



Parent Handbook

Revised August 2023

*Parent Handbook revisions are implemented as needed and redistributed electronically.
The most current version may be found on the BigSIS Portal under the Parents/Guardians>Documents tab.*

Grace Farm Campus
2290 VT Route 14N
East Montpelier, VT 05651
(802) 456-7400
orchardvalley@ovws.org

Sweet Clover Nursery
203 Country Club Road
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 225-6490
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Mission

Orchard Valley Waldorf School is an educational institution that serves children from 3 months through eighth grade. We deliver proven educational programs, guiding each student along a path that allows the child to grow into young adulthood with inner confidence, a love of learning, and the dynamic thinking required to promote social renewal.

We seek to awaken and educate the whole child by equally engaging the mind, enlivening the imagination, and strengthening the will, in harmony with the natural stages of child development. This is accomplished by:

- Integrating the arts into all aspects of the curriculum – foreign language, humanities, math and sciences
- Creating an environment of safety and acceptance that seeks to recognize the special gifts of each child
- Cultivating a living relationship between the land, our children, and the community where the joys and traditions of play, work, festivals and song unfold

Vision

To awaken the highest potential in every child

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ABOUT OVWS

History

Orchard Valley Waldorf School, Inc. was established in July of 2004 through a merger of the Montpelier Waldorf Child's Garden and the Three Rivers School. OVWS opened in September of 2004 offering a full complement of Early Childhood programs and Grades One through Five. The school expanded by one grade each year and offered full Early Childhood through Grade Eight programs beginning in September of 2007.

In the summer of 2003, community members, committed to forming a Pre-K through Grade Eight, independent, Waldorf School, formed an investment cooperative and raised funds for the purchase and initial renovation of the house, barn and 55-acre parcel. This purchase, achieved through the Montpelier Waldorf Investment Community Corporation, (MWICC), made ownership of a permanent home and beautiful grounds for the Orchard Valley Waldorf School possible.

OVWS has a strong Early Childhood program offered in various locations: the Grace Farm Campus in East Montpelier, Sweet Clover Nursery on Country Club Rd in Montpelier. OVWS offers a rich Grades program for students in Grades 1 – 7 at the Grace Farm campus.

OVWS is a co-educational, non-profit and non-sectarian independent school serving approximately 130 children and their families from Washington, Lamoille, Orange, and Caledonia Counties.

Vision

Awaken the highest potential in every child.

Mission

Orchard Valley Waldorf School is an educational institution serving children from Birth through Eighth Grade. We deliver proven educational programs, guiding each student along a path that allows the child to grow into young adulthood with inner confidence, a love for learning, and the dynamic thinking required to promote social renewal.

We seek to awaken and educate the whole child by equally engaging the mind, enlivening the imagination, and strengthening the will, in harmony with the natural stages of child development. We accomplish this by:

- integrating the arts into all aspects of the curriculum—foreign language, humanities, math and the sciences.
- creating an environment of safety, respect and acceptance that seeks to recognize the special gifts of each child.
- cultivating a living relationship between the land, our children, and the community where the joys and traditions of play, work, festivals and song unfold.

Goals

1. **Childhood Centered Education:** To deliver the full Waldorf curriculum in accordance with the indications of Steiner and consistent with the AWSNA Shared Principles.
2. **Strong Infrastructure:** To ensure effective governance and management of the school.
3. **Increasing Sustainability:** To ensure a financially healthy and secure school.
4. **Evolving Campus:** To ensure our facility evolves as we do.

Core Values

1. **Child Focused:** At OVWS we hold the interests of the children as our highest priority.
2. **Open and Welcoming:** Ours is a welcoming, hospitable, gracious and grateful community committed to open and direct communication.
3. **Accessible To All:** We work to make Waldorf education accessible to all who desire it.
4. **Fiscally Responsible:** We conduct school matters in a fiscally responsible, transparent manner and endeavor to be financially self-sustaining.
5. **Support of Faculty and Staff:** We support our faculty and staff, financially and professionally.
6. **Consistent Process:** OVWS uses clear and consistent processes which bring integrity to our plans, projects, and decision-making.
7. **Environmental Stewardship:** We aspire to serve as a model of sustainability and environmental conservation for our children and the surrounding community.
8. **Anthroposophy:** As the philosophical keystone of any Waldorf school, we are guided and inspired in our work by the teachings of Rudolf Steiner and the study of contemporary Anthroposophical works.

Anthroposophy

Waldorf education was founded in Germany by Rudolf Steiner out of an impulse for social renewal in the aftermath of World War I. Anthroposophy, the spiritual and philosophical underpinnings of all Steiner's work, is a path of intentional, conscious self-development and inspires the work of all Waldorf teachers and administrators.

Waldorf teachers hold an image of each child as a spiritual being. Their work is to support and educate, envisioning each student on a lifelong journey toward discovering their role as a future adult and becoming members of the local and global community.

Although the work of the Orchard Valley faculty is infused with the inspirations and understandings of Anthroposophy, this philosophy is not taught to the students. Waldorf education is a non-denominational pedagogy that does not teach any one world view; rather it surveys a wide range of world philosophies, religions

and cultures with the intention of fostering tolerance and cooperation. Our community of parents and teachers is diverse in every respect, including religious and spiritual paths, beliefs, and practices.

Recommended readings by Steiner are available for you to borrow. An excellent introduction is [Anthroposophy in Everyday Life](#). You are also welcome to join the local Steiner Study Group - reach out to the Front Office for details if interested.

Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA)

AWSNA is an association of independent schools working out of the pedagogical indications of Rudolf Steiner. Waldorf is a trademark name in the United States and is reserved for member schools. AWSNA's mission is to support schools through collaborative regional work, professional and resource development, accreditation, community outreach, and advocacy (www.waldorfeducation.org/awsna). Orchard Valley Waldorf School is an Associate member of AWSNA.

The Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN)

WECAN's mission is to foster a new cultural impulse for work with young children 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. WECAN works closely with its sister organization, AWSNA. Orchard Valley Waldorf School Early Childhood programs are full members of WECAN.

Independent School Status

Orchard Valley Waldorf School is an approved independent school for Kindergarten through Grade Eight by the Vermont Agency of Education. The Early Childhood and Aftercare programs are licensed by the Child Development Division of the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families. Our Mixed Age Preschool and Kindergarten classes are Qualified Prekindergarten Programs as approved by the Vermont Agency of Education.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

It is a fundamental goal of Waldorf education and Waldorf schools to bring students to an understanding and experience of the common humanity of all the world's peoples, transcending the stereotypes, prejudices and barriers of classification by sex, race, and nationality. OVWS admits students of any race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, political affiliation, or marital status in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and tuition assistance practices, athletic and other school administered programs.

Non-Discriminatory Mascots and School Branding

It is the policy of Orchard Valley Waldorf School to provide a welcoming, positive, and inclusive learning environment for all students by prohibiting the use of discriminatory school branding, which undermines the educational experiences of members of all communities and perpetuates negative stereotypes. "School branding" means any name, symbol, or image used by the school as a mascot, nickname, logo, letterhead, team name, slogan, motto, or other identifier.

Diversity Statement

Orchard Valley Waldorf School commits to creating an educational and social environment in which families, faculty, and staff of diverse backgrounds feel welcomed, respected, and expressly valued. We define diversity as the broad spectrum of cultures, races, ethnicities, language speakers, genders, sexual orientations, religions and creeds, socioeconomic backgrounds, and abilities that together make up our communities, country, and world.

As a Waldorf school committed to the evolution and growth of our philosophy and our educational approach, we do not condone, and pledge not to perpetuate any of Rudolf Steiner's work that subtly or overtly suggests discrimination or judgment toward any race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, or socio-economic group.

We are committed to deepening our understanding of how the privilege of dominant culture affects and shapes both our pedagogy and our society, and to engaging in the personal and collective self-reflection and inner work necessary to actively dismantle systems of oppression within ourselves, our school, and our communities.

Using an anti-oppression lens of inclusion, diversity, equity, and justice, we commit to a continual and rigorous examination and advancement of our pedagogy, our policies, the creation and implementation of our curriculums, and our approach to tending the social and emotional health of our school community.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

We acknowledge that Orchard Valley Waldorf School's Grace Farm, Child's Garden and Sweet Clover Nursery all sit upon the unceded traditional lands of the Abenaki people. The Abenaki, who are members of the Wabanaki Confederacy, are indigenous to this land they call Wabanahkik, or "Dawnland."

We at Orchard Valley honor the continued resilience and resistance of the Abenaki people in the face of historical and ongoing oppression. As a school community, we are grateful for the privilege to learn, play and grow on Abenaki land and recognize the responsibility we have to care for it with reverence and learn from it with respect.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Governance at Orchard Valley Waldorf School

Please see the School Directory for committee lists and member contact information.

The Three Realms

According to Rudolf Steiner, Waldorf schools should be “self-administered,” rather than relying on a traditional, hierarchical governing structure. Steiner also suggests that the school should be viewed as a three-fold organism, comprising three interrelated **realms** of leadership.

The **Faculty** is responsible for cultivating a learning environment in the **cultural realm** of the classroom, the school and the surrounding community. Broad areas of responsibility delegated to the Faculty include (i) curriculum and pedagogy; (ii) school culture and spirit; (iii) self governance; (iv) program administration; and (v) communication. Coordination of the Faculty’s work occurs in a number of committees staffed by members of the Faculty and Administration.

Support for the school’s mission comes from parents and community members in the **economic realm** of the school. At OVWS, the **Board of Trustees** is entrusted with oversight of school finances, legal matters and long-term strategic planning. The Board is rarely involved in the day-to-day operation of the school, except through oversight of Board-adopted processes, Board committee work, delegation of tasks and review of reports. **Parent Council** provides a formal channel of communication and voice for the parents; promotes culture through assistance with development and education; and supports school events and fundraising.

The school’s **Administration** supports the overall mission of the school in the **rights realm**, bringing logistical support, leadership, guidance and expertise to the operation of the school. The scope of this work includes finance and development, enrollment, facility management, legal and regulatory compliance, communication and coordination, student health and records and operational as well as strategic planning. Members of the Administrative Team serve on most of the Faculty, Board and Parent Council committees.

Special Groups of the Faculty and Staff

Care Committee

This committee supports faculty in working with academic, social, and behavioral needs of individual students.

Collegial Circle

The Collegial Circle (CC) is a group that is in an active relationship with the spiritual being of the school. In partnership with the school’s administrative leadership, the faculty, the parent community and the Board of Trustees (BOT), the Collegial Circle:

- Furthers the mission of offering high-quality Waldorf education for families living around Central Vermont
- Provides curricular and pedagogical direction that supports Waldorf education and its insights into human development
- Facilitates the hiring process of qualified faculty
- Supports teacher development
- Addresses faculty performance and disciplinary issues
- Creates and maintains the anthroposophical impulses of the school, including festivals and school culture
- Provides meditative guidance and practice for issues presented by the administrative leadership, school faculty, parent body, and Board of Trustees

- Infuses the daily work of the school with spiritual impulse

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee

The DEI Committee's purpose is to make sure that the faculty, staff, and administration of Orchard Valley are upholding our diversity statement and putting into action the required steps needed to ensure our community is adopting an anti-oppression lens and committing to justice for all.

Some of the goals of this group are:

- To examine and advance our pedagogy, curriculum, and policies in regards to our diversity statement
- To tend to the social and emotional health of our community in regards to our diversity statement
- To encourage and take part in collective reflection and individual self-reflection in regards to our diversity statement

Facilities Committee

The aesthetics of the spaces that we inhabit are impactful on our whole beings. The goal of this committee is to oversee and coordinate the overall beautification of the interior and exterior spaces of the buildings and the adjacent grounds. The committee will create and maintain a consistent aesthetic of all campuses in keeping with Anthroposophical philosophy and vernacular of our area.

School Life Committee

This committee serves the school to bring more consciousness to the activities (festivals and events) which bring our school community together. Our goal is to enliven community participation in school activities.

Parent Council

The Parent Council provides a formal channel of communication and voice for the parents; to promote school culture through development and education of parents; to support the school and the work of the Faculty and Administration during school events and fundraisers. All are most welcome to join.

DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS

Attendance

Regular, prompt attendance from Early Childhood through the Grades is vital in helping your child build a deep connection with teachers, classmates and all aspects of the curriculum and provides a solid start to each day. School schedules strengthen and maximize rhythm for the students, providing the foundation for learning. Student absences, while sometimes inevitable, negatively impacts the wholeness and rhythm of a student's experience and absorption of the blocks and special subject material, and impacts academic progress. It is our shared responsibility to be sure that every child is safe and accounted for on every school day. ***Please schedule family trips or special outings for weekends and school vacations.***

Attendance and Absenteeism for PreK Students

PreK funding is tied to attendance, and we are required to report your child's attendance to your Supervisory Union as part of accessing Act 166/Universal Preschool funds. **Excessive absences may result in your PreK funding being discontinued, at the discretion of the SU/school district. Should this happen, you will be responsible for any unpaid balance.**

If your child is absent from PreK for:

- an average of one PreK day per week over the course of two months or
- more than 2 consecutive weeks or
- the equivalent of 3 weeks

Reporting Absence/Tardiness/Early Pickup and Pickup Change

If your child will be absent, tardy, or released early please do the following:

1. Contact the campus your child attends before 8:00 am and leave a message via phone or send an email. Campus contact info is:
Sweet Clover Nursery: sweetclovernursery@ovws.org 802-225-6490
Grace Farm orchardvalley@ovws.org 802-456-7400
2. Tell your child's teacher as soon as you schedule an expected absence, tardy, or early release. Teachers like to know of absences in advance so they can prepare homework if necessary.

Tardiness Protocol for the Grace Farm Campus

All students (Pre-K, Kindergarten, and Grades) who arrive after 8:25am are considered tardy and should do the following:

1. Report to the Front Office for a late slip so the student is not recorded as absent for the day.
2. Wait quietly outside the classroom door until the teacher indicates that they may enter without interrupting the morning rhythm. Tardy entrances are distracting to the other students as well as difficult for the student arriving late. Students arriving late can have trouble integrating into the day. There is often a correlation between consistently tardy arrival and academic performance and social issues. **Being present on time is also a life skill to be cultivated and respected.**
3. Process for ensuring timeliness:
 - After 3 days of unexcused tardiness, the front office will send an email with a reminder of drop off times and to alert parents that it is getting to a point of note.
 - After 7 days of unexcused tardiness, the teacher and parents will meet to develop a formal plan of action
 - After 10 days of unexcused tardiness, the teacher and Pedagogical Chair will meet with the parents to determine next steps.

Truancy Protocol for the Grace Farm Campus, Grades 1 - 8

Staying in school is the first step to a good education. Students cannot learn if they are not in school. Children ages 7-16 are required by law to be in a school or home school program approved by the Agency of Education. Absences from school for any reason (illness, vacation, religious holidays, family deaths, etc.) affect a student's ability to learn and succeed but are appropriate. Truancy is excessive absence from school, which is defined as the accumulation of 10 absences. We are required by law to have a procedure in place to evaluate the absences. This requirement is based on the fact that a student who misses 10 days of school is missing significant instructional time and may not take full advantage of the opportunities available to them. The process to ensure student attendance is as follows:

- After five UNEXCUSED absent days, an email will go out to the family from the Front Office that includes, if appropriate, support services available, a request for a doctor's note for any future absences and a copy of the Truancy policy. Documentation will be held in the student's record.
- After ten unexcused absent days, a parent meeting is called with the class teacher and Pedagogical Director to discuss impact of absences on child's membership within class and participation within the curriculum, sustainability of this school within the family's life, and planning for re-enrollment. The teacher will fill out a School Attendance Agreement including a written plan to improve the child's attendance going forward. This agreement must be signed by the parents and added to the student's file.
- After twelve unexcused days in one semester the Admin Director sends an affidavit to the State's Attorney and they may file a petition with the Dept of Children and families who may bring case to the Family Court.
- Area schools call in a truant officer after 12 days of unexcused absence.

The onset of this process is at the discretion of the teacher and the administration.

Arrival

Morning time is when all people, children and adults, are most sensitive. Being recently out of dreamland makes children very open to influences around them. It is especially important to set bedtimes early enough that children may wake slowly and follow an unrushed morning routine. We ask parents to bring children to the school quietly each morning and refrain from listening to the radio or music.

Grades Arrival

In seeing your child safely into our care, we ask that you save any involved questions or concerns which would interfere with the teacher's welcoming the children. We encourage you to write a short note to the teacher, leave a message with the Front Office Staff, or ask your child's teacher to call you during a planning period or in the evening. As the teachers need early morning time for their own inner and outer preparation, we ask that parents bring their children to class no earlier than 8:10 a.m.

Farmhouse Programs Arrival

If your child travels in a carpool, please ask the driving parent to bring the child directly to their teacher to be greeted. An adult must sign each child in with the time of arrival and initials.

As there is limited space in the sign-in area, please say goodbye quickly and quietly to your child before sending them into the classroom, and leave the building promptly since it can be difficult for children to engage with the school day until their parents are out of sight.

Dismissal

Carpool and Pickup Guidelines

Legally, the school must have written notice if anyone other than a parent picks up a child from school. Parents are to list the names of those authorized to pick up their children on the Permissions Forms available on the BigSIS portal. Identified individuals may include but are not limited to drivers of scheduled carpools, a grandparent who may pick up during a visit, those listed as emergency contacts, and others who may occasionally pick up your child for a playdate or if your schedule changes unexpectedly.

Please also complete the Carpool Form, which is available to download in BigSIS, and return it to the Front Office. If your pickup schedule changes from day to day, then a note should be signed and left with the child's teacher each morning. When there is a change in pickup during the day, please contact the campus front office at:

Grace Farm: 802-456-7400 or orchardvalley@ovws.org

Sweet Clover Nursery: 802-225-6490 or sweetclovernursery@ovws.org

Children will not be allowed to go home with anyone other than the designated pickup person without prior permission from a parent.

Apple Tree and Maple Tree Kindergartens (Farmhouse)

All children must be picked up at 12:00 noon unless they are enrolled in Aftercare, in which case pick-up is at 3:00pm (*2:15pm pick up on Thursdays*). If you have a child in both the Grades and Farmhouse, please pick up your younger child first. It is fine to arrive a few minutes early for Farmhouse pick-up.

Grades

Grades pickup is at 3pm, except Thursdays when we have early dismissal at 2:1pm..

Sweet Clover Nursery

Sweet Clover pickup is at 3:30pm, except Thursdays when dismissal is at 2:15pm.

Visiting Grace Farm Campus

For the safety of our staff and students, all visitors must sign in at the Front Office.

Orchard Valley Waldorf School School Access and Visitor Policy

In compliance with Act 29 related to school safety, OVWS will lock all exterior doors during the school day between 8:25am and 3:15pm. All visitors/ parents/ guardians must park in the large lot off Coburn Road. If the doors are already locked, please knock on the main door and wait to be admitted by Front Office staff. Proceed immediately to the Front Office to sign in and remember that you must also sign out before leaving the building. If you are coming to campus for any reason outside of drop off and pick up, you must stop by the Front Office to sign in.

Farm related buildings that will remain unlocked:

Garden shed

Goat shed

Sheep shed

Chicken coop

Orchard Valley Waldorf School Playground Expectations

Families are welcome to stay after school hours to use the playground at OVWS. In order to keep everyone safe and comfortable, it is important that we all follow the same guidelines for conduct. Adults supervising children should uphold the following expectations:

- I. General:
 - A. Children must be within sight and under the direct supervision of an adult at all times.
 - B. Shoes must be worn at all times.
 - C. Children are expected to be respectful and kind to each other. Teasing, taunting, and name calling are not permitted.
 - D. Roughhousing is not permitted. This includes hitting, kicking, pushing, and any play where another student could get hurt.
 - E. Hats are worn to protect the children from the elements. Taking another student's hat is not permitted, even in play.
 - F. Snowballs can be created for building or sculpting. Throwing snowballs at others is not permitted.
 - G. Children are welcome to climb the trees on campus and may climb as high as an adult's outstretched hand.

- II. Equipment, Structures, and Forts:
 - A. Pavilions are for class use only and not open to children during recess or after school.
 - B. Digging should only be done in the sandboxes.
 - C. The orchard play structure is for use by students in second grade and under.
 - D. Hammocks are meant for resting, not swinging. A maximum of two at a time should be in a hammock or on the slackline.
 - E. Families are welcome to bring their own balls, bats, shovels, etc. for use after hours. OVWS equipment and supplies are for use during the school day only. Hard balls such as baseballs and softballs are not permitted on campus.
 - F. Sledding is not permitted afterschool in the orchard area.
 - G. Students are expected to respect others' projects and leave them as they found them.
 - H. Students should only work on forts, sculptures, and outdoor projects that they helped create. They can play in them but not change them.

Classrooms are off limits.

Grace Farm Parking

Please use extreme caution whenever moving your vehicle at school. We ask that when you're parking, please be aware that it is a high traffic area! ***Slowly and carefully backing your vehicle into a space is our expected method of parking,*** to ensure that everyone is seen while pulling out of your parking space

- ***North Parking Lot (between the Farmhouse and Grades building) –Employee Parking Only.***
- ***South (large) Parking Lot – For Grades and Farmhouse Families, visitors.***
- ***Farmyard Parking area - Employee Parking Only***
- ***Driveway around the Farmhouse – DO NOT USE –*** This is strictly a walking path for entrance to the Early Childhood programs and a Fire Lane.
- ***Driveway between the South and North parking lots – ONE WAY!*** This is a Fire Lane and is only to be used as an exit from the South parking lot only. This is a fire lane. Do NOT park on this driveway.

- *We do not have a designated drop off area for older students. Please park and escort your child to the front door.*

For the safety of our children, please observe the following guidelines:

- Observe a 5mph speed limit when driving in the lots and on the roads at OVWS
- Escort your young children through the parking lots.
- Don't allow children to run in the parking areas.
- Don't stop to let children out of the car in the entrance to the South parking lot or the lot itself – this causes a traffic jam during busy times and is an unsafe practice. Please pull out of traffic to the drop off area and proceed as directed above.
- Don't leave your car running.

Never leave children unattended in the parking areas or in a car. Please remember to turn off your car for safety and better air quality.

Snack and Lunch

Grades 1-8: Each day in their respective classrooms the children eat a morning snack and lunch brought from home. We encourage parents to pack nutritious lunches for their children. Beverages may accompany lunches, or your child may drink water. **Candy and gum are not allowed in school.** On special occasions, parents provide snacks for the entire class. Simple, nutritious snacks are most appreciated.

Early Childhood programs: Children participate in the preparation of a nutritious, hearty morning snack. Children staying for afternoons should bring a nutritious lunch and an afternoon snack from home.

Outdoor Play and Recess

Grades 1-8: There are two recess periods daily; one following morning snack and one before or after lunch. All children go outdoors for recess. There are rare exceptions when indoor recess is called due to extreme rain or cold. Please see that children have clothing, outerwear and footwear that will keep them warm, dry and comfortable in any weather.

Early Childhood: Children spend a significant portion of the day outside. Please see that children have clothing, outerwear and footwear that will keep them warm, dry and comfortable in any weather.

When play activities or trips occur outside of the immediate play area, the school uses a walkie-talkie system for safety, allowing teachers to be in direct communication with the office.

School Cancellations

For notice of an emergency closing or school delay due to inclement weather, listen to radio WDEV 96.1 FM or 550 AM or most regional radio stations including NCS, The Point and Vermont Public. In addition, Grace Farm and Sweet Clover closings or delayed openings will be posted at www.vermontpublic.org and WCAX-TV and WPTZ-TV and will receive an early morning email from the front office and call from the school through our *DialMYCalls* phone blast system.

Since we are a school with two campuses we don't always close them at the same time. We typically follow the Montpelier Supervisory Union's decision to close or delay Sweet Clover programs and the Washington Central Unified Union School District to close or delay Grace Farm programs. There may be times when we close or delay our programs even if the local districts do not due to the awareness that our families come from a broad geographic area. If schools are closing in the central Vermont area, it is best to go to one of the above postings

for specific program information. You will find the closings listed under “Orchard Valley Waldorf School” and “Sweet Clover Nursery.”

Once school is in session for the day, we typically do not release our students until the end of their school day because of the logistics of notifying families from such a broad geographic area and the confusion it creates for carpooling families. In the event of sudden severe weather or a problem in one of the buildings, we would use the phone blast to alert families of an early closing.

Because our students travel from a broad geographic area with varied weather patterns we understand that families must make independent choices to travel or not. If the roads you travel are unsafe, please notify the school when you will be late, keeping your child home, or picking up early.

School Delay

If school is delayed, Grace Farm programs drop off will be from 10:10-10:25. Sweet Clover Nursery drop off will be from 10:00am-11:00am.

School Directory

A school directory is compiled each year listing students, families, faculty, and staff, as well as school committees and membership. This directory is provided electronically in pdf format and in hard copy after all Health and Emergency information has been updated by the school, usually by the end of September.

Weekly Email Update

A Weekly Update will be sent by email, with housekeeping notes, reminders, kudos, and important messages from faculty and staff. ***Please make a habit of reading this important newsletter every week, in a timely manner, and save orchardvalley@ovws.org in your email contacts.***

The *Apple Core* school newsletter is distributed quarterly to current families, alum families, and those who request it. Each issue varies in content, but typically contains school news from the faculty, administration, board and parent council and a brief calendar of upcoming school events. Each issue also offers a look into the curriculum in practice through articles about projects, presentations, field trips, and classwork in the grades, as well as early childhood class activities.

Telephone Messages

Grace Farm Campus

The school’s main telephone number is (802) 456-7400. Unless there is an emergency, we prefer that parents do not call their children at school. Emergency messages will be taken at the Front Office. If you do not reach someone, please leave a message for the office staff using the voicemail system.

Sweet Clover

The telephone number at Sweet Clover is (802) 225-6490 and parents in that program may leave messages for the teachers there for a more timely response. Questions regarding programs, finances, etc. should be directed to the Grace Farm campus.

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

Risk Management

OVWS works carefully to balance risk management with a very intentional allowance for direct experience and kinesthetic learning that support the physical, emotional and academic development of the child. Safely navigating risk is an important component of our curriculum, and our staff and faculty are CPR and First Aid certified.

Some of our practices include:

- active indoor and outdoor play, games, sports, and other activities
- tree climbing, fort building, jump rope
- building fires
- play with items from nature such as sticks and rocks
- the supervised use of knives and other tools in cooking, gardening, and woodworking
- handwork and textile projects
- exposure to the elements with daily outdoor time, in cold or heat, in rain and snow
- time spent outdoors all over the OVWS campus
- use of parent volunteer chaperones and private automobiles on field trips
- play equipment such as swings, monkey bars, climbing ropes, and climbing structures
- authentic chemistry and physics experiments (grades 7-8)

Emergency/Consent Forms

In an emergency, the school staff will use the information you provide on the Health and Emergency Form for contact numbers, physician name and telephone number, and specific instructions. In the event that you cannot be reached, your signed consent will allow us to give your child the medical attention they might need.

Please make sure student's emergency contact information is kept up to date with correct names and contact information at all times to ensure our ability to provide prompt and effective communication, treatment to your child should the need arise, and early pick up from school. An emergency can include an ill child who is extremely nauseated, vomiting, experiencing diarrhea, or has a high fever. Additional Contact information can be updated through the BigSIS portal or by contacting the Front Office at 802-456-7400 or orchardvalley@ovws.org.

All students must have an updated Health & Emergency Form completed and signed in BigSIS before the first day of school each year. Sweet Clover Nursery, PreK, and Kindergarten students must also complete the Child Care Health Exam Form (or similar statement of general health and wellness) signed by a provider.

The Health & Emergency Form is available for electronic signature in BigSIS under the Parents tab. The Child Care Health Form is available to download in BigSIS and must be returned to the Front Office orchardvalley@ovws.org

Illnesses and Supporting Wellness in our Community

Children benefit more from their time at school if they are well rested and in good health. If they are sent to school ill, they are unable to participate fully and their ability to heal is impaired. *Of great concern in a close school community is that sick children expose others to their illness, thereby setting off a potential wave of illness that impacts everyone.*

Please support our prevention efforts by following these guidelines at home:

- First and foremost, teach children to wash their hands well and often. This is a simple and extremely effective method for preventing the spread of viruses and bacteria; reinforced often, it will become a habit that doesn't even require reminders. Use soap, water, scrub for 20 seconds, and rinse with water flowing down the palms and off the fingers
- Be sure your child gets enough sleep and eats nutritious food.
- Teach children not to share personal items.
- Teach children to cover up coughs and sneezes using their inner elbow. If tissues are used, throw tissues directly into the trash and wash hands immediately.
- Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and the flu (see below).
- Keep sick children (or yourself) home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, without using fever-reducing drugs.

If you have any questions about the health of your child and whether or not they should be in school, please use the above guidelines, your best judgment, or consult your family physician. Please err on the side of caution, giving your child the opportunity to recover as much as possible before returning to school; doing so will benefit everyone.

Orchard Valley Waldorf School is required to report to the Vermont Department of Health any incidence of infectious diseases that are preventable through vaccination, and also flu. Please help us support a healthy school and fulfill our mandatory reporting requirements by informing the front office of your child's illness, whether the diagnosis is known or suspected.

To help you decide whether or not your child should be in school we offer the following minimum guidelines set by the State of Vermont, Department of Health

When A Child May Return To School Following An Illness

COVID-19: 24 hours fever free without use of fever reducing medications, 5 days after initial onset of symptoms or positive test (first day of symptoms or positive test is day 0), symptoms have improved, and either wear a mask until day 10 OR two consecutive negative rapid tests taken 24 hours apart no sooner than day 4.

Colds: 24 hours after the fever is gone, when mucus is clear

Strep Throat: 24 hours minimum after starting antibiotics or receiving a clear throat culture via a healthcare provider

Conjunctivitis (pink eye): 24 hours after beginning medication

Chicken pox: When blisters have completely scabbed over

Impetigo: 24 hours after beginning medication

Measles: 5 days after the rash appears

Mumps: 9 days after swelling starts

Pinworm: After a medicinal or alternative remedy has proven effective (stool test required)

Bronchitis: 24 hours after the fever is gone, mucus is clear

Pneumonia: This is a potentially serious illness that can have a viral or bacterial form and persist for a long period of time. Please consult your pediatrician before considering returning your child to school.

Special Health Needs

The school is not staffed with medical personnel. While most teachers and staff have CPR & First Aid training, they can only administer simple first aid and basic CPR. If your child has special medical needs, please bring it to the attention of your child's teacher and the office upon enrollment and give them regular updates as needed.

Orchard Valley Waldorf School does not have a school nurse or other medical professionals on staff. It will be at the discretion of the class teacher and/or the front office staff to send a child home when they are feeling unwell.

Medications

All medications to be given during the school day, including prescription, over-the-counter, and homeopathic, are to be brought to school by a parent in its original and professionally labeled packaging with the child's name and with a Medication Administration Form (*downloadable in BigSIS*) specifying the timing, dosage, and route of administration. Prescribed inhalers must come with a spacer and Asthma Action Plan from a healthcare provider. The medication and instructions will be returned to the parent upon completion of the usage. No other medication will be administered, excluding extraordinary emergency situations.

Grades 1-8: All medications will be given to the Front Office.

Early Childhood: All medications will be given to the Class Teacher.

Immunization Records

These records are kept in a locked file cabinet in the Front Office and are reported to the Vermont Department of Health as required.

The Vermont Department of Health specifies that no child may enroll in school unless a physician record states that all immunizations are up to date. However, there are exemptions to this requirement.

Religious – If the parent or guardian has religious convictions opposed to immunization, an Immunization Exemption Form must be signed and on file in the student's permanent record. These exemption forms are downloadable in BigSIS and are required to be updated **before** the start of school every year.

Medical exemptions – If the child has a medical condition which prevents immunizations an Exemption Form **signed by a physician must be on file in the student's permanent record.**

Student Accident Policy

OVWS students are covered by our student accident insurance policy for injuries resulting from an accident which occurs directly from:

1. Activities that are scheduled, sponsored or supervised by OVWS
2. Premises owned, leased or borrowed by OVWS
3. Travel scheduled, sponsored or supervised by OVWS.

The policy will pay the eligible medical expenses incurred within one year from the date of an Accident that exceed the deductible of \$100. The maximum amount payable per covered person, per accident is \$25,000. Eligible medical expenses may not exceed the Usual & Customary charge for the service or treatment provided.

A certificate of insurance providing complete details regarding the student accident insurance plan can be made available upon request.

OVWS Tick Prevention and Removal Procedure

Tick populations have gotten comfortable in Central Vermont. With this understanding we are prepared to be on the lookout for ticks and have put the following precautions and protocol in place.

Students are encouraged to wear light colored full length pants that can be tucked into socks when on campus to deter ticks. Routine visual tick checks will happen during the day. These are not going to be as thorough as can be done unclothed at home. Parents are encouraged to do a thorough tick check at the end of the day with their child.

Ticks that are found crawling are to be disposed of by placing them between two pieces of tape and discarding them in the trash.

It is the intention of OVWS faculty and Staff to take proactive care of our students in the event of an embedded tick.

The procedure for removing ticks that have become embedded is as follows:

- Send the student with an embedded tick to the Front Office if feasible. If an embedded tick is found while on the land, the teacher will be responsible for following the tick removal protocol.
- Teacher or Front office staff will remove the tick as follows:
 - Don't handle the tick with bare hands. Use a tick key to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Gently pull out the tick using a slow and steady upward motion. Avoid twisting or squeezing the tick.
- Seal the tick in a small zip lock bag purchased specifically for collecting ticks.
- Apply rubbing alcohol to the bite area and circle bite with a skin safe marker.
- Tape the zip lock bag to a piece of paper with the following information written on it:
 - Child's first and last name,
 - Date,
 - Location on campus where the tick was discovered on the child
- Call the parents to inform them of the tick bite before the end of the school day and give them the bagged tick when they come to pick up their child.

Lice Policy

It is the intention of the Orchard Valley Waldorf School that cases of head lice be contained so that they do not spread among the children. The following steps are required once a child is suspected of having lice.

- If head lice is discovered at home, immediately notify the Front Office **AND** your child's teacher. Notification from the office, in the form of an email message will be sent to all school families that day to the best of our ability. The school will announce the Grade(s) of the student(s) involved but no names. We ask that families who spend time together will let one another know when they have a case of lice.
- If head lice are discovered at school, the parent will be notified immediately by phone and school-wide notification will go out that day. Parents have the option of picking up their child right away or at the

normal pick up time. If a child is not picked up right away, they will be asked to tie their hair back close to their head for the rest of the day and urged to avoid head-to-head contact from other classmates.

- Orchard Valley Waldorf School recognizes that each family will use the treatment that they feel is best for their child. However, whatever treatment is used, the child may return to school **only** as long as they are free of live lice **and** a reasonable attempt has been made to remove all nits from the hair. (The complete removal of nits can take several days of combing and manual removal and we do not want students to miss school for this reason) Children will be asked to keep their hair pulled back close to the head when they return. They may choose to wear a bandana or hat as well.
- The Faculty/Staff at Orchard Valley Waldorf School will only check the head of a child who is observed to be vigorously scratching. There will not be any class-wide or school-wide checks made at school.
- There are many resources available on the internet to help guide you in your treatment of head lice but OVWS suggests that you consult with your physician's office for their recommendation first.

CONSCIOUS PROTECTION OF CHILDHOOD

In order to support your child's Waldorf education at home we encourage you to foster a rhythmic home life by providing consistent meal times, bedtimes, and scheduled downtime.

Homework

While there may be an occasional home-based activity in grades 1-3, regular homework is not introduced formally until grade 4. The stable, habit life of materials-management is ideally established in grade 4, paving the way for regular homework in grades 5-8.

Field Trips

Field trips are curricular and social activities pedagogically-designed for a specific class (es); therefore, siblings are asked to remain at home.

Local trips during the school day

Parents will be given at least one week's notification of all local class trips. Each family will be asked to sign a permission form for each class trip.

Overnight trips

A specific permission form will go home at least two weeks prior to a school or class field trip that extends beyond our locality or requires an overnight stay.

Parent drivers

Each year, prior to driving for a field trip, parents must sign the Volunteer Driver Protocol Form, which can be found on the BigSIS portal, and provide copies of current driver's license and car insurance. This form and copies are kept on file in the Front Office. Should there be more than 30 students attending a field trip, OVWS will use a school bus for transportation.

Aftercare

Serves children enrolled in the Grace Farm and Child's Garden Early Childhood programs from noon to 3:00pm. This program has a 4STARS rating by Vermont's Step Ahead Recognition System for recognizing high-quality child care programs. The program follows a simple, consistent daily rhythm:

- lunch and snack (brought from home)

- an extended rest period that provides the opportunity for real sleep for the younger children and significant “down-time” for the older children (the school supplies comfortable mattresses; parents supply a sleeping bag and a stuffed animal)
- play time that supports genuine creative play and provides generous amounts of outdoor time, seasonal handwork and craft activities

FESTIVALS

The school community hosts a variety of seasonal festivals throughout the year. Festival days are a source of joy and enrichment for all. Our annual festivals include Michaelmas/Fall Festival, Lantern Walk, Winter Spiral and Mayfest. Your family will be asked to help with Michaelmas (autumn) and/or Mayfest (spring).

We strive to bring a universal nature to our celebrations of festivals through their connection with the rhythms of the earth. These celebrations help reveal the deeper significance of many everyday occurrences. The rhythms of the year, though taken up in each class in different ways, help provide a common foundation for the children. Waldorf education does not seek to teach a particular religious view. Rather, the human spirit finds its expression in seasonal festivals and is celebrated through story and artistic presentation in assemblies and in the classroom. Our festivals inspire us to see beyond our daily world and to feel the wisdom and spiritual renewal which have nourished people for millennia.

In our festivals we hope to create a mood of reverence which can then be carried into each family’s particular celebrations, whatever their religion or culture. The teachers do not seek to explain the meaning of the festivals to the children, but allow them to take these things quietly into their hearts. A child’s role in the festival changes with age. Adding a component of service for the older child builds upon his or her earlier experiences of the festival.

At Orchard Valley, festivals form the centerpiece of community involvement and are cherished by teachers and children alike, who are inspired by the power of these gatherings, the strength behind the verses and songs, and the tradition of activities that enliven each festival day. Parental participation in festivals enlivens the experience of the festival for the whole community. The faculty warmly encourages parents to offer their own spiritual traditions, either as part of a festival, a distinct celebration, or a tradition to deepen the curriculum in a particular grade. Parents are requested to contact their child’s teacher with your ideas.

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

Michaelmas/Fall Festival (October)

Michaelmas is an ancient festival that dates back to the sixth century and coincides with the autumnal equinox. Legends describe St. Michael facing and taming a dragon. The motif of a conqueror of the dragon is also echoed in stories of Apollo and the serpent, Krishna and the demons, and St. George and the dragon. It is a festival that celebrates deeds of strength and courage, of facing “dragons” both external and internal. Waldorf schools celebrate Michaelmas as a harvest festival; a time of celebration, a time of seeking balance within oneself, between hope and struggle, and a time to embrace the challenges which we meet in life.

Lantern Walk (November; Early Childhood families and Grades 1 & 2)

The history of Martinmas/Lantern Walk comes from the French legend of Saint Martin of Tours. Martin was a soldier in the 4th Century. Legend says that one wintry night he met a poor beggar, half naked and freezing. He

removed his cloak, cut it in two, and gave half to the beggar. Martin represents the attitude of selflessness, a devotion to humankind, and the ability to bring warmth and hope to those in struggle. According to old customs, as the days become shorter and the stars appear earlier, children would walk with lanterns through the streets singing. Our lantern walk is a simple, short, beautiful experience for the children. Here at the Orchard Valley Waldorf School we work with the idea of creating an inner and outer light to help guide us all through this approaching dark time of the year. Seeing the children carrying their outer lights through the night reminds us of the unique individuality and inner light of each child.

Winter Spiral (December)

The Winter Spiral is a simple festival of lights with roots in the rural Bavarian folk-culture. In 1926 the pedagogical-therapeutic practice of walking a spiral and the Bavarian “winter garden” combined to create a new ritual that celebrates bringing illumination to the hibernation and internal reflection offered by the cold and quiet of December. At Orchard Valley children hold small jars with candles and walk along the spiral path of fir boughs and moss, surrounded by the reverence of music towards a light at the center of the spiral. They light their candle at that center, and then set their candle along the spiral on their way out, to add light for the next person walking in.

In many Waldorf schools throughout the United States it is customary to hold the Winter Spiral in December. The essence of the festival is one of peaceful anticipation. What begins as a labyrinth of stillness in twilight, with each additional candle gradually illuminating the winter’s night. Ending in full community, our spirits shining together shed a beautiful, bright light!

Mayfest (May)

This ancient celebration of spring brings beauty to our campus and our lives as we move through the cycle of the seasons. In early May, we welcome spring and the season of growth and light at the East Montpelier campus with class performances around the maypole, fun activities for the whole family and a wonderful opportunity for our extended community to visit our school and share in this day of merriment. The festival begins with the always-entertaining domestic dispute between King Winter and Lady Spring. Dances by Grades 3, 4 and 5 are one of the day’s special features, followed by activities for everyone.

Other Events

- School Warming before the first day of school (parents only)
- Opening Circle (Rose Ceremony) for the Grades
- Winter Solstice Concert for the Grades
- Annual Community Meeting
- Class Plays
- Final Day Sharing for the Grades
- Graduation

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Educational Support

Record Keeping of Assessment Results

The school assesses children transitioning from Kindergarten to First grade each spring. Formal assessments are conducted on a periodic basis to determine academic progress and assessment results are summarized and shared with teachers with a copy filed in each student's permanent record. Conferences may be scheduled based on the results of the assessments. First-Eighth grade individual assessments may be requested by the teacher or parents. Those results are placed in the student's permanent record.

Educational Support and Title I

Orchard Valley employs a Student Services Coordinator/Educator to oversee and case manage the Title I students' services, collaborate with local districts, arrange for comprehensive evaluations where warranted, serve as a conduit between school and families, and provide small group instruction in reading and writing to students with learning difficulties. This person is also responsible for administering the assessments mentioned above.

Title II funding is made available through the Washington Central Supervisory Union allowing OVWS faculty to receive training in literacy and mathematics.

Special Education Eligibility

Upon enrollment in an Independent School you are waiving your right to services available through the public school system.

Children enrolled at OVWS who are suspected of having a disability may be eligible for a comprehensive evaluation through the Washington Central Unified Union School District (WCUUSD). This may include academic, psychological, speech and language, or other assessments to determine whether the child would be eligible for special education services in their local school. It is the right of any child and family attending an independent or public school to request an evaluation to determine if a disability exists through the State Child Find mandate. To be determined eligible for Special Education under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA), the child must be determined to have a disability that adversely affects his/her academic performance and must have a need for specialized instruction. Parents who believe their child has a disability and may be eligible for special education can make a request for an evaluation by calling the Student Services Coordinator at the school for more information.

When an enrolled child is identified by the faculty as having special learning or emotional needs requiring special services to support his/her success within the school but does not qualify for an IEP, the child's teacher, parents and others directly involved will work with the Student Services Coordinator to develop and agree to an educational plan.

If the local school district offers your child a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and you decide to place your child in an independent school (such as OVWS) on your own, the school district does not have to provide or pay the cost of special education and related services.

Should specific needs to meet your child's educational progress be identified by the class teacher, the student services coordinator, or outside assessments that cannot be met at Orchard Valley, there may be a determination made that your child will be better served in another educational environment.

COMMUNICATION

Approval of Written Materials

Prior to any written materials being distributed to OVWS mailing lists, through the weekly email updates, or the pouch system in the farmhouse, all written material must be given to the Front Office for prior approval. Submit material at least three days before publication or intended distribution to allow time for review and editing, should this be indicated. This will allow parents to trust that OVWS email is an official communication from the school, for which it accepts full responsibility.

Communication Procedure/Expectations

When you have a grievance or concern to discuss with a teacher or staff, our expectation is that this happens in person. Written communication through email can sometimes offer a false shield which allows for an easy channel to express harsh tone, venting, and general disgruntledness. Our expectation is that everyone in our community work sequentially through the communication principles listed below and that email be used for logistical and scheduling purposes, not to communicate concerns or difficulties.

Communication Principles

We realize that effective communication is the key to our healthy social working. It is important to note that one unique aspect of a Waldorf school's underlying philosophy is the realization that difficulties and differences of opinion are inherent and necessary in human encounters; that the willingness to struggle consciously to overcome conflict offers valuable opportunities for personal/spiritual growth.

If you have a concern, please utilize the following constructive avenues toward resolution:

- 1. Inner Reflection:** First work on the question within yourself, if possible, to come to a centered understanding of your feelings and needs.
- 2. Speak Directly to the Person Involved:** To assure a healthy community, speaking first to the person(s) directly involved is absolutely necessary. As tone and intention can be easily miscommunicated through email and text, we encourage in-person conversations.
- 3. Pedagogical/Class concern:** If you have a concern about your child or a situation in the classroom, please discuss your concerns directly with the child's teacher. Our teachers are dedicated to working in partnership with parents to do what is best for each child; they appreciate your involvement. If after speaking with your child's teacher you still have concerns, please speak to our Pedagogical Chair who will help guide the process.
- 4. General School Concerns:** If you have questions or concerns regarding school policies, finances, use of facility, publications, schedules and events, legal matters and safety, please speak with the Administrative Director who will connect you with the appropriate Faculty, Staff, Board Member or committee.

If you still have not reached a resolution after following these Communication Principles, please set up a time to talk to the Administrative Director to discuss your concerns. The Administrative Director will help facilitate resolution.

Communication Pathways between Parents and Teachers

Class Meetings: Class teachers schedule three meetings per year for the parents of the children in their class which are essential for you to attend. These meetings are an integral bridge between home and school and offer parents an opportunity to become familiar with the activities of the class. The meetings may include discussions on various aspects of Waldorf education as well as pertinent pedagogical information. Often there will be an article to read and discussion of its relevance to the children's stage of development. Attendance by at least one parent of each child is expected. If you are unable to attend, please notify your child's teacher.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year. School is not in session on days where conference times are available during the school day; parents will have opportunities to sign up for conferences during the day or after school to accommodate a variety of family schedules. Conferences allow time for you and your child's teachers to discuss your child's progress in school. Special subject teachers will also offer appointments so that parents can have individual conferences with them. Childcare is provided for families only during your appointment time so that you may speak with your child's teacher privately. A sign-up sheet for conferences will be available electronically one week before the conference dates; look for an email with a link to sign up for your conference times. Supplemental conferences may be scheduled at the request of the parent or teacher. During conferences your child's teacher will share with you:

Grades 1—8: Main lesson books, drawings, paintings, compositions, and math work done by your child. A description of your child's progress in all subjects and his/her interactions with peers. Problems and challenges faced by your child leading to a conversation about steps you and the teacher can take to overcome them.

Early Childhood: Their observations of your child's physical, emotional and social growth in the classroom. Examples of your child's work in class. Any concerns your teacher or you may have regarding your child's development.

In addition to the scheduled parent/teacher conferences you or your teacher may find a need for additional conference time. A phone conference or in-person conference may be scheduled as you or your child's teacher deem necessary. Your child's teachers welcome your calls and concerns during school hours regarding your child's participation in class.

Teacher Letters: All class teachers will email periodic letters about class activities. Grades 1-8 class teachers will send email letters at the beginning of each new teaching block. Early Childhood teachers will send email letters every three to four weeks. These letters are intended to update the parents on the activities of the class, inform families about upcoming curriculum, field trip plans and any other vital information you might need.

School Reports: *OVWS does not follow a traditional grading system for student evaluation.* The year-end report for all grades including Early Childhood programs will also include a curriculum summary for the year. All reports become part of your child's permanent academic file.

Grades 1—8: Teachers prepare a mid-year progress report and end-of-year narrative report for each child which will include a characterization of the child and his/her work, attitude, effort and accomplishments in relation to each subject. These reports are for parents only and the teachers respectfully request that parents not share these with their child. Direct feedback from the teacher to the child is ongoing in the classroom.

Early Childhood: Our Early Childhood teachers prepare a year-end report for PreK students and mid-year and end of year reports for Kindergarten students.

PARENTING IN A WALDORF SCHOOL

Orchard Valley Waldorf School appreciates the leading role parents play in their children's education. Along with this responsibility come many opportunities for parents to learn, grow, and socialize. The Weekly Update sent by email, special event flyers and postings will alert the community to workshops, study groups, craft groups, and adult classes on topics designed to deepen an understanding of Waldorf Education, community, personal growth, and child development. This level of caring and participation continues into the Grades. As children mature and gradually become more independent, their parents often become leaders of the school community.

Throughout your child's educational journey, you are invited to join wholeheartedly in our community of caring and dedicated parents.

Collaborative Parenting Practices that Support Waldorf Schooling

Given that many Waldorf Parenting “Do’s and Don’ts” can be overwhelming, this list is offered as those that are most supportive of the faculty and staff’s work with all of our students and parents.

1. Ensure your child(ren) arrives five minutes early to school and to school events, every day.
2. Model respect for school policies to your child, especially the policies with which you disagree.
3. Talk to your child’s class teacher about other schooling options before notifying your child of a potential or planned school change.
4. Keep disagreements or conflicts that reside in the adult work of co-parenting and collaborating with teachers and administration strictly among the adults.
5. Hold conversations about dissatisfaction, frustrations, fears, and disagreements entirely away from the ears of students and practice direct resolution between adults.
6. Beware of judgment and exclusion of others, and check carefully all critical comments (derogatory) about any member of your child’s community in front of your child.
7. Do not criticize a classmate or any other student in front of your child.

Resources for Parents

Parents are strongly encouraged to become familiar with the basics of the Waldorf approach as an inspiring way to enhance their children’s education as well as their own participation in the life of the school. Your child(s) teacher may be able to make recommendations for books, podcasts, websites, and other resources.

A parent library is located in the cubby room at the Farmhouse. All are welcome to use the resources there. When borrowing a book, follow the posted instructions and return the book within a month so that it may be available for others.

Another great online resource is at the website for the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA), <https://www.waldorfeducation.org>. They have articles, a bookstore with reviews to include children’s books organized by age groupings and books on parenting, Waldorf education, and many other topics of interest.

All-School Meetings

All-school meetings, such as the School Warming night and the Annual Community Meeting, bring the parent community together at least twice a year. Additional all-school meetings may be scheduled as needed. Please plan on attending these meetings as they are essential to building and maintaining a cohesive school community. Should you be unable to attend please inform yourself of what you missed by reading the emailed minutes.

Topics discussed at these meetings may include but are not limited to: Site renovation planning, strategic planning, changes of programs, election of new board members, reports from the board, faculty and school committees, etc. All-school meetings provide the opportunity for all members to gain a sense of the spirit of the larger school community outside their children's classes and to meet more members of the parent body, faculty and board. They are a forum to develop and generate enthusiasm for a shared vision and to mobilize support for implementing our plans for growth and development.

Volunteer Service

By far the most important contribution you can make to the school is your support. Orchard Valley was started by parents and parents continue to be a vital part of its strength and success. The entire parent community has continually given a heartwarming amount of volunteer support for the school and there have always been a few especially dedicated individuals who amaze both the community and themselves with what they can and do give. Some of the areas covered by the volunteer program include:

- Board Service
- Building and Grounds Maintenance, Repair, and Cleaning
- Class Parent/Parent Council Representative
- Classroom Teacher Support
- Community Outreach
- Community Work Days
- Development Committee Membership
- Festivals, Community Events, and Open Houses
- Finance Committee Membership
- Fundraising
- Office Support
- Public Relations and Publicity
- Special Programs and Activities
- IT Support

FUNDING A WALDORF SCHOOL

The Family's Role

Like all non-profits, Orchard Valley Waldorf School must raise some of its income each year through fundraising efforts. The staff, Board of Trustees and OVWS community collaborate in a multitude of ways to build a strong foundation for our school and development/fundraising is an integral part of these efforts. Orchard Valley thrives on a mix of support from each family in the form of tuition, donations, and volunteer work. The amounts and proportions will be different for each family, per their unique circumstances. We ask that each parent consider his or her participation in all three ways, each according to means, and to the extent that is healthy and

sustainable with the many other demands of family, work life, etc. Beyond making the school a financial priority for tuition and philanthropic giving, many of our parents form their deepest friendships through volunteer work.

School parents are asked to contribute in the following ways:

Annual Giving Campaign

As in other independent schools, ***tuition and fees fund only a portion of the school's expenses***. Whereas Waldorf schools in Europe are heavily subsidized by a high income tax structure and federal funding, Waldorf schools in the United States are funded by philanthropic gifts, primarily from parents, relatives and friends of enrolled students as well as alumni as the school grows.

It is critical that every family participate in the Annual Appeal through their own gift(s) and by asking relatives and friends to give as well. When seeking money from investors or philanthropic organizations, the first question they ask is "Have you asked your parent body to contribute and what percentage does?" The higher the percentage, the more likely OVWS is to get outside support. This is the easiest and most effective fundraiser at OVWS, requiring very little effort and time on the part of our community. The Annual Appeal kickoff is typically in late October but gifts to the Annual Appeal may be made at any time during the school year by check, securities, direct bank transfer and through BigSIS. Please make a gift to the school your top priority for your charitable giving practices. EVERY GIFT, including the small ones, is critical to the school's health.

Fundraising Events

Fundraisers are primarily led by the parent community with administrative support from the school. Members of the Parent Council chair the events and require all OVWS parents to participate in order to be successful. Sign-ups are done for each individual event during the planning process. All of these events are open to the public and we encourage our families to reach out to friends and family and bring them along. They are a great first introduction!

We welcome your ideas and action in creating a successful event. Some past fundraisers have included:

Holiday Market (November): A beautiful shopping opportunity that showcases local vendors, an anthroposophical book sale, school crafts sale, as well as a luncheon held by the 8th grade.

Winter Fair (February): A fun-filled, child-centered day of crafting, eating, merry-making and wonderment! This kick off to the winter season on our beautiful 55-acre campus includes an array of craft projects to make, a musical cake walk game, outdoor games, a community craft and book sale, special fair characters to widen the eyes of our littlest ones, lots of delicious food and live music. Special activities for young children include puppet shows, storytelling, the Crystal Cave featuring the Snow Queen, and face painting. There is a fee for activities.

Auction (Mar/April): This event has taken many forms over the years, including a "Gala Auction" with live entertainment, catered food, local spirits, and over 100 items such as personal health services, gift certificates to all the area restaurants and businesses, artwork, gym memberships, items from local artisans, and more!

POLICIES

Animals on Campus

For the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors, we do not permit dogs or other animals to be on our campuses. We expect dogs to be left at home or in the car during the busy drop off and pickup times. We ask that animals that are not part of our programs be left at home.

If you have a service dog accompanying you, please check in with the Front Office so we know that a service animal is on campus.

Dress Code

Each occasion and activity lends itself to a certain kind of attire. Yard work, weddings, a beach vacation or dinner party all have an appropriate way of dressing. The school day, likewise, requires a level of outer preparedness which reflects the social mood and learning activities of the classroom environment. It is in this spirit that these policies have been created.

For the purposes of this policy, dress refers to clothing, footwear, cosmetics and hairstyling. This has been established out of our respect for the growing, developing child and in support of healthy social, emotional, and physical development.

- Students must be able to fully participate in all school activities free of hindrance by their dress.
- In order to support our media policy we expect clothing to be free from media images.
- Children must always be dressed appropriately for the weather since recess is outdoors, rain or shine. They must be able to participate in On the Land lessons in any weather. This requires boots, rain pants, and raincoats during the rainy months and full snow gear and boots in the winter months
- Indoor shoes are required and must support the whole foot and provide good traction and protection. Indoor shoes are used for student safety and to keep the school clean. One pair of indoor shoes used exclusively indoors in all seasons must be kept at school.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are special occasions for the whole class. Please do not send invitations to school for a birthday party unless all children in the class are invited. You may want to consider a party that includes all the children in the class.

Grades 1—8: Please discuss your child's birthday celebration with their teacher in advance.

Early Childhood Programs: Birthdays in our Early Childhood programs are celebrated with a special gathering of family and classmates. Each teacher has their own way of making this a special celebration and will let you know what to expect at the beginning of the year.

Media Exposure

The faculty finds that Waldorf Education works best with children who experience little or no electronic media exposure. Media's potentially damaging impact is contrary to our focus on nurturing capacities for imagination, independent thinking, healthy feeling and enthusiastic participation. Our definition of media includes (but is not

limited to) videos, social media, texting, DVDs, video games, cell phones, tablets, computers, computer games, television, movies, electronic toys, digital watches and anything that has a screen.

The following policy is put forth to offer guidance and support to families based upon accumulated knowledge and professional expertise regarding child development, education and media exposure. We fully recognize the prevalence of media in our culture and the need that many adults have for this in their vocation and leisure time. We must also recognize, however, that the adult, unlike the child, has the ability to absorb and consciously process these experiences.

Parents are encouraged to speak to teachers about questions and challenges related to media so that together we can work out a viable approach. If a student's media exposure disturbs the healthy classroom atmosphere, teachers will ask parents to reduce or eliminate exposure. We encourage you to take up your own study. Here is a list to help you understand the above mentioned policy.

Media Reading List

Electronic Media – television in particular

Amusing Ourselves to Death by Neil Postman

The Plug-In Drug by Marie Winn

Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television by Susan R. Johnson, M.D.

How Television Poisons Children's Minds by Everett Miles, Ph.D.

The Children of Cyclops: The Influence of Television Viewing on the Developing Human Brain by Keith Buzzel

Computers in Education

Failure to Connect by Jane Healy

Computers in Education by Sloan, Fink & Mitchell

The End of Education by Neil Postman

Technopoly by Neil Postman

Silicon Snake Oil: Second Thoughts on the Information Highway by Clifford Stoll

The Future Does Not Compute: Transcending the Machines in Our Midst by Stephen Talbott

The Computer Delusion (Atlantic Monthly, July 1997) by Todd Oppenheimer

The Child and the Machine by Armstrong, Alison & Casement

General Media Guidelines

While television viewing occurs at home and not in the school, its adverse effects are brought to school in altered play patterns, shortened attention spans, and hampered listening and learning skills. Even good shows or educational games rob young children of the time to play imaginatively and rob school age children of free time in which they can be creative. In addition, exposure to commercial television has influences inconsistent with those we emphasize at school.

Thus, we strongly urge the elimination of all media in the early childhood through fifth grade, and ideally through eighth grade. If any media is permitted, students should not watch on school nights (Sunday through Thursday). Weekend watching should be restricted to worthwhile productions lasting no more than one or two hours.

Video and computer games are particularly objectionable because they can create addictive behavior. Ongoing exposure to video games and computer games can lead to obesity, hyperactivity, and inattention. Social networking can be exclusive and challenging, disrupting the social well-being of the class as well as robbing students from practicing and learning important interpersonal life skills.

Electronic toys, games, digital watches with games, music devices, and cell phones are not allowed to be used in school and will be confiscated by faculty or staff. These items will be returned to parents.

Virtual Play

Waldorf educators are increasingly concerned about the detrimental impact of virtual play on children. Online virtual sites are not only addictive, but encourage students to view themselves as consumers. The Waldorf philosophy places great value on children learning to explore the richness of the natural world; on developing skills for meaningful interpersonal relationships; on the importance of an unfettered imagination to lay the foundation for critical thinking. Virtual play greatly undermines these values. We very strongly discourage these activities for all students.

Media Guidelines — Grades 6-8

Waldorf education seeks to provide meaningful, hands-on experiences that foster appreciation for the natural world and promote enthusiasm about life. Although we encourage the complete elimination of media experiences in the lives of our younger students, we understand that sustaining this expectation may be more difficult for middle school students. However, it is our experience, and one backed by outside researchers, that students who are exposed to a great deal of media often have a more difficult time focusing on their lessons and frequently become preoccupied with discussions about shows and movies during class. These students are also more likely to be lethargic and apathetic when faced with challenges, and may have difficulty engaging during individual and group projects.

Once again, in the interest of supporting a dynamic and creative learning atmosphere in the classroom, we urge parents to strongly discourage any media exposure on school nights (*including Sundays*), and to limit exposure to one or two (1-2) hours on weekends.

Social Networking, Email and Computer Skills: Although we encourage the gradual development of word-processing and typing skills in 8th grade, we strongly discourage our students from using social networking applications or email to communicate with one another. During the middle school years, students can be quite impulsive in their feeling life. Messages may be misinterpreted, forwarded to others, or used as ammunition in social disputes. Thus, please encourage students to engage in direct verbal communication with one another instead.

Text messaging, online social networking, chat rooms and instant messaging also weaken efforts to promote real, meaningful social relationships and are strongly discouraged.

Movies: Students who attend movies should be encouraged to enjoy films with inspiring storylines and well developed characters. Parents are encouraged to develop a list of good choices to share with one another. There may be a few, very limited occasions when a movie rated PG-13 may be appropriate for upper school students. However, R rated movies are strongly discouraged. As always, any activity where students are engaged in a creative process is much preferred over passive viewing. In particular, please be sensitive to the impact your children's media exposure may have on their classmates. We urge you to discuss these issues with your child's teachers and at class parent evenings.

Public Media Use Policy

The Weekly Update, *The Apple Core* newsletter, OVWS school website, Facebook pages, Instagram, and our physical school bulletin boards provide important communication bridges between school and home life. The

purpose of these communications is to provide information of interest to the Orchard Valley community as well as serve as a communication tool for school policy, activities and events, and parent sharing.

Only messages and events related to Orchard Valley school life can be posted on these community media sources. We cannot permit any solicitations, sales promotions, or services offered by individuals, except for those activities specifically authorized by Orchard Valley and/or specifically a part of Orchard Valley programming or fundraising. Competitive programming will not be approved for publication or posting. Additionally, we cannot permit the dissemination of information used to promote or publicize a particular political point of view.

Schoolwide as well as class email lists are to be used for school and class-related needs only.

Any individual who wishes to post a flier to a school bulletin board must send the information or flier to the Front Office. If approved, the information will be posted.

Student Conduct

Our school is a community of adults and children engaged in the activity of daily living, learning, and working. The adults assume responsibility for the safety and health of all children. We need to be living examples of fair, moral, and respectful behavior. We view discipline as an inner guide for true human interactions and we strive as adults through our own words and conduct to create a loving, supportive environment where the children experience discipline as the natural way of being.

General Expectations of Conduct

Each teacher employs his or her own strategies to uphold clearly stated behavioral expectations. When students are disruptive, interrupting classroom learning, or misbehaving on the playground, staff members will use effective methods to ensure a healthy and productive environment for all students.

Teachers, students and parents will work together to model and support the following:

- **Respect and Care** for self, others, personal and school property, the natural world, and all living creatures.
- **Safety** – being safe, playing safe.
- **Cooperation** – with classmates, teachers and staff.

To support these values students are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

In the Classroom

1. Respectful listening to teacher and classmates.
2. Be on time for school and every lesson.
3. Keep the classroom and its contents clean and orderly to ensure the safety and beauty of the room.
4. Set a good example.
5. Toys and electronic devices stay at home.
6. Join in during lessons and take up school work.

In the Hallways

1. Walk, don't run.
2. Speak very quietly so that other classes are not disturbed.
3. Don't loiter.

On the Playground

1. Stay within playground boundaries.
2. In play, all are welcome.

3. Tree climbing requires verbal permission from a supervising teacher.
4. Snowball fights and play involving physical contact are not allowed.
5. Take turns using play equipment.
6. At the ringing of the warning bell, collect all your clothes and return playground equipment you use to its proper storage place.
7. At the ringing of the final bell, promptly join your class in line and return to class quietly.

During Field Trips, Festivals, and Assemblies

1. Stay together, listen and follow the directions of the teacher and chaperones.
2. Remember you are a representative of the school and your family; your behavior away from school is a reflection of them both.
3. When attending a performance applause is appreciated at the end. Soft whispers are acceptable between acts, but not during a presentation.
4. Electronic devices stay at home.

Guidelines for Early Childhood Behavior and Discipline

Young children are just learning what is appropriate and what is not. We expect that learning these behaviors will be an important part of our work with the children. It is our job to be clear and loving guides in this learning process.

Teachers create activities and stories that encourage gentle, imaginative, kind behaviors, words and touch. Teachers use humor, games, and imagination to encourage cooperation and self-initiated compliance. Teachers use positive redirection and always strive to offer choices of what is an appropriate option for the child. Teachers actively strive to role model problem solving techniques for the children. Teachers give the children space to work out their conflicts on their own, while staying close and ready to step in to help when needed. When guidance is needed, children are given gentle, yet firm reminders of rules and expectations. Teachers approach children with mutual respect in daily caregiving and encourage children to use similar respectful interactions with each other. If a conflict arises between two children, teachers approach both children as needing support, and don't see one child as the aggressor and the other as the victim.

Home life is also a crucial factor in creating a joyful classroom atmosphere. Well-rested, properly fed children who engage in creative and practical work activities at home usually adjust well to the guidelines and expectations of our early childhood classrooms. The limiting of all screen exposure at home is a very important factor in this. Children do not have the experience to understand what they watch on screens and frequently try to integrate what they have seen and heard from the media into their play.

We hold the safety of our children as a priority. We do not allow children to hurt each other or engage in unsafe behavior. Teachers step in and provide guidance and boundaries as needed with attention to helping children learn to handle conflict in healthy and appropriate ways. For example: "You may ask him for the next turn but you may not take it out of his hand." Learning these behaviors will be an important part of our work with the children this year.

We have the following expectations:

- Children stay inside the play yard fence unless directly supervised by teachers or parents.
- Only adults open and unlatch all doors and gates throughout the center and play yard.

- There are no monsters, robots, weapons, etc. at school. This kind of play can be scary for other children.
- Children may carry sticks in the woods that are shorter than their arms. Sticks point down, never towards another person.
- Sand stays in the sandbox. It may not be carried outside the sandbox or thrown in the air.
- Children sit at the table to eat. Please do not eat in the hallways or during drop-offs and pickups.
- Walking feet inside. Children may run outside.
- Children will use kind words with the teachers and other children.
- Children will listen to the teachers and friends.
- Children will use gentle hands for good work and play.
- Teeth are for chewing, there will be no spitting, tongues and spit stay in our mouths.
- Children will keep hands and feet to themselves.
- Children will hand objects to people. There will be no throwing hard toys.
- Everyone may play, all are welcome

Unacceptable/threatening behaviors will be taken seriously. They include:

- biting,
- hitting, pushing, kicking, scratching
- using toys or tools as weapons that could harm another person,
- climbing over the play yard fence or opening the gate and going outside the play yard without direct adult supervision,
- not listening to the teachers to the point that it causes disruption or danger of other children, and
- inappropriate language and or name calling.

All of the Early Childhood teachers work directly with the parents to help support any child that is having difficulties in school. On occasion, a young child is not prepared to stay in the classroom and the parents will be called and asked to pick up their child as soon as possible. Habitual behaviors that compromise the safety of the children, or result in injury of another person, may lead to termination of the enrollment agreement. The school will make every effort to help parents and children resolve difficulties. The Pedagogical Director will assist in developing a support plan when needed.

Every effort will be made to help parents and children resolve difficulties that may arise in the program.

Steps toward resolution include:

- Parental notification of the incident. An incident report will be filled out by the Lead Teacher and given to parents for their signature.
- An official meeting between parents, the Lead Teacher/Director will be scheduled. Regular progress meetings will be scheduled to follow up on the situation.
- An Action Plan will be developed with the Pedagogical Director. This may include contacting local resources (such as Early Intervention) for support.
- Possible termination of Enrollment Agreement. This decision will be made by the Lead Teacher/Pedagogical Director, in conjunction with the Administrative Director.

Guidelines for Social Health for Grade School

Preamble

At Orchard Valley Waldorf School, discipline is neither rigid in an authoritarian sense, nor free in a permissive way. The objective of discipline is to provide guidelines to support a healthy learning environment. Self-discipline arises naturally when there is mutual human understanding between pupils and between teacher and pupil - a mutual caring concern and respect. Correction, and redirection, if required, is carefully considered in accordance with the nature of the behavior and the dignity of the individual concerned and the fellow students in the class.

Mission

The teachers at Orchard Valley Waldorf School aim to awaken and educate the whole child by equally engaging the mind, enlivening the imagination, and strengthening the will. Meeting these goals is the responsibility of everyone connected with the school. Therefore, everyone is expected to follow the discipline policy as outlined here which is informed by our core values and goals as a community.

Regarding all students, the following applies:

- To remember that everyone's personal safety and well-being comes first.
- To be at school and in the classroom on time for every lesson.
- To conduct yourself during the lessons in such a way that the teacher can teach the whole class with minimal interruptions.
- To treat all teachers, staff, parents, and students with the same courtesy and respect you would wish to receive yourself.
- To maintain the classroom and the school grounds clean and well respected.
- To treat all property, not only your own, with care.
- To remain within school boundaries while at school and never to leave the school campus without permission.
- To do class work to the best of your ability.
- To keep your school books in good order, up to date, and in good condition.
- To hand in all required assignments on time.

For teachers and adults in care of students:

- To be on time for every lesson.
- To treat students with courtesy and respect, especially when discipline is needed.
- To treat colleagues and parents with courtesy and respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement.
- To be supportive and encouraging to all the students in your care, in words and actions equally and without favoritism.
- To strive to be consistent in your approach to discipline issues, individually and as a faculty.
- To provide all students and parents with opportunities to express concerns and questions outside lesson time.
- To provide parents with opportunities to learn more about the Waldorf philosophy.
- To notify parents *in a timely manner* when expectations for schoolwork and behavior have not been met.
- To be versed with State Laws regarding neglect and abuse, to be alert to signs and symptoms of such neglect or abuse, and implement legal requirements accordingly.
- To be prepared and diligent in repetition and enforcing expectations with students, as needed.

For parents:

- To provide a home atmosphere conducive to the child's social, emotional and educational well-being.
- To collaborate with faculty in implementing discipline policies.
- To review the discipline policy and school rules with your child or children.
- To ensure that your child or children are at school on time and that they are collected from school in a timely manner.
- To treat teachers and staff with courtesy and respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement.
- To make use, when possible, of the opportunities given by the school to learn more about the philosophy of Waldorf education.

- To see that your child gets adequate rest.
- To provide an appropriate time and environment for homework.

General Guidelines for Students' Behavior at School

To some, it may seem strange that we need guidelines about how to behave at school -- after all, "*good behavior*" is what we learn at home and guides how people expect us to behave when we are in their company. "*Treat other people as you would like them to treat you*" is the theme behind all our rules: it is important to have something written down, so that everyone is clear about what is expected behavior at school.

At Recess Bell Time

Please line up promptly and quietly with students in your grade. When you are told that you may go in, please go in quietly with no pushing. Take care of personal needs quickly and efficiently: if you need to use the restroom, remember that you must be in your classroom on time for the lesson to begin without interruption.

In the Classroom

Please follow your teacher's requests quickly and quietly. Everyone needs a quiet atmosphere, so your cooperation is needed and will be recognized. Some questions need prompt attention, so that you are able to do your work well. Other questions are better asked at the end of the lesson. Try to learn which questions to ask right away and which would be better asked at another time.

Follow each teacher's rules for "*classroom etiquette*". Each teacher will have their own expectations that will be slightly different from other teachers. Some things are expected by all teachers -- for instance, raising your hand when you want to say something, instead of just shouting it out. In some lessons, you will be expected to stay in your seat most, if not all, the time. In other lessons, it may be possible to move around the room quietly. Please adapt your behavior to the situation -- always remember that everyone's personal safety and well-being comes first.

If someone disrupts a lesson by interrupting the work the class is supposed to be doing, that individual is denying students their right to learn, as well as the teacher's right and duty to teach. This cannot be permitted except in an emergency. If you think or feel that a situation is unfair, you have the right to express your concerns - but politely and at the right time. Sometimes the right time is "now", sometimes it is "later". If, after speaking quietly to the teacher concerned, you are still not satisfied, then speak to your class teacher or your parents. (Your parents may decide the best thing is to have a conference with the teacher or teachers concerned, so that the matter can be resolved.)

Remember, if you ever feel that your safety and well-being have not been respected, you have a right to have your concerns addressed.

If you need materials at school -- always ask! Never take materials from anyone else without asking first. If you take something without asking first, it may be considered stealing - even if you were only "*just borrowing it*".

You will be expected to play your part in keeping your classroom and the school clean and tidy.

At no time is any student to be in a classroom without adult supervision, except in certain cases when a teacher has given special permission.

Chewing gum, sitting on tables, marking classroom furniture, writing on walls are not allowed at school. Other things not allowed at school include electronic devices, most toys and objects that might offend others. Please ask if you are not sure about something. If you do bring something that is not allowed, a teacher may take it from you and give it back at the end of the day. If you bring it again, it may be taken from you until your parents have been informed and return of the object arranged with them.

In the Buildings

When going from one place to another in school, between lessons and at other times, behave quietly and safely. Please walk quietly -- do not run or shout. Please keep to the right when going through the hallway in busy times, using the left for passing other people. Horseplay is not allowed in the buildings at any time. Please play your part in keeping our school safe and clean.

Outside Play Areas

Everyone's safety and well-being come first.

If you and your friends are enjoying "horseplay", remember that the game stops when anyone in the game says that they don't want to play anymore.

For many people teasing is like torture. Teasing is not allowed.

Hitting people or hurting them by name calling or swearing at them never solves problems - it just makes the problem worse. In a conflict situation, call upon a teacher to help you with "conflict resolution" and "peer mediation". These are the methods we use at school to help in situations of conflict.

For safety reasons, we cannot allow anyone to kick any balls in the play area unless under the direct and constant supervision of a teacher. Using hard surfaced balls (like baseballs) or heavy balls is not allowed for the same reason. If you are not sure, ask a teacher. Again for safety reasons, the throwing of snowballs is not allowed.

Bicycles, skateboards and inline skates are not to be ridden.

The boundaries of the play area DO NOT include the parking area. Once you are outside, you may not go into the school buildings without specific permission. This means that you **always** have to ask for permission.

On school excursions

Keep together and listen to the teachers and other adults who are with you. Follow their requests quietly and without argument. If you have something to say, always remember that politeness works better than rudeness.

Your behavior away from home and school is a reflection of both. Remember that you are a representative of yourself, your family, and your school - and behave according to the clear and appropriate school expectations.

At School Assemblies and Functions

The same simple rules apply as when you are on school excursions. Please do not use screaming and shouting as a form of applause. Clapping and (sometimes) cheering is more appreciated. Things can go embarrassingly wrong during performances and it is really hurtful if people make things worse by booing. Booing or hooting, or any other form of hurtful behavior, is not allowed.

Please whisper between items during assemblies and pay attention to what is going on, so that the teachers do not have to call you to order. Remember that we always have guests at our functions and we don't want them to get a wrong impression of you.

If you - or your parents - want to have a photograph as a reminder of someone's play or assembly item, **please** arrange with the teacher concerned to have photos taken afterwards or during a dress rehearsal so that the class does not have its concentration interrupted during the actual performance. The teachers will be happy to help with this because they know how difficult it is when people are taking flash photographs while the students are trying to remember all the things they have to do!

Social Health Guidelines

When the guidelines for student behavior are not followed, the following processes are followed:

Level One

Inappropriate physical contact, inappropriate verbal communication, disrespectful/disruptive behavior, infrequent use of profanity, unsafe, dangerous and/or threatening behavior, and/or willful damage of property.

- Conflict Resolution with student
- Parents will be informed by phone.
- An incident report will be written for the student's file and will be signed by parents.
- Parent conference is recommended.

Level Two

On-going repetition of Level One behavior, bringing a toy weapon to school (one which cannot cause harm), leaving the school property, running away from adult supervision, and/or stealing.

- Conflict Resolution with student
- Parents will be informed by phone.
- An incident report will be written for the student's file and will be signed by parents.
- Parent conference with Care Committee and class teacher.
- A behavior contract will be established by the student's team. (If the child does not meet the expectations, the protocol for Level Three will be followed.)

Level Three

Significant unsafe, dangerous and/or threatening behavior, serious use of profanity (such as swearing and other disrespectful language directed at a teacher), deliberate injury to a person, drug possession or use at school, sexual behavior, sexual activity, bringing a weapon to school, and/or repetition of stealing.

- Conflict Resolution with student
- Parents will be informed immediately by phone.
- Parents will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible.
- If the parents cannot be reached, the school will communicate with the emergency contact.
- The child will be suspended the following school day.
- An incident report will be written for the student's file and will be signed by parents.
- Parent conference with Care Committee and class teacher.
- A behavior contract will be established by the student's team.

Harassment of Students

OVWS is committed to providing all students with a physically and emotionally safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect. Harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination that will not be tolerated. The complete policy and reporting procedure is taken directly from the State of Vermont guidelines and is in the appendix of this document.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

In accordance with Vermont State Law, educators are mandated reporters of any suspected child physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation. Reports of suspected abuse should be made to the Vermont

Child Protection Line at 1-800-649-5285 within 24 hours. The complete policy and reporting procedure is on file in the office. If you need a copy, one can be sent to you electronically.

SCHOOL ADMISSION

Early Childhood Programs

An application is required for any child seeking to enroll for the first time. Once the school receives a completed application and a non-refundable \$50 application fee, an interview will be scheduled. This is a time for parents to see the facility, meet teachers, and learn about the program; and a time for the teacher(s) to assess the child's readiness for the class. Parents will be informed of the admissions decision as soon as possible. If the program is already full, the application will be placed on a waitlist and parents will be notified if a spot becomes available. Applications are kept on file for two years.

Publicly Funded PreK

Regardless of parental income or circumstance, all children who are age 3,4, or 5 on or before September 1st (and who are not enrolled in a state-accredited public or private kindergarten) are eligible to receive funding from the state PreK funding grant until their 6th birthday. For the 2023-24 school year, the PreK funding grant is \$3764 per child.

Attendance and Absenteeism

The PreK funding is paid based on attendance. When a child is not present in class, they are considered absent. Excessive absences may affect the PreK funding. OVWS shares attendance records with each Supervisory Union/School District and may contact the family and/or discontinue Act 166 tuition funding when attendance is irregular, which could result in charges to your BigSIS financial account to cover any missing PreK funding payments.

Tuition Statement

The Act 166 funding is applied as a credit at the beginning of the school year for the convenience of families. Any PreK funding not received by Orchard Valley Waldorf School due to incomplete registration with the local district, absenteeism, or transfer out of our PreK program shall be added to the family's BigSIS account for repayment.

Morning Garden Parent/Caregiver & Child Program

Morning Garden is a weekly program serving caregivers and children who are beginning walkers up to three-year of age. There is no interview for Morning Garden families; a registration form and deposit for the Fall and Spring sessions are all that is needed. Families are admitted on a first come, first serve basis.

First Grade Readiness

Observations of the child comprise a large part of the evaluation for first grade readiness. Each spring a parent/teacher evening is devoted to the issue of readiness in an effort to deepen our understanding of the

major changes that take place for the child approaching seven. Time to develop the body, the speech, and the thinking, unhampered by intellectual demands, is a great gift we can offer our children. Then, with a solid base on which to stand, the child is ready to direct growing forces to a new form of lively mental activity and to accept the loving authority of the first grade teacher.

A first grade readiness screening is conducted for each child. The First Grade Readiness Committee communicates with parents the findings of the screening. If there is any question about whether a six-year-old child is First-Grade-ready, then the parents and the First Grade Readiness Committee will arrive at a decision together.

Grades 1—8

Prospective parents to the Grade School usually learn about our school and Waldorf education through regularly scheduled tours and observation days. Interested parents should call the school to arrange a visit.

To enter first grade at OVWS, children should be six years old by June 1 of the admission year. The first step in the admission process is to complete an application and return it with a non-refundable application fee of \$50. An observation visit may be scheduled to see the class of interest. Once the application has been received, the parents will be contacted by the appropriate teacher to schedule an interview. Pending the admissions interview, those applicants in grades 2 through 8 are asked to spend 3 days visiting the appropriate class. During this visit, students will meet with the Support Services Coordinator for a one-to-one assessment that will last for approximately 45 minutes and takes into consideration the academic, social and developmental progress of the student. Following the 3-day visit, a decision is made about admission and is communicated to the family. Parents who wish to take advantage of the Tiered Tuition model will be asked to complete a FACTS application, and a tuition tier will be determined. Upon acceptance, an enrollment agreement is issued. The completed agreement and enrollment deposit finalizes the enrollment process.

Children with Special Needs

In the early childhood and grades programs, teachers are happy to meet with families with a child with special needs to assess whether OVWS is able to provide their child with a successful school experience. Teachers are committed to meeting every student's social, emotional and intellectual needs, but there may be times when our available remedial and support services are not adequate to meet the needs of a particular child while balancing the needs of the class as a whole.

Home Visits

In late Summer, prior to the first day of school, new students can expect a home visit from the teacher in Early Childhood programs and the early grades. Middle school teachers may also wish to schedule home visits. Early Childhood children moving to a new class with a new teacher will have a home visit.

Waiting List

If a class is full, a child will be placed in a waiting pool. Admissions considerations are prioritized based upon many criteria, including: Children of Faculty and Staff; Siblings in the school; Alumni families; the age of the child, the desired schedule, and the date of the application.

Summer Camps

We do not require application forms for summer camps. Registration for Summer Camp sessions is first come, first serve, and requires completion of a registration form, health and emergency contact information, and payment in full.

ANNUAL RE-ENROLLMENT

The re-enrollment process begins in late Winter and is coordinated by the Admissions Director.

Parents will be informed via email when this process is underway and of the upcoming deadlines. Contracts for the coming year will be released to your BigSIS portal and a notification email sent to you. After the final contract deadline, OVWS will begin offering unfilled spaces to new applicants and families on our waiting list.

Deposits, Class Fees, & Withdrawal Terms

Signed re-enrollment contracts must be accompanied by a tuition deposit of \$500 for the first child enrolled at OVWS, and \$300 for subsequent siblings. Deposits are credited against the tuition obligation and are non-refundable.

Class Fees directly support the supplies, food, field trips and auxiliary costs spent at the discretion of the teacher to support the work of the class. These are evaluated annually, based on actual needs as anticipated by the class teacher and subject teachers (in the grades programs). Class fees are included in the total tuition amounts for all programs.

If a child is withdrawn from Orchard Valley Waldorf School at any time after enrollment, tuition remains due and payable as follows:

20% of total tuition after June 30th, but before the first day of school;

60% of total tuition after the first day of school but on or before December 15th

100% of total tuition after December 15th.

If you are withdrawing your child from Sweet Clover Nursery, we require notice in writing via email (enrollment@ovws.org) 45 days prior to the last day of attendance. You are responsible for payment through the last day of attendance, and no tuition refunds will be issued if you should forfeit your spot prior to the 45 day notification.

Written Intent to Withdraw

We ask families to notify the Admissions Director in writing if a child will not be returning to OVWS for the following school year or will be terminating the enrollment agreement prematurely during the school year. Please send an email stating the child's name, grade, the intent, and reason for withdrawing (optional but appreciated) to enrollment@ovws.org. Exit interviews will follow the withdrawal of all students to gain insight regarding a family's experience at Orchard Valley.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Enrollment Deposit and Tuition Payment

Completion of the Enrollment Contract/Agreement and deposit finalizes enrollment and is required by the due date noted in your Welcome Letter or Re-Enrollment Letter. Once we have received your deposit we will hold your child's place in the class. Your deposit is non-refundable and is credited to tuition.

Tuition must be paid online via the BigSIS Parent Portal, and payments may be made via eCheck or Credit Card. Tuition may be paid in a single installment, or a payment plan of 2, 4, or 10 payments (12 for Sweet Clover Nursery) may be selected. Please note that there is a \$49 plan fee for multiple payments.

Tuition and Fees Policies

Families are legally responsible to pay tuition and fees as agreed to in the enrollment agreement. It is essential that families pay tuition and fees on time.

The Orchard Valley Waldorf School reserves the right to withhold educational services if a family's account balance is over \$500 overdue, or if the account balance of any amount is 60 or more days overdue. Our Admissions Director is the point of contact for tuition billing and questions.

Families should expect to see an annual 3-7% increase in tuition.

Tiered Tuition

Accessibility to our Kindergarten and Grades 1-8 programs is made through our Tiered Tuition Model. Our Tiered Tuition Model embodies the school's commitment to enter into a relationship with each family and facilitates an empathetic awareness of the needs and gifts of each community member, while remaining cognizant of the budgetary needs of our school. For more information about the Tiered Tuition, please visit <https://www.ovws.org/tuition>.

To determine where each family falls on our Tiered Tuition Chart we ask all families to submit a FACTS Grant and Aid application. This third party platform uses household income and liquid assets to determine the applicant's Gross Household Income. For more information on how to submit your FACTS Grant and Aid application please reach out to our Admission Director at enrollment@ovws.org.

Appendix

Orchard Valley Waldorf School Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students

I. Statement of Policy

Orchard Valley Waldorf School^[1] (hereinafter “OVWS”) is committed to providing all of its students with a safe and supportive school environment in which all members of the school community are treated with respect.

It is the policy of OVWS to prohibit the unlawful harassment of students based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. Harassment may also constitute a violation of Vermont’s Public Accommodations Act, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and/or Title IX of the federal Education Amendments Act of 1972.

It is also the policy of OVWS to prohibit the unlawful hazing and bullying of students. Conduct which constitutes hazing may be subject to civil penalties.

OVWS shall address all complaints of harassment, hazing and bullying according to the procedures accompanying this policy, and shall take appropriate action against any person - subject to the jurisdiction of the board - who violates this policy. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit punishment of a student for conduct which, although it does not rise to the level of harassment, bullying, or hazing as defined herein, otherwise violates one or more of the school’s disciplinary policies or code of conduct.

The Model Procedures are expressly incorporated by reference as though fully included within this Model Policy. The Model Procedures are separated from the policy for ease of use as may be required.

II. Implementation

The School Administrator or his/her designee shall:

1. Adopt a procedure directing staff, parents and guardians how to report violations of this policy and file complaints under this policy. (See Model Procedures on the Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students)

2. Annually, select two or more designated employees to receive complaints of hazing, bullying and/or

harassment at each school campus and publicize their availability in any publication of the school that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for the school.

3. Designate an Equity Coordinator to oversee all aspects of the implementation of this policy as it relates to obligations imposed by federal law regarding discrimination. This role may also be assigned to one or both of the Designated Employees.

4. Respond to notifications of possible violations of this policy in order to promptly and effectively address all complaints of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying.

5. Take action on substantiated complaints. In cases where hazing, harassment and/or bullying is substantiated, the school shall take prompt and appropriate remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying; prevent its recurrence; and to remedy the impact of the offending conduct on the victim(s), where appropriate. Such action may include a wide range of responses from education to serious discipline.

Serious discipline may include termination for employees and, for students, expulsion or removal from school property. It may also involve penalties or sanctions for both organizations and individuals who engage in hazing. Revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the school's purview may also be considered if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes or condones hazing.

III. Constitutionally Protected Speech

It is the intent of OVWS to apply and enforce this policy in a manner that is consistent with student rights to free expression under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The purpose of this policy is to (1) prohibit conduct or communication that is directed at a person's protected characteristics as defined below and that has the purpose or effect of substantially disrupting the educational learning process and/or access to educational resources or creates a hostile learning environment; (2) prohibit conduct intended to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate students in a manner as defined under this policy.

IV. Definitions. For the purposes of this policy and the accompanying procedures, the following definitions apply:

1. **"Bullying"** means any overt act or combination of acts, including an act conducted by electronic means, directed against a student by another student or group of students and which:

- a. Is repeated over time; b. Is intended to ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate the student; and c. (i) occurs during the school day on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity, or before or after the school day on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity; or (ii) does not occur during the school day on school property, on a school bus or at a school sponsored activity and can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's right to access educational programs.

2. **“Complaint”** means an oral or written report information provided by a student or any person to an employee alleging that a student has been subjected to conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment or bullying.

3. **“Complainant”** means a student who has provided oral or written information about conduct that may rise to the level of hazing, harassment or bullying, or a student who is the target of alleged hazing, harassment or bullying.

4. **“Designated employee”** means an employee who has been designated by the school to receive complaints of hazing, harassment and bullying pursuant to subdivision 16 V.S.A. 570a(a)(7). The designated employees for each school building are identified in Appendix A of this policy.

5. **“Employee”** includes any person employed directly by or retained through a contract with OVWS, an agent of the school, a school board member, a student teacher, an intern or a school volunteer. For purposes of this policy, “agent of the school” includes supervisory union staff.

6. **“Equity Coordinator”** is the person responsible for implementation of Title IX (regarding sex-based discrimination) and Title VI (regarding race-based discrimination) for the school and for coordinating the school’s compliance with Title IX and Title VI in all areas covered by the implementing regulations. The Equity Coordinator is also responsible for overseeing implementation of the school’s *Preventing and Responding to Harassment of Students and Harassment of Employees* policies. This role may also be assigned to Designated Employees.

7. **“Harassment”** means an incident or incidents of verbal, written, visual, or physical conduct, including any incident conducted by electronic means, based on or motivated by a student’s or a student’s family member’s actual or perceived race, creed, color, national origin, marital status disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity, that has the purpose or effect of objectively and substantially undermining and detracting from or interfering with a student’s educational performance or access to school resources or creating an objectively intimidating hostile, or offensive environment.

Harassment includes conduct as defined above and may also constitute one or more of the following:

- (1) Sexual harassment, which means unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, that includes sexual violence/sexual assault, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, written, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and includes situations when one or both of the following occur: (i) Submission to that conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a student’s education, academic status, or progress; or (ii) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by a student is used as a component of the basis for decisions affecting that student.

Sexual harassment may also include student-on-student conduct or conduct of a non-employee third party that creates a hostile environment. A hostile environment exists where the harassing conduct is severe, persistent or pervasive so as to deny or limit the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program on the basis of sex.

(2) Racial harassment, which means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived race or color, and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, racial slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, and taunts on manner of speech and negative references to cultural customs.

(3) Harassment of members of other protected categories, means conduct directed at the characteristics of a student's or a student's family member's actual or perceived creed, national origin, marital status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity and includes the use of epithets, stereotypes, slurs, comments, insults, derogatory remarks, gestures, threats, graffiti, display, or circulation of written or visual material, taunts on manner of speech, and negative references to customs related to any of these protected categories.

8. "**Hazing**" means any intentional, knowing or reckless act committed by a student, whether individually or in concert with others, against another student: In connection with pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization which is affiliated with the educational institution; and (1) Which is intended to have the effect of, or should reasonably be expected to have the effect of, endangering the mental or physical health of the student.

Hazing shall not include any activity or conduct that furthers legitimate curricular, extra-curricular program goals, provided that:

(1) The goals are approved by the educational institution; and (2) The activity or conduct furthers the goals in a manner that is appropriate, contemplated by the educational institution, and normal and customary for similar programs at other educational institutions.

With respect to Hazing, "**Student**" means any person who: (A) is registered in or in attendance at an educational institution; (B) has been accepted for admission at the educational institution where the hazing incident occurs; or (C) intends to attend an educational institution during any of its regular sessions after an official academic break.

9. "**Notice**" means a written complaint or oral information that hazing, harassment or bullying may have occurred which has been provided to a designated employee from another employee, the student allegedly subjected to the hazing, harassment or bullying, another student, a parent or guardian, or any other individual who has reasonable cause to believe the alleged conduct may have occurred. If the school learns of possible hazing, harassment or bullying through other means, for example, if information about hazing, harassment or bullying is received from a third party (such as from a witness to an incident or an anonymous letter or telephone call), different factors will affect the school's response. These factors include the source and nature of the information; the seriousness of the alleged incident; the specificity

of the information; the objectivity and credibility of the source of the report; whether any individuals can be identified who were subjected to the alleged harassment; and whether those individuals want to pursue the matter. In addition, for purposes of violations of federal anti-discrimination laws, notice may occur when an employee of the school, including any individual who a student could reasonably believe has this authority or responsibility, knows or in the exercise of reasonable care should have known about potential unlawful harassment or bullying.

10. **“Organization”** means a fraternity, sorority, athletic team, association, corporation, order, society, corps, cooperative, club, or other similar group, whose members primarily are students at an educational institution, and which is affiliated with the educational institution.

11. **“Pledging”** means any action or activity related to becoming a member of an organization.

12. **“Retaliation”** is any adverse action by any person against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment, hazing or bullying or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. Such adverse action may include conduct by a school employee directed at a student in the form of intimidation or reprisal such as diminishment of grades, suspension, expulsion, change in educational conditions, loss of privileges or benefits, or other unwarranted disciplinary action. Retaliation may also include conduct by a student directed at another student in the form of further harassment, intimidation, and reprisal.

13. **“School administrator”** means a superintendent, principal or his/her designee assistant principal//technical center director or his/her designee and/or the school’s Equity Coordinator.

14. **“Student Conduct Form”** is a form used by students, staff, or parents, to provide, in written form, information about inappropriate student behaviors that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

Designated Employees:

The following employees of the Orchard Valley Waldorf School have been designated by the school to receive complaints of bullying and/or harassment pursuant to this policy and 16 V.S.A. § 570a(a)(7) and 16 V.S.A. §570c(7) and under federal anti discrimination laws;

Name: Madelief Becherer
Title: Administrative Director
Contact Information: madelief.b@ovws.org, (802)456-7400

Name: Teri Page
Title: Admissions Director

Contact Information: teri.p@ovws.org, (802)456-7400

[1] Throughout this model policy and the related procedures, “District” shall apply to Independent Schools and should be substituted as appropriate. References to the Superintendent shall equate to “Head of School” or “Headmaster” as appropriate, with regard to Independent Schools. Where language suggests a “District” will take action, it shall be the Superintendent, the Head of School, the Headmaster or his/her designee.

**Orchard Valley Waldorf School
Model Procedures on the Prevention of
Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students**

I. Reporting Complaints of Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying

A. Student Reporting: Any student who believes that s/he has been hazed, harassed and/or bullied under this policy, or who witnesses or has knowledge of conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and or/bullying, should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee or any other school employee.

B. School employee reporting: Any school employee who **witnesses conduct** that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall take reasonable action to stop the conduct and to prevent its recurrence and immediately report it to a designated employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form.

Any school employee **who overhears or directly receives information** about conduct that might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying shall immediately report the information to a designated employee and immediately complete a Student Conduct Form. If one of the designated employees is a person alleged to be engaged in the conduct complained of, the incident shall be immediately reported to the other designated employee or the school administrator.

C. Other reporting: Any other person who witnesses conduct that s/he reasonably believes might constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying under this policy should promptly report the conduct to a designated employee.

D. Documentation of the report: If the complaint is oral, the designated employee shall promptly reduce the complaint to writing in a Student Conduct Form, including the time, place, and nature of the alleged conduct, the identity of the complainant, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. Both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator will have the right to present witnesses and other evidence in support of their position.

E. False complaint: Any person who knowingly makes a false accusation regarding hazing, harassment and/or bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion with regard to students, or up to and including discharge with regard to employees. There shall be no adverse action taken against a person for reporting a complaint of hazing, harassment and/or bullying when the person has a good faith belief that hazing, harassment and/or bullying occurred or is occurring.

F. Rights to Alternative Complaint Process: In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111 (voice)
877-521-2172 (td)
617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

II. Responding to Notice of Possible Policy Violation(s)

A. Upon **notice of information** that hazing, harassment and/or bullying may have occurred the designated employee shall:

- i. Promptly reduce any oral information to writing, including the time, place, and nature of the conduct, and the identity of the participants and complainant.
- ii. Promptly inform the school administrator of the information;
- iii. If in the judgment of the school administrator, the information alleges conduct which may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying, the school administrator shall, as soon as reasonably possible, provide a copy of the policy on hazing, harassment and bullying and these procedures to the complainant and accused individual, or if either is a minor, cause a copy to be provided or delivered to their respective parent or guardian.

B. Upon **initiation of an investigation**, the designated employee shall:

- i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:
 1. an investigation has been initiated;
 2. retaliation is prohibited;
 3. all parties have certain confidentiality rights; and
 4. they will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

C. All notifications shall be subject to state and/or federal laws protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable student information. Pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, a school administrator may seek the consent of

the parent/guardian of the accused student, or the accused eligible student (if 18 or older, the accused student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the complainant of any disciplinary action taken in cases where the school determined that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying, or other misconduct occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

III. Investigating Hazing, Harassment and/or Bullying Complaints

1. Initiation of Investigation - Timing. Unless special circumstances are present and documented, such as reports to the Department for Children and Families (“DCF”) or the police, the school administrator shall, no later than one school day after Notice to a designated employee, initiate or cause to be initiated, an investigation of the allegations, which the school administrator reasonably believes may constitute harassment, hazing or bullying.
2. Investigator Assignment. The school administrator shall assign a person to conduct the investigation; nothing herein shall be construed to preclude the school administrator from assigning him/herself or a designated employee as the investigator. No person who is the subject of a complaint shall conduct such an investigation.
3. Interim Measures. It may be appropriate for the school to take interim measures during the investigation of a complaint. For instance, if a student alleges that he or she has been sexually assaulted by another student, the school may decide to place the students immediately in separate classes and/or transportation pending the results of the school’s investigation. Similarly, if the alleged harasser is a teacher, allowing the student to transfer to a different class may be appropriate. In all cases, the school will make every effort to prevent disclosure of the names of all parties involved – the complainant, the witnesses, and the accused -- except to the extent necessary to carry out the investigation. In all cases where physical harm has resulted and/or where the targeted student is known to be expressing suicidal ideation, or experiencing serious emotional harm, a safety plan will be put in place. Safety plans must also be considered in cases where the targeted student is known to have difficulty accessing the educational programs at the school as a result of the inappropriate behavior. No contact orders, or their enforcement, may also be appropriate interim measures.
4. Due Process. The United States Constitution guarantees due process to students and District employees who are accused of certain types of infractions, including but not limited to sexual harassment under Federal Title IX. The rights established under Title IX must be interpreted consistent with any federally guaranteed due process rights involved in a complaint proceeding, including but not limited to the ability of the complainant and the accused to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The District will ensure that steps to accord due process rights do not restrict or unnecessarily delay the protections provided by Title IX to the complainant.
5. Standard Used to Assess Conduct. In determining whether the conduct constitutes a violation of this policy, the investigator shall consider the surrounding circumstances, the nature of the behavior, past incidents or past or continuing patterns of behavior, the relationships between the parties involved and the context in which the alleged incidents occurred. The complainant and accused will be provided the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence during an investigation. The school will also

consider the impact of relevant off-campus conduct on the school environment where direct harm to the welfare of the school can be demonstrated or the conduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student's equal access to educational programs. Whether a particular action constitutes a violation of this policy requires determination based on all the facts and surrounding circumstances.

6. Completion of Investigation – Timing. No later than five school days from the filing of the complaint with the designated employee, unless special circumstances are present and documented, the investigator shall submit a written initial determination to the school administrator.
7. Investigation Report. The investigator shall prepare a written report to include a statement of the findings of the investigator as to whether the allegations have been substantiated, and as to whether the alleged conduct constitutes hazing, harassment and/or bullying. The report, when referencing student conduct, is a student record and therefore confidential. It will be made available to investigators in the context of a review conducted by either Vermont AOE, or investigations of harassment conducted by the Vermont Human Rights Commission or U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights.
8. Notice to Students/Parents/Guardians. Within five school days of the conclusion of the investigation, the designated employee shall:

i. Notify in writing both the complainant and accused individual (or if either is a minor inform their respective parent or guardian) that:

1. the investigation has been completed;
2. whether or not the investigation concluded that a policy violation occurred (and which policy term was violated, i.e. harassment, hazing and/or bullying);
3. that federal privacy law prevents disclosure of any discipline imposed as a result of the investigation unless the parent/guardian of the accused student and/or the accused eligible student consents to such disclosure, pursuant to 34 CFR Part 99.30, as set forth in Section II, Part C, above.

ii. Notify the Complainant Student - or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian - in writing of their rights to:

1. an internal review by the school of its initial determination as a result of its investigation as to whether harassment occurred;
2. request an Independent Review of the school's "final" determination as to whether harassment occurred within thirty (30) days of the final determination or although a "final" determination was made that harassment indeed occurred the school's response to that harassment was inadequate to correct the problem; and that the review will be conducted by an investigator to be selected by the school administrator from a list developed by the Agency of Education;
3. file complaints of harassment with either the Vermont Human Rights Commission and/or the federal Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.

iii. Notify the Accused Student – or if a minor, their parent(s) or guardian - in writing of their right to appeal as set forth in Section V of these procedures.

1. Violations of Other Policies. In cases where the investigation has identified other conduct that may constitute a violation of other school disciplinary policies or codes of conduct, the designated employee shall report such conduct to the school administrator for action in accordance with relevant school policies or codes of conduct.

IV. Responding to Substantiated Claims

A. Scope of Response. After a final determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has been committed, the school shall take prompt and appropriate disciplinary and/or remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the hazing, harassment and/or bullying and prevent any recurrence of harassment, hazing and/or bullying, and remedy its effects on the victim(s). In so doing, the following should be considered:

(i) Potential Remedial Actions. Remedial action may include but not be limited to an age appropriate warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension, and/or expulsion of a student, and warning, reprimand, education, training and counseling, transfer, suspension and/or termination of an employee. A series of escalating consequences may be necessary if the initial steps are ineffective in stopping the hazing, harassment and/or bullying. To prevent recurrences, counseling for the offender may be appropriate to ensure that he or she understands what constitutes hazing/harassment and/or bullying and the effects it can have. Depending on how widespread the hazing/harassment/bullying was and whether there have been any prior incidents, the school may need to provide training for the larger school community to ensure that students, parents and teachers can recognize hazing/harassment/bullying if it recurs and know how to respond.

(ii) School Access/Environment Considerations. The school will also take efforts to support victims' access to programs, services and activities and consider and implement school-wide remedies, where appropriate. Accordingly, steps will be taken to eliminate any hostile and/or threatening environment that has been created. For example, if a female student has been subjected to harassment/bullying by a group of other students in a class, the school may need to deliver special training or other interventions for that class to repair the educational environment. If the school offers the student the option of withdrawing from a class in which a hostile environment/bullying occurred, the school will assist the student in making program or schedule changes and ensure that none of the changes adversely affect the student's academic record. Other measures may include, if appropriate, directing a bully/harasser to apologize to the affected student. If a hostile environment has affected the entire school or campus, an effective response may need to include dissemination of information, the issuance of new policy statements or other steps that are designed to clearly communicate the message that the school does not tolerate harassment and/or bullying and will be responsive to any student who reports that conduct.

(iii) Hazing Case Considerations. Appropriate penalties or sanctions or both for organizations that or individuals who engage in hazing and revocation or suspension of an organization's permission to operate or exist within the institution's purview if that organization knowingly permits, authorizes, or condones hazing.

(iv) Other Remedies: Other remedies may include providing counseling to the victim(s) and/or the perpetrator(s), and additional safety planning measures for the victim(s).

B. Retaliation Prevention. It is unlawful for any person to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint of harassment or against a person who assists or participates in an investigation, proceeding or hearing related to the harassment complaint. A person may violate this anti-retaliation provision regardless of whether the underlying complaint of harassment is substantiated.

The school will take reasonable steps to prevent any retaliation against the student who made the complaint (or was the subject of the harassment), against the person who filed a complaint on behalf of a student, or against those who provided information as witnesses. At a minimum, this includes making sure that the students and

their parents, and those witnesses involved in the school's investigation, know how to report any subsequent problems and making follow-up inquiries to see if there are have been any new incidents or any retaliation.

C. Alternative Dispute Resolution. At all stages of the investigation and determination process, school officials are encouraged to make available to complainants alternative dispute resolution methods, such as mediation, for resolving complaints. Certain considerations should be made before pursuing alternative dispute resolution methods, including, but not limited to:

(1) the nature of the accusations (for example, face-to-face mediation is not appropriate for sexual violence cases), (2) the age of the complainant and the accused individual, (3) the agreement of the complainant, and (4) other relevant factors such as any disability of the target or accused individual, safety issues, the relationship and relative power differential between the target and accused individual, or any history of repeated misconduct/harassment by the accused individual.

V. Post Investigative Reviews

Rights of Complainants

A. Internal Review of Initial Harassment Determinations By Complainant.

A complainant or parent of a complainant may request an internal review by the school of a designee's initial determination (following investigation) that harassment has not occurred via written request submitted to the School Administrator. All levels of internal review of the investigator's initial determination, and the issuance of a final decision, shall, unless special circumstances are present and documented by the school, be completed within 30 calendar days after review is requested.

B. Independent Reviews of Final Harassment Determinations By Complainant.

A complainant may request an independent review within thirty (30) days of a final determination if s/he: (1) is dissatisfied with the final determination as to whether harassment occurred, or (2) believes that although a final determination was made that harassment occurred, the school's response was inadequate to correct the problem.

The complainant shall make such a request in writing to the Board of Trustees within thirty (30) days of a final determination. Upon such request, the Board of Trustees shall promptly initiate an independent review by a neutral person as described under 16 V.S.A. § 570a.(b)(1) and shall cooperate with the independent reviewer so that s/he may proceed expeditiously. The review shall consist of an interview of the complainant and relevant school officials and a review of the written materials from the school's investigation.

Upon completion of the independent review, the reviewer shall advise the complainant and school officials in writing: (1) as to the sufficiency of the school's investigation, its determination, and/or the steps taken by the school to correct any harassment found to have occurred, and (2) of recommendations of any steps the school might take to prevent further harassment from occurring. A copy of the independent review report shall be sent to the Secretary of Education.

The reviewer shall advise the student of other remedies that may be available if the student remains dissatisfied and, if appropriate, may recommend mediation or other alternative dispute resolution. The independent reviewer shall be considered an agent of the school for the purpose of being able to review confidential student records. The costs of the independent review shall be borne by the school. The school may request an independent review at any stage of the process.

C. Rights to Alternative Harassment Complaint Process. In addition to, or as an alternative to filing a harassment complaint pursuant to this policy, a person may file a harassment complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission or the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education at the addresses noted below:

Vermont Human Rights Commission
14-16 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-6301
(800) 416-2010 or (802) 828-2480 (voice)
(877) 294-9200 (tty)
(802) 828-2481 (fax)
Email: human.rights@state.vt.us

Office for Civil Rights, Boston Office
U.S. Department of Education
8th Floor
5 Post Office Square
Boston, MA 02109-3921
617-289-0111 (voice)
877-521-2172 (tdd)
617-289-0150 (fax)
Email: OCR.Boston@ed.gov

Rights of Accused Students

A. Appeal. Any person determined to have engaged in an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying may appeal the determination and/or any related disciplinary action(s) taken, directly to the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall conduct a review on the record. The standard of review by the Board of Trustees shall be whether the finding that an act(s) of hazing, harassment, and/or bullying has been committed constitutes an abuse of discretion by the school level fact finder. Appeals should be made to the Board of Trustees within ten (10) calendar days of receiving the determination that an act(s) of hazing, harassment and/or bullying has occurred and/or any announced discipline. The Board of Trustees shall set the matter for a review hearing at the next scheduled board meeting to the extent practicable, but not later than 30 days from receipt of the appeal filing.

B. Accused Student/Appellant Access to Investigative Reports/Findings. The school shall make available upon request of the Accused Student/Appellant, any relevant information, documents, materials, etc. related to the investigation and related finding on appeal that can be redacted and de-identified in compliance with the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99. For those documents that cannot be provided due to the requirements set forth at 34 CFR Part 99, when an Accused Student/Appellant seeks a review on the record before the Board of Trustees, a school administrator may seek the consent of the parent/guardian of the targeted student, or the accused eligible targeted student (if 18 or older, the targeted student has the ability to consent), in order to inform the accused student of the findings which gave rise to the school's determination that an act(s) of harassment, hazing, and/or bullying occurred. The parent/guardian or eligible student shall provide a signed and dated written consent before an educational agency or institution discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records.

VI. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

A. Privacy Concerns. The privacy of the complainant, the accused individual, and the witnesses shall be maintained consistent with the school's obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to comply with laws governing the disclosure of student records or other applicable discovery or disclosure obligations.

i. Concerns Related to Harassment Complaints. The scope of appropriate response to a harassment complaint may depend upon whether a student or parent of a minor student reporting the harassment asks that the student's name not be disclosed to the harasser or that nothing be done about the alleged harassment. In all cases, school officials will discuss confidentiality standards and concerns with the complainant initially. The school will inform the student that a confidentiality request may limit the school's ability to respond. The school will remind the student that both federal Title IX and Vermont Title 9 prevent retaliation and that if he or she is afraid of reprisals from the alleged harasser, the school will take steps to prevent retaliation and will take strong action if retaliation occurs. If the student continues to ask that his or her name not be revealed, the school should take all reasonable steps to investigate and respond to the complaint consistent with the student's request as long as doing so does not prevent the school from responding effectively to the harassment and preventing harassment of other students.

The school will evaluate the confidentiality request in the context of its responsibility to provide a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for all students. The factors the school might consider in this regard include the seriousness of the alleged harassment, the age of the student harassed, whether there have been other complaints or reports of harassment against the alleged harasser, and the rights of the accused individual to receive information about the accuser and the allegations if a formal proceeding with sanctions may result. If information about the incident is contained in an "education record" of the student alleging the harassment, as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. 1232g, the school will consider whether FERPA prohibits it from disclosing information without the student's consent.

B. Document Maintenance. The School Administrator shall assure that a record of any complaint, its investigation and disposition, as well as any disciplinary or remedial action taken following the completion of the investigation, is maintained by the school in a confidential file accessible only to authorized persons. All investigation records created in conformance with this model policy and model procedures, including but not limited to, the complaint form, interview notes, additional evidence, and the investigative report, shall be kept by the Equity Coordinator, Designated Employees and School Office for at least six years after the investigation is completed.

VII. Reporting to Other Agencies

A. Reports to Department of Children and Families. When a complaint made pursuant to this policy includes allegations of child abuse, any person responsible for reporting suspected child abuse under 33 V.S.A. § 4911, et seq. must report the allegation to the Commissioner of DCF. If the victim is over the age of 18 and a report of abuse is warranted, the report shall be made to Adult Protective Services in accordance with 33 V.S.A. § 6901 et seq.

B. Reports to Vermont Agency of Education. If a harassment complaint is made in a public school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the principal shall report the alleged conduct to the Superintendent and the Superintendent shall report the alleged conduct to the Commissioner. If a harassment complaint is made in an independent school about conduct by a licensed educator that might be grounds under Vermont law for licensing action, the School Administrator is encouraged to report the alleged conduct to the Secretary of Education.

C. Reporting Incidents to Police

a. FERPA Rights. Information obtained and documented by school administration regarding the school's response to notice of student conduct that may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying may constitute an "educational record" regarding the student or student(s) involved as defined by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Accordingly, such information may not be disclosed without prior parent approval to local law enforcement except in response to a lawfully issued subpoena, or in connection with an emergency if disclosure is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

b. First Hand Reports. Nothing in this policy shall preclude persons from reporting incidents and/or conduct witnessed first-hand that may be considered to be a criminal act to law enforcement officials.

c. Hazing Incidents. It is unlawful to (1) engage in hazing; (2) solicit direct, aid, or attempt to aid, or abet another person engaged in hazing; or (3) knowingly fail to take reasonable measures within the scope of the person's authority to prevent hazing. It is not a defense in an action under this section that the person against whom the hazing was directed consented to or acquiesced in the hazing activity. Hazing incidents will be reported to the police in a manner consistent with the confidentiality rights set forth above in this section.

D. Continuing Obligation to Investigate. Reports made to either DCF or law enforcement shall not be considered to absolve the school administrators of their obligations under this policy to pursue and complete an investigation upon receipt of notice of conduct which may constitute hazing, harassment and/or bullying.

VIII. Disseminating Information, Training, and Data Reporting

A. Disseminating Information. Annually, prior to the commencement of curricular and co-curricular activities, the School shall provide notice of this policy and procedures to students, custodial parents or guardians of students, and staff members, including references to the consequences of misbehavior contained in the plan required by 16 V.S.A. 1161a. Notice to students shall be in age-appropriate language and include examples of hazing, harassment and bullying. At a minimum, this notice shall appear in any publication of the School that sets forth the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for the School.

B. Student Training. The school administrator shall use his/her discretion in developing age-appropriate methods of discussing the meaning and substance of this policy with students to help prevent hazing, harassment and bullying.

C. Staff Training. The board or its designee shall ensure that teachers and other staff receive training in preventing, recognizing and responding to hazing, harassment and bullying.

D. Data Gathering. Public school districts shall provide the Vermont Agency of Education with data requested by the Secretary of Education.

Legal References:

Title V, Section B, 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794 et seq.;
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §2000d;
Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq.;
Family Education Rights Privacy Act; 20 U.S.C. §1232g;
Public Accommodations Act, 9 V.S.A. §§4500 et seq.;
Education, Classifications and Definitions, 16 V.S.A. §11(26);(30)(A);(32);
Education, 16 V.S.A. §140(a)(1); Education, 16 V.S.A. §166(e);
Education, Bullying, 16 V.S.A. §570c;
Education, Harassment, Hazing and Bullying, 16 V.S.A. § 570;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570a;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570c;
Education, Harassment, 16 V.S.A. §570f;
Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. §570b;
Education, Hazing, 16 V.S.A. §570f
Education, Discipline, 16 V.S.A. §1161a;
Education, Suspension or Expulsion of Pupils; 16 V.S.A. §1162;
Child Abuse, 33 V.S.A. §§4911 et seq.;
Adult Protective Services, 33 V.S.A. §6901 et seq., all as they may be amended from time to time.
Washington v. Pierce, 179 VT 318 (2005).