher, helping with their work until it is clear that the child is ready to enter group activities again. Sometimes a child will leave the classroom with a teacher for a quiet moment before re-entering the classroom. In other cases, if it is clear that the child is not able to participate in the classroom in a healthy way, the parent(s) will be called to pick them up to spend the rest of the day at home. The teachers are always looking for what is

in the best interest of the child, other children with whom they may be experiencing conflict, and the group as a whole.

Disciplinary approaches at home and at school lay the foundation for our children's future self-discipline. This perspective helps to strengthen our resolve to hold boundaries as an act of love for our children. When a problem persists the teachers will work with parents to support the child in a collaborative way at school and in the home. Intervention may include working with and supporting families whose children are affected directly by another child's behaviour. When behaviour issues cannot be corrected in the classroom the discipline process is as follows:

1. The teacher of the child exhibiting unwanted behaviour makes contact with the child's parent(s) and describes the situation.
2. If the unwanted behaviour continues, a meeting will be set with the parent(s) and a plan will be developed with clear expectations for guidance and support of the child/ children.
3. In some cases the parent(s) may be called to take the child home for the rest of the day.
4. The teacher will follow up with the parent(s) to evaluate the situation, based on the time- frame outlined in the plan.
5. In cases where there are ongoing behavioural issues that cannot be resolved through a plan developed collaboratively between teacher and parent(s), the parent(s) will be advised that their child must remain at home.

Challenging Behaviours

Some examples of challenging behaviours that can become issues would be:

Fighting or aggressive behaviour, bullying or violence.

Harmful or threatening behaviour.

Exclusion of other children.

Teasing or name calling.

Unsafe play including fighting, pushing, tripping or throwing objects which might hurt or injure another child.

Disrespecting the authority of all teachers and other adults providing supervision.

Disrespecting the Daily Rhythm of the classroom.

Running in the school or classroom.

Unwillingness to respond when singing begins, or to line up in an orderly fashion.

Rude or aggressive language.

Disrespect to all people regardless of age, sex, race or religion.

Destruction to all property including school equipment, gardens, buildings and personal property.

Overcoming our Harmony Addiction

Kim John Payne - a psychologist and former Waldorf teacher who lectures worldwide on parenting, education, and social issues - is opening new areas of inquiry within Waldorf schools by encouraging a more direct approach to conflicts among children of all ages. During a lecture entitled "When Push Comes to Love: How to Raise Civilized Children in an Uncivilized World" Payne said: "As adults, we need to get over our 'harmony addiction' and develop policies both at home and at school for dealing with conflict in a more straightforward way." He urges us to embrace conflict by not immediately separating children when they are arguing but instead helping them to work it out so that they can develop a sense of who they are in relation to others and feel that it's possible to resolve conflict themselves.

Sharifa Oppenheimer is another advocate for teaching children conflict resolution skills. In her book, *Heaven on Earth: A Handbook for Parents of Young Children*, she says:

It will require us to take our own emotions in hand and work with ourselves, not only to model justice, but also to shed light on human dynamics and creative problem-solving at an early age. [When guiding children] there are three essential elements to remember.

1. Use the same tone of voice you use for “here’s the towel”: simple, informative, clear.
2. Rarely is there a situation in which “victim” and “aggressor” can be clearly identified: there are two sides to every child’s disagreement, and you need to know both.
3. Keep it simple. A few words used skillfully are far more effective than the best lecture on justice and equality. (Oppenheimer, 202).

Appendix B: Purpose and Context of the Media Policy

The South Shore Waldorf School electronic media policy is designed to support the objectives of Waldorf education, and to be workable in the homes and lives of school families. Parents have consistently found that reducing the influence of media on their family life has encouraged family members to develop a keener interest in one another, enlivened and deepened their communication, and fostered a deeper connection to the world around them.

The school expects that each parent understands and supports the media policy for the good of their own children and their children’s peers.

All members of the SSWS community depend on the parents of SSWS students to help create in their homes an environment that supports and reinforces Waldorf education. Each family’s respect for the media policy has a far-reaching positive effect on the students’ educational and social experience in school. A failure to make best efforts to respect the media policy has a correspondingly negative impact on our own children and their classmates. The impact of media exposure is passed on to other children, reverberating through the community and showing up in other children’s play, attitudes, language, and inner life. It is therefore important for the health of the entire SSWS community for each family to comply with the media policy.

To these ends, the school reserves the right to require students to reduce or alter their use of media if that exposure is undermining their education or the education of others.

For purposes of this policy, “Electronic Media” includes smart devices, television, movies, computers and all other video and audio devices, including cellphones, tablets, personal digital assistants, video games, and music/mp3 players. The scope of this definition may well change as media technology and its applications evolve.

While SSWS’s media policy specifically governs interaction with certain media, care and judgment also should be applied to permitting exposure to media that is not expressly covered by the media policy, including print media (newspapers, magazines, and catalogs) and radio (news and recorded music). Developmentally inappropriate exposure to any media can have harmful effects and may create a level of “background noise” in students’ lives that interferes with their direct connection to their environment and is thus antithetical to the principles of Waldorf education.

A Media Policy that Grows with Our Children

Children enrolled in the Early Childhood programs at the South Shore Waldorf School should be given the gift of a media-free childhood. Teachers are available and willing to assist with transitions to a media-free environment.

Consistent with Waldorf education's emphasis on learning through direct experience, children in the lower grades (1-4) should be allowed to develop new ideas and attitudes based on real personal interactions, without the distortion of mediation through technology. **Children in the lower grades should not be exposed to electronic media in their daily lives.**

During grades 5 to 7 it is appropriate for students to have a gradual and guided introduction to the applications and use of electronic media. During these transition years, use and exposure to media should be very moderate, under clear parental guidance and participation, and not work to the detriment of the social and educational climate of the class. Media exposure can be a socially divisive influence in these years and often works directly against what is brought in the classroom. **Children in these grades should not be exposed to electronic media during the school week, and should have, at most, limited exposure on weekends and vacations.**

Implementing the Media Policy at School

The use of cell phones for any purpose by students is not permitted on campus during school hours,, during school activities or on school sponsored trips without a teacher's permission. In order to support the healthy use of cell phones, adults at the school are asked to keep their cell phones away during the school day, unless they are required for a specific work purpose.

Cell phones may never be used by students inside of school buildings.

Note: If a SSWS student will be bringing a cell phone to school, the phone must be left in the office for the day, not on the child's person or in their backpack. Personal audio or video devices (such as music/mp3 players, PDAs, cameras) are not permitted on SSWS's campus, during school activities, or on any school trips without a teacher's permission.

When determined by a teacher to be appropriate, media may be used in some instances for supervised educational purposes.

Implementing the Media Policy Outside of School

It is essential to the successful implementation of the media policy that parents guide their children in the appropriate uses of electronic media outside of the school environment. We encourage parents to keep an open dialogue with their children, other class parents, teachers, and advisors regarding media. Specifically, parents should speak to teachers either privately or with other parents in class or other group meetings about their questions and challenges related to media, so that together they can work out viable approaches. Parents who are interested in a Media Resource Group, which will discuss media impact on students, families and classes, are encouraged to contact their class teacher for information.

Appendix C: Waldorf Education Resources

Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA)

AWSNA's mission is to support schools through collaborative regional work, professional and resource development, accreditation, community outreach, and advocacy. The Association's work is based on four core values. These values are:

- Evoke and develop Quality and Integrity in everything we attempt and achieve;
- Promote Strength and Resourcefulness in every school community;
- Foster, encourage, and support inspired Leadership and Collegueship;
- Work towards conscious and collaborative human Community and Relationships.

Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN)

Fostering a new cultural impulse for the work with the young child from pre-birth to age seven. Based on an anthroposophical understanding of human development, WECAN is committed to protecting and nurturing childhood as a foundation for renewing human culture.

Research Institute for Waldorf Education

Working to deepen and enhance the quality of Waldorf education, to engage in serious and sustained dialogue with the wider educational-cultural community and to support research that would serve educators in all types of schools in their work with children and adolescents.

Books

Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out, Jack Petrash, Gryphon House

Waldorf Education — A Family Guide, Pam Fenner, ed., Michaelmas Press

You are your Child's First Teacher, Rahima Baldwin, Celestial Arts

Education Towards Freedom, Frans Calgren, SteinerBooks

The Education of the Child, Rudolf Steiner, Anthroposophic Press

School as a Journey, Torin Finser, SteinerBooks

Many other wonderful resources exist. If you are looking for something specific please speak with your class teacher.