



*"Receive the children with reverence, educate them with love, let them go in freedom."*

- Rudolf Steiner, Founder of Waldorf Education, 1919

# FAMILY HANDBOOK

35 West Plain Road, Great Barrington MA 01230

Phone: (413) 528-4015 | Fax: (413) 240-3246

[www.berkshirewaldorfschool.org](http://www.berkshirewaldorfschool.org)

*Revised 1.7.25*

**Berkshire Waldorf School is accredited by:**

- Association of Independent Schools of New England (AISNE)
- Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA)
- Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN)



## Welcome from the BWS Leadership Team

Welcome to Berkshire Waldorf School! As we considered a school wide theme upon the dawn of our new collaborative governance model in 2021, the idea of *Renewal* was brought forward by many. We asked ourselves the question, when have we officially arrived at this place of *Renewal*? The answer: it is a constant, both for human beings and for our planet.

Each year, we renew our commitment to our school, the children we teach, our community, the greater world around us, to one another, and to ourselves. Honoring renewal asks each of us to dedicate ourselves to this place of great change and newness, extending gestures of kindness and compassion to ourselves and each other. As we embark on a new school year every September with new friends and family joining our community, we are eager to continue the important journey of *Renewal* with each and every one of you. We can't do this without you!

### The BWS Leadership Team

Christianna Riley, Pedagogical Lead  
Kendra Smallwood, Operations Lead  
Renée Far, Community Lead

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# **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

This Family Handbook is your guide to most everything you need to know about "how things work around here," and we hope it will provide many answers to questions that arise.

Please familiarize yourself with its contents, so you are aware of the mutual agreements between parents, faculty and staff. Your understanding of these core BWS agreements, and your willingness to work with them at home to the best of your ability, helps create optimal learning for our children in a mutually supportive and welcoming community.

We are delighted to partner with you at BWS, and thank you for being a part of a dedicated community of parents and educators who are fully invested in our children's education and well-being.

## **1. BWS at a Glance**

- Independent Coeducational Day School
- [Toddlers through Grade 8](#)
- Founded in 1971
- Governed by Board of Trustees, Leadership Team
- Accredited by [Association of Independent Schools of New England \(AISNE\)](#) and [Association of Waldorf Schools of North America \(AWSNA\)](#)
- Full Member of the [Association of Waldorf Schools of North America \(AWSNA\)](#) and [Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America \(WECAN\)](#)
- [Two Buildings on 32 acres](#)
- Current enrollment of 214 students from Toddlers through Grade 8
- Additional Programs: Extended Care, [Summer Program](#), [Sports Program](#), Adopt-a-Highway clean-up and Presto! Strings Ensemble. In addition we partner with community members to provide programming on campus such as [Parent-Child classes](#), private music lessons, academic tutoring and after school clubs.
- Part of the fastest-growing independent school movement, with more than 1,000 Waldorf schools worldwide

## **2. BWS Mission Statement**

Berkshire Waldorf School cultivates students' academic, emotional, and spiritual development through our unique curriculum. We provide students with the foundation to live up to their full human potential, creating lives of meaning and purpose that positively contribute to our world.

*We accomplish our mission:*

- By instilling in students a love of learning, a sense of wonder, an appreciation of beauty, and a connection to the natural world;
- By following a curriculum based on the developmental stages of human beings as described by Rudolf Steiner;
- By attracting excellent teachers who are committed to their own professional and personal development, and giving each teacher the freedom to work creatively within the Waldorf curriculum;
- By working cooperatively with parents to facilitate continuity between school and home;
- By being a part of the time-tested, world-wide tradition of Waldorf Education that integrates the humanities, sciences, and practical and fine arts.

### **3. BWS Land Acknowledgement**

Berkshire Waldorf School honors the land on which our school is built, and acknowledges that it is the sacred homeland of the Muhhekkunneaw (Muh-he-con-nuck; Mohican in English) Nation. This Nation is now known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Nation; the majority of citizens are alive and well and living in Wisconsin, and they maintain an office in Williamstown, MA.

We give thanks for the elders and the land-keepers past, present and future, who cherish and work in successful partnership with the land, water, plants and animals, and who have maintained a conscientious balance of natural resources for 10,000 years. Because we cherish the paradise where we live, gather and learn, we acknowledge that this is unceded land, not freely given or rightfully sold but stolen and colonized from people who cherished it for generations before us. We recognize that this is the legacy upon which we build our community, and that in the spirit of truth and healing, we will keep in our hearts, minds and learning the complex and painful truths of our country's history.

May this knowledge inspire us to seek and speak truth, to work toward health and healing, and to collaborate towards a healthy culture and society that honors all points of view, warmly welcomes all people, acknowledges our interdependence, cares for the earth and encourages the appreciation of Earth's magnificent diversity, the dismantling of systemic racism and the creation of equitable and inclusive education for all children and families.

### **4. Berkshire Waldorf School Diversity Statement**

Berkshire Waldorf School welcomes diversity of all kinds—cultural, economic, religious, racial, learning style, gender identification and expression, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin—among students, teachers, staff, trustees and parents. We believe that diversity makes us stronger and that empathy and collaboration change the world for the better. Waldorf education prioritizes building a community where all children and families are cherished for their intrinsic value and potential.

Although we come from many different backgrounds, one quality our community shares is cultural openness. We continuously foster and deepen this commitment with self-reflection and education. Being part of Berkshire Waldorf School community includes taking up the work of recognizing and rectifying our own biases, to keep ourselves accountable to this mission. Berkshire Waldorf School recognizes diversity as essential to providing an education that develops the full potential of each student. Sensitivity and cultural competency are critical to enriching our community and deepening the learning experience for all students. Further, we believe it is a moral imperative to build a strong, diverse school community. A holistic education must include preparing our students to meet the world with compassion, resilience, understanding, and creativity, so they have the capacity to create a healthy, safe and life-affirming world for future generations.

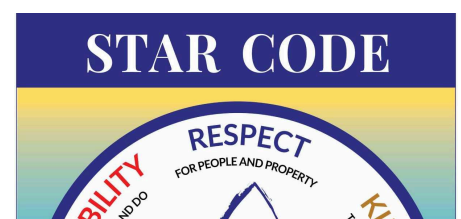
### **Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) Member Schools' Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Waldorf schools and institutes embrace respect for human rights and for the diversity of humankind, and we believe that valuing and supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion comprise a journey of both moral and educational importance. Through our commitment to social justice, we recognize the value of addressing the historical context and the endemic nature of racism and inequality. This commitment is supported by an anthroposophical understanding of the spiritual nature of all humans and the importance of the conscious development of human relationships, as described in principles 1 and 5 of both the AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Schools and the AWSNA Principles for Waldorf Institutes. These principles state, respectively: "The image of the human being as a spiritual being informs every aspect of the school," and "The conscious development of human relationships fosters individual and community health."

As cultural institutions rooted in our communities, we strive to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion through healthy policies and practices. This commitment may look different depending on the community, location, and age of the school or institute, and may include elements such as: DEI committees and position statements; partnerships with organizations with expertise on diversity and equity; tuition models that support socio-economic diversity; admissions and employment practices that recognize and honor racial and gender diversity; curricular innovations; diverse perspectives in curriculum; activities to build bridges with broader communities; and specific education programs that suit the needs of the location, among other possibilities.

### **5. Non-Discrimination Policy**

Berkshire Waldorf School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, ancestry, national origin, age, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation or disability in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies or tuition assistance programs.





## 6. BWS Star Code

Created by teachers and students based on the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the BWS Star Code guides social interactions and behavioral expectations for our school community. The Star Code is prominently displayed throughout the school, and teachers practice these values with our students, from Early Childhood through Eighth Grade. The 5 principles of the Star Code are:

- **RESPECT** for people and property
- **KINDNESS** to self and others
- **CELEBRATION** of diversity
- **APPRECIATION** for the good in each other
- **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and do

Students, faculty, staff, parents, caregivers and all adults in our community are expected to follow the rules of the Star Code both in school and outside of school as representatives of our school.

Your understanding of these core BWS agreements, and your willingness to work with them at home to the best of your ability, helps create optimal learning for our children in a mutually supportive and welcoming community.

## 7. Who to Contact

For questions pertaining to your child's class or curriculum, please always contact your child's teacher first.

- **Absences, late arrivals and general school questions** should go to your child's teacher and Ruth Callahan at the front desk. Ruth will direct questions where they need to go if she does not have the answer for you: [frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org).
- **Medical records, student reports, household information changes, enrollment, registration, Educate or TADS questions** may be directed to Philip Ormanovich: [registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org).
- **Tuition, financial aid or enrollment questions** may go to Renée Far as Enrollment Director: [enrollment@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:enrollment@berkshirewaldorfschool.org).
- **Community events, communications questions or family/student issues** that you may not be able to discuss with your teacher may go to Renée Far as parent liaison and Community Lead: [rfar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:rfar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org).
- **Student, faculty, classroom or curriculum questions that are overall school questions** or that you do not feel you can go directly to your teacher for may be directed to Christianna Riley, Pedagogical Lead: [criley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:criley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org).

- **Development, Business Office, general school finance and buildings and grounds/facility related questions** may be directed to Kendra Smallwood, Operations Lead:  
[ksmallwood@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:ksmallwood@berkshirewaldorfschool.org).

**If you are not sure who to go to** you may always contact the full Leadership Team:  
[leadership@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:leadership@berkshirewaldorfschool.org).

## 8. Daily Schedule

### ***Grades 1 through 8***

8:00 - 8:10	Arrival	12:20 - 1:00	Lunch/Recess
8:15 - 10:15	Main Lesson	1:05 - 1:50	Third Period
10:15 - 10:40	Snack/Recess	1:55 - 2:40	Fourth Period
10:45 - 11:30	First Period	2:40 - 2:50	Home Room
11:35 - 12:20	Second Period	2:50	Dismissal

### ***Early Childhood***

8:15-8:30	Arrival
8:15 - Noon	Morning program
Noon - 2:45	Afternoon program

### ***Extended Care***

Dismissal until either 4:15pm or 5:15pm

## 9. Office Hours, Email, Fax & Telephone Extensions

During the school year, the office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. Summer and vacation hours vary.

**Telephone:** (413) 528-4015

**Fax:** (413) 528-6410

**E-mail:** [frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org)

### ***Telephone extensions:***

Front desk	x 0
Registrar	x 125
Community Lead/Enrollment	x 108
Pedagogical Lead	x 104
Operations Lead	x 101
Admissions	x 106
Buildings and Grounds	x 111
Business Office	x 101

*For other extensions and voicemail boxes, please check the faculty/staff directory.*

**Extended Care after hours** - Please call 413-854-8356

**Sports Phone - (413) 528-4015 ext .110**

If you have a question about a scheduled game or practice, team return times, a cancellation or postponement because of weather or any other circumstance, please call the Sports Phone, NOT the front desk. The Sports Phone number is frequently updated, particularly when weather may change planned activities. Check after 1 p.m. on game days for the latest information.

**Berkshire Waldorf High School - (413) 298-3800** [berkshirewaldorf.com](http://berkshirewaldorf.com)

## **10. Arrivals and Departure**

### **Early Childhood**

Children may arrive between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m. The morning Early Childhood program is dismissed at 12:00 noon\*. Children may be picked up either in their classrooms or outside in the dismissal area. The afternoon Early Childhood program is dismissed at 2:45 p.m. There is a five-minute differential between Grades and Early Childhood pickup and drop off times so parents can pick up Early Childhood siblings before Grades and Middle school Students. Please refer to your teacher's instructions for pickup areas specific to your class.

*\* Please note that if you are picking up students before 2:45 pm, you must leave campus with your child. Picnicking and use of the playgrounds or campus during school hours is not allowed as programming is still taking place for other students.*

### **Grades 1-8**

Grade 1-8 students may be dropped off between 8:00 and 8:10 a.m. **Main Lesson begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. and students are expected to be present and ready.** Last period concludes at 2:40 p.m. Students are dismissed and should be picked up from school by 2:50 p.m. (For more details, see [drop-off and pickup instructions](#).)

**If there is a change in your pickup plans, it is important for parents to let the Class Teacher and the Front Desk know.** Contact the front desk at [frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org) or 413-528-4015 x.0 *well before* dismissal, so that we can responsibly supervise your child's transition from school to home.

- To ensure the safety of your child at pickup time, send any changes in schedule via written note delivered **to the Class Teacher, email to teacher and front desk or call the front desk.**
- If a change occurs during the school day, please notify the Front Desk prior to pick up time, and staff will get a message to your child's teacher.
- If a person other than your child's usual parent or caregiver will pick up your child, please notify the Front Desk, or we will not be able to release your child.
- If an alternate person will pick up your child regularly during the school year, it's important

to add their contact information to your child's record. Please e-mail the [registrar](#) for assistance with this.

**Any student waiting after 3:00 p.m. will be brought inside and parents will need to come in the building to sign them out.** Late fees may be charged. We appreciate your cooperation in picking up your children on time.

#### **After Dismissal**

Only children enrolled in the Extended Care Program will be allowed in the building after school is dismissed. Parents are responsible for children who are waiting for carpools or rides, or who are participating in an after-school program (such as a music lesson), but are not registered for after care.

### **11. Pick-up and Drop-off; Parent Parking**

**Important: Pets must remain in the car while you are on campus.** For the safety of everyone, no pets are allowed on campus at any time, including after hours and during the summer.

#### **Drop-off Grades 1-8**

Please drop off your Grades and Middle School student(s) promptly between 8:00a.m. - 8:10 a.m. Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. will be marked tardy and will miss the opening exercises of class. Students arriving before 8:00 a.m. must be attended by their parents. They will not be admitted into the building early, as teachers are preparing for the day.

- Grades 1-8 students may be dropped off either in the drop-off lane, or parents may park and walk their students to any of the doors listed below (not to the classroom). Parking for Grades 1-8 is in the overflow parking lot.
- Students may enter through the front door, the front porch door, or the front hall door **ONLY**. Beginning at 8:15am, students will need to enter through the front door only (alternative entry doors will be locked).
- Pick up is promptly at 2:50 p.m. Students who are not picked up by 3:00 p.m. may be charged a late pickup fee, to provide for extra staffing.

#### **Pick-up Grades 1-4**

- Parents/Caregivers must park in the overflow lot and pick up their students from their teachers on the Grades School grounds. There is no car pick-up for students in Grade 1-4.

#### **Pick-up Grades 5-8**

- Students will be dismissed from their classrooms and will meet their parents/caregivers on the front lawn, or they may be picked up in the pick-up lane.

The lane closest to the school is reserved for buses.

- If using the pick-up lane, please drive around or park if your student is not ready when you arrive so that traffic can keep flowing.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up for Early Childhood**

Drop off is between 8:15 - 8:30 a.m. Early Childhood students will be dropped off by their caregivers at their play yard or by other arrangement communicated to you by your teacher.

Pick up is at 12:00 p.m. for half day students\* and 2:45 p.m. for full day students. Pick up locations will be communicated by individual teachers. Students not picked up by 3:00 p.m. may be charged a late pickup fee due to extra staffing needed, unless students are part of the Extended Day Program.

*\* Please note that if you are picking up students before 2:45 pm, you must leave campus with your child. Picnicking and use of the playgrounds or campus during school hours is not allowed as programming is still taking place for other students.*

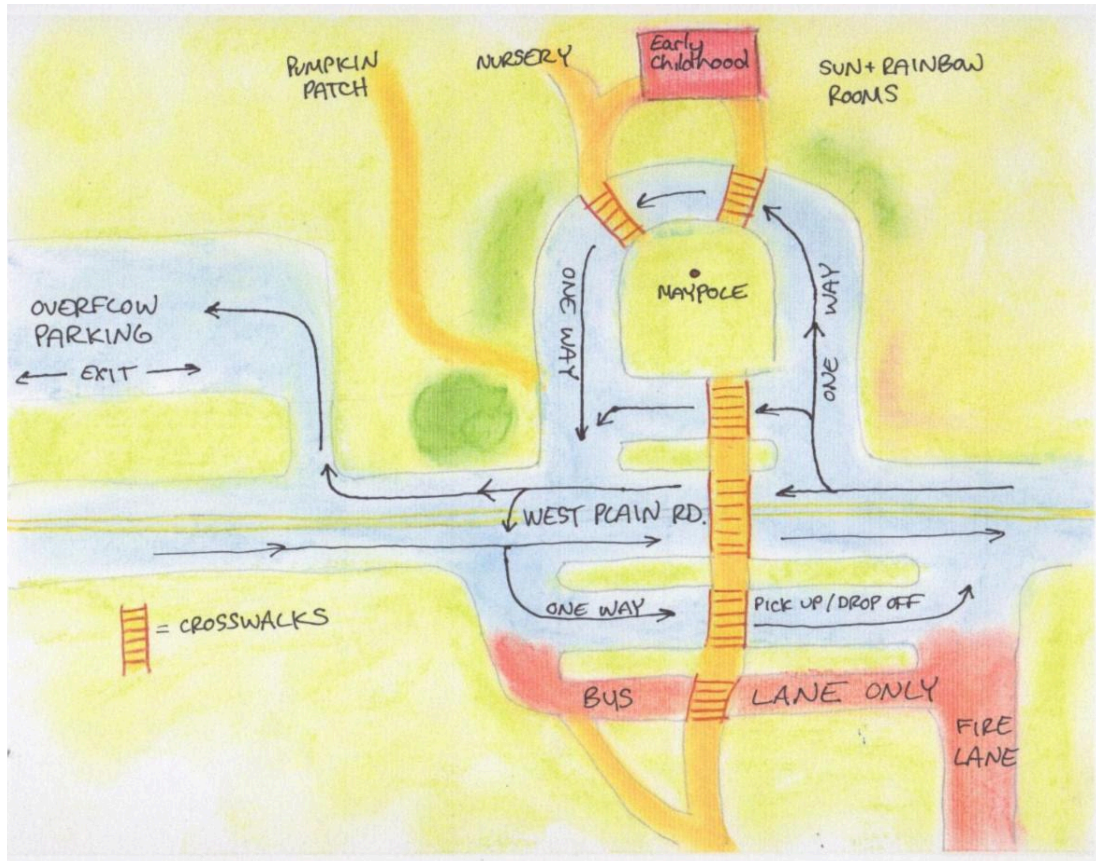
### **How to Pickup and Drop off Your Children**

- **Drop Off Only in the drop-off lane**, pull as far forward as traffic allows. If there is no one ahead of you, proceed past the cross walk to drop off. **IMPORTANT:** Do not drop students on West Plain Road or at the entrance to the driveway, to avoid holding up traffic.
- Traffic in the parking lot and drop off/pick up lane is **one way**.
- **If you arrive early, park in the North lot** and cross the street to wait for your child. Do not wait in your car in the drop off/pick up lane for your child to be dismissed. This blocks the lane for other parents, and prevents faculty and staff from leaving.
- **If you have extra gear** (i.e. camping trips, ski program, etc.), please park in the parking lot and unload to avoid holding up traffic.
- Parents are to park in the **lot on the northside of West Plain Road**, which is the Early Childhood side of the road. Please use the crosswalk to accompany young children across the street. Do not park in the “bus parking only” area or in the Faculty/Staff parking.
- **Parking on the south or Elementary Grades Building side of the road is for employees, school buses and commercial deliveries only.**

When dropping off and picking up students:

- Do not leave your vehicle unattended with the motor running.
- Pull your car as far to the front of the drop off lane as possible.
- Remind your children to walk in between the wooden posts in the pedestrian walkway.
- No idling please.
- Be especially careful of children darting into the lanes.
- **Do not use your cell phone for texting or voice calls while driving on or near campus.**
- Note traffic entrance and exit signs.
- Observe the crosswalk.

- Use all available parking lot spaces before using the lawns.
- Conscientiously observe the 35 mph speed limit on West Plain Road, as well as **20 mph in the school zone.**
- Be considerate of our neighbors.
- Handicapped Parking is for handicapped persons **ONLY**.



## 12. Transportation

**Berkshire Hills Regional School District** provides transportation, through Massini Bus Company, to students in Great Barrington, Housatonic, Stockbridge, West Stockbridge, and Glendale who are five years old and over. **Sign-up for bus service by April 1. Ridership is re-established annually.**

**New York State** residents within 15 miles driving distance from BWS are entitled to school bus transportation by New York State law. **Sign up for bus service by April 1st.** New residents can request a waiver for bus service after that date.

**Taconic Hills Central School District** or **Chatham School District** residents and other children who are further than 15 miles from BWS, may ride the bus. Families will receive a pick-up and drop off pickup point within the 15 miles. For more information, please call Taconic Hills Central School

District (518-325-2870) or Chatham Transportation Dept. (518-392-2415).

For more information or to sign up for bus service, please contact the BWS Registrar at [registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org) by April 1.

Children are expected to conduct themselves on the bus as they do at school and to abide by the requests of the bus drivers.

***Parents who do not meet students at the bus stop in time may incur a \$50 charge, as the children will be bused back to school; we pass this charge along from the bus company.***

**Car Pools** have been arranged by parents in many towns, including Southwestern Massachusetts, New York and Connecticut. All car pool arrangements are made among parents themselves. Teachers should be informed about car pool arrangements, and possible changes, in writing as soon the arrangement is made. Please be sure that children riding in cars wear safety belts.

**Bicycles** are stored in and locked to the school's bicycle rack during the school day. Children may not ride bikes in the play area. After school, bicycles must be ridden/taken straight home. The school is not responsible for damage to bicycles stored at school. Children should always wear a helmet.

### 13. Snow Days

BWS determines school closure for a snow day or opening delay when travel conditions are deemed unsafe. The Berkshire Hills Regional School District school closings typically inform our decision. (Closings for Southern Regional Berkshire Schools do not affect us.) For those traveling from Columbia County, note that students riding the Taconic Hills or Chatham buses may have a different school delay or snow day schedule. At times, NY will have a closing or a delay and we will not, and vice versa. **Parents whose children ride the bus are responsible for monitoring their home districts and arranging for alternate transport if road conditions are safe enough to travel.**

We will always attempt to make school closing decisions by 6:30 a.m. In such instances, we will do the following to inform parents:

- Add a message on the school answering machine.
- Post the school closing on our [website homepage](http://berkshirewaldorfschool.org) (berkshire waldorf school.org).
- Text and email through Educate, which will use your listed contact information.

Since many of our students commute from outlying districts, and the school is located in a rural area, on occasion we may make an independent decision regarding school closures.

#### **Internet**

Bookmark the [Berkshire Hills Regional School District web page](http://Berkshire Hills Regional School District web page). If they're closed for weather,



we're typically closed, too.

### ***School Notification system***

We use an automated system to notify parents of weather-related closings, delays or early dismissals by text, email and sometimes voice call. Please check your account in our Parent Portal, [Educate](#), to update your notification preferences. Contact [registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org) if you need help updating your preferences in Educate.

### ***School phone***

Call the school at (413) 528-4015. A recorded message will give the BWS status by no later than 7:00 a.m.

Taconic Hills and Chatham early dismissal for students using the Taconic Hills and Chatham school district buses are announced on the local NY stations. The office also announces it through email and text message as soon as we are notified. However, this does not necessarily mean that our school is dismissed. New York parents whose children ride the New York buses will decide if they wish to have their children leave school early or stay until the end of the day. If they stay for the full school day, parents are then responsible for picking up their children.

### ***Class Phone/Email Trees***

Class teachers and class parent reps may also develop a class phone tree, use a class email group, or decide on a communication app at the beginning of the year for parent communication and updates other than school closings due to snow (i.e. estimated time arrivals of school field trips).

## **14. Lost And Found**

We collect lost and found clothing and other articles on the side porch of the Grades School Building. Check there regularly for missing articles. Please label your child's clothing, particularly outerwear. Unclaimed items will be donated to the PA clothing swap or to a local thrift store at the end of the year.

## **15. Health and Wellness**

### **DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL IF SICK**

The school asks parents to keep any child at home who, because of illness, cannot participate comfortably in classroom or school activities, or who may present a health risk to other children.

### **Symptom Checklist**

Please read the following [Symptom Checklist](#) and refer to it daily before bringing your child to school. If a child shows any symptoms on the list, you will be called to pick them up. The school asks parents to keep any child at home who, because of illness, cannot participate comfortably in classroom or school activities, or who may present a health risk to other children.



**Check** that your child does not have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (100.4°F or higher), chills or shaking chills (Students cannot return until they are fever free for 24 hrs without the use of fever reducing medication\*)
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as a chronic cough, allergies or asthma)
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea (Students cannot return to school until they are vomit or diarrhea free for 24 hrs\*)
- Headache (when in combination with one or more other symptoms)
- Runny nose (in combination with one other symptom, including fatigue, lethargy, irritability, lack of appetite)
- Sore throat (when in combination with one or more other symptoms)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches, body aches or fatigue (when in combination with one or more other symptoms)

*\*If a student stays home or is sent home with a fever, vomiting or diarrhea, students may not return to school the next day (including after school activities) even if 24 hours falls during the school day.*

**If your child has any of the symptoms above**, keep them home, notify the school (413-528-4015 x. 0) and contact your primary care physician.

**If in doubt**, please keep your child home and call school. Any child who presents to school with symptoms of illness will immediately be sent home. We would prefer not to have to turn a student away.

**If a student becomes ill at school and cannot participate in class**, families will be contacted and the student must be picked up immediately. We ask that you support and respect any teacher or staff member's decision to send a child home. BWS does not have facilities to care for ill students at school. Please be sure you have emergency contacts listed who are able to pick up your child in case of illness if you are unable to do so.

**If your child is ill and diagnosed with a communicable illness** (i.e., Covid-19, strep throat, conjunctivitis, etc.) please follow your doctor's medical directions for when they can return to school.

### **BWS and State Medical Policies**

In compliance with the State of Massachusetts, the school and our parents must adhere to the following medical policies.

**IMPORTANT:** Throughout the year, be sure to keep the school updated regarding any changes in your child's health status.

### **Release Forms**

Children cannot attend school unless the school has a signed release form ("**Permission to Participate in Field Trips and Authorization for Treatment**") on file for each child. It is essential that the information listed on the permission form be accurate and complete, with alternate persons designated to make decisions on a child's medical treatment in lieu of parents. This form is part of your TADS enrollment process on TADS.com.

### **Medical Records**

BWS must have the most current medical records on file each year for each student. These records must be current within one year. Medical records include a **Massachusetts School Health Record** (or your health care provider's equivalent form) and current **Vaccination Records** or **Vaccination Exemption Letter** (dated & signed by doctor or parent/guardian).

### **Medication Administration**

BWS does not have a full time nurse on staff. Therefore, it must be our school policy that **no medications (including over-the-counter, herbal remedies, homeopathic remedies) will be administered to students by school personnel.** If a child is recovering from an illness and needs to take medicine, parents must arrange dosage outside of school hours or come to school to administer the medication themselves.

### **Medication Storage**

Under no circumstances should a student have any medication in his or her possession unless written permission from a physician is on file at BWS for the student to carry asthma inhalers and Epi-pens. Action plan medications will be stored in the classroom unless otherwise determined by the school and family.

### **Medical Action Plan**

If your child has asthma, allergies (especially bee sting sensitivities) or other medical considerations, **the class teacher and the school office must be informed as well as a meeting set up prior to the start of school. An action plan filled out by the child's physician must also be submitted to the school Registrar.** Any child who has asthma or life threatening allergies is required to have the asthma/allergy action plan completed by a physician every year.

### **24 Hour Rule**

If your child has a fever (100.4 F or higher), diarrhea or vomiting they must be **symptom-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medications, before returning to school.** If 24 hours falls during the next school day, students must stay home for the full day and may not participate in after school activities.

### **Illness at school**

If a student becomes ill at school and cannot participate in class, families will be contacted and the student must be picked up immediately. We ask that you support and respect any

teacher or staff member's decision to send a child home. BWS does not have facilities to care for ill students at school. Please be sure you have emergency contacts listed who are able to pick up your child in case of illness if you are unable to do so.

### **Communicable Illness**

Please notify the school if your child contracts a doctor-diagnosed incidence of a communicable illness. The school may alert other parents as deemed appropriate. Medical clearance from your physician may be required prior to your child returning to school. It is critical for BWS to protect the health of all our students and teachers.

## **16. Immunization Records Policy**

Berkshire Waldorf School follows the [Massachusetts School Immunization Law](#) for grades K-8. This law mandates that all students be immunized before attending school. It also requires that schools submit immunization records to the State of Massachusetts for tracking.

### **Massachusetts School Immunization Requirements**

Visit [www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/immunization/guidelines-ma-school-requirements.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/immunization/guidelines-ma-school-requirements.pdf) for the most up to date chart of state immunization requirements.

The State provides an opportunity for parents to control the immunization schedule and regimen for their individual child, allowing two exemptions:

- A **medical exemption** is allowed if the child's physician submits documentation attesting that an immunization is medically contraindicated;
- A **religious exemption** is allowed if a parent or guardian submits a written statement that immunizations conflict with their sincere religious beliefs.

**Immunization records and exemptions must be updated annually before your child may attend school.** In situations when one or more cases of a vaccine-preventable or other communicable disease are present in school, all susceptibles, including those with medical or religious exemptions, are subject to exclusion as described in the [Reportable Diseases and Isolation and Quarantine Requirements \(105 CMR 300.000\)](#). Susceptibles may be unable to return to school for up to 21 days.

We abide by state requirements as they pertain to immunization. We also concur that the decision to immunize is a personal one, and that it should be made by families and their physicians.

While the majority of our parents opt to immunize their children (at least partially), there are some who opt not to include specific immunizations, or to immunize children on a slower schedule than the state code stipulates.

When students are partially immunized, or are not immunized by the beginning of the school year,

parents must provide a signed and dated statement, as referenced above, in order for the child to attend school.

## **17. Communication Policy for Parents**

We are dedicated to clear paths of communication based on the strong working partnership between parents, teachers and the administration at BWS. When a question or concern arises, there are two options:

### **Option 1:**

- Please contact your teacher with your question or concern.
- Your teacher will respond within 24-48 hours to answer your question, or find a time to schedule a meeting, if the concern requires more in-depth conversation. Your teacher may copy the BWS Leadership Team and the Chairperson of the Council of Teachers, so you and the teachers have all the support needed to address the question.
- After the discussion or meeting, your teacher will follow up via phone or email within 24 hours to check in or provide next steps to resolving your question or concern.

Please address questions or concerns to Subject teachers in the same way. You may contact the Front Desk if you need assistance with an email address.

### **Option 2:**

- Please contact the School Leadership Team with your question or concern.
- The School Leadership Team will respond within 24-48 hours to answer your question or find a time to schedule a meeting, if the concern requires more in-depth conversation.
- After the discussion or meeting, the School Leadership Team will follow up via phone or email within 24-48 hours to check in or provide next steps to resolving your question or concern.

The School Leadership Team has an open door policy, and is available by phone (413-528-4015), email ([leadership@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:leadership@berkshirewaldorfschool.org)) or in person by appointment.

To support discrete collaboration between school and parents, and the secure and positive relationship to the school for students, it is helpful **not** to share adult dissatisfactions with children. If they must be involved, it is an opportunity to model direct, calm and respectful interactions.

## **18. Letters to the School**

All letters to the school (not to specific individuals at the school) should be sent to the BWS Leadership Team. Letters addressed to the Council of Teachers and Board of Trustees will be forwarded by these individuals to the Leadership Team for action and reply.

## 19. Graduation

Each year, the Seventh Grade assists the Eighth Grade class and teacher with graduation. Specifically, this entails setting up the auditorium or outdoor space per the request of the eighth grade teacher, ordering and setting up the cake and punch for the tea, cleaning up and clearing out of the auditorium following the ceremony, and carrying out any other reasonable requests of the eighth grade class teacher. The seventh grade class teacher delegates all the above to seventh grade students and parents. The school provides a small budget to cover the cost of refreshments; these monies are not to come from the seventh or eighth grade class funds.

## 20. Re-enrollment each year

Currently enrolled students will automatically be sent re-enrollment instructions for the next school year, but new tuition agreements must be completed each year by March 1 in order to secure students' seats. Students will receive full price agreements unless families have applied for financial aid by the deadline.

Families seeking financial assistance must submit an application by Feb. 1 for the following school year. Tuition support requests must be renewed annually. The tuition assistance policies outline the necessary steps and required forms to apply. See our [tuition support page](#) on our website for details and forms. BWS keeps all tuition assistance information strictly confidential. We require that parents and caregivers also honor this confidentiality.

## II. SCHOOL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

Even though we are one school, there are certain policies that pertain particularly to our youngest students in Early Childhood, and others that are more pertinent for Grades School students. There are, therefore, **two general sections** under School Policies & Guidelines.

- The practical details of attendance in Early Childhood is first.
- The second section is applicable to students in the Grades, although the spirit and general standards contained therein are expected throughout the school.

For families with students in the Grades School only, please continue to [Section C - School Policies and Guidelines for the Grades](#).

### A. BWS Early Childhood Program and Philosophy

A simple yet profound concept is ever-present in the Early Childhood Program at Berkshire Waldorf School: Young children learn through imitation, imagination and integration of the will

through activity.

In keeping with Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of Waldorf Education, our teachers strive to meet the young child according to his or her developmental stage in life, and to create a nurturing environment in which every child's senses, imagination, and awareness of self and others can flourish.

We offer Early Childhood programs for children 18 months to 2.8 years (Toddler Nursery), 2.9 to 4 years old (Nursery) and children turning 4 (by September 30th) to 6 years old during the school year (Kindergarten). Our program includes one Toddler class, two Nursery classes, and three Kindergartens. Each class has a Lead Teacher and an Assistant Teacher, as well as program-wide assistants who help as needed. Class placement considers each child's age, individual needs and the configuration of the class as a whole.

BWS partners with former Early Childhood teacher, Somer Serpe, who offers [Parent-Child classes](#) for babies and young children ages four months through 4 years, accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Parent Child Garden is an ideal opportunity for parents and other important people in babies' and toddlers' lives to become acquainted with our approach to Early Childhood education, and for the youngest children to gain comfort and familiarity in our setting.

Our teachers carefully create a homelike classroom environment that allows the young child gradually to transition into grade school. This handbook describes how and why we approach Early Childhood education the way we do, and provides information to help build and strengthen the bridge between school and home. The descriptions of classroom rhythms, seasonal festivals, play and media are followed by details and policies relevant to our half- or full-day Early Childhood offerings.

BWS is a member of the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America (AWSNA), the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN), and the Association of Independent Schools in New England (AISNE).

### **Early Childhood Rhythms**

In the Early Childhood classroom, teachers thoughtfully plan daily and weekly activities that nurture children's outer and inner development. Through the careful cultivation of creative play, reverence for nature, practical life skills and artistic opportunities, teachers help the children gradually become accustomed to working within a group while developing their capacities as individuals. The teacher arranges the daily and weekly activities into a classroom rhythm that follows a natural flow. Children find comfort in the familiarity of our rhythm and soon begin to ease in and out of activities intuitively and effortlessly. We sometimes refer to these classroom rhythms as "in-breaths" and "out-breaths," conveying the idea that, as in breathing, a healthy, rhythmical balance allows us to feel nourished, centered and fully engaged. For instance, quiet absorption in a puppet story may be followed by self-initiated free play and full bodily action. A strong emphasis on outdoor play in all kinds of weather allows for healthy movement and a close

connection to nature. This connection encourages the sense of wonder that is so important to later learning and supports the child's own sense of well-being in the world. Nature itself abounds with rhythms that have a healthy effect on children and adults.

**The following is a description of some of the activities found in an Early Childhood rhythm:**

### **Creative Indoor Play**

During play time children are encouraged to play imaginatively with a variety of natural, open-ended toys and materials in a beautiful but simple environment created by the teachers. Play is child-directed but closely monitored by teachers so that social learning and imagination can be guided and supported in ways that are healthy for each child and the class as a whole. Children may play by themselves or in groups of two or more as their age and social experience allow. As the year progresses, so does the children's ability to work and play together empathetically. While the children play, the teachers are involved in preparing snacks, cleaning, sewing or other practical activities that the children are welcome to join or emulate. Within this free-play time there are opportunities for the children individually or in small groups to help set the table, grind grains, fix toys and engage in seasonal crafts. While playing and working, the children are integrating their senses of balance, movement and touch as well as processing their life experiences. Practicing their capacity for speech and language, social and emotional interactions, and cognitive development lays the foundation for our students' future learning.

### **Circle Time**

During Circle Time, the teacher and children embark on a seasonal journey of songs and movement. This joyful time consists of a fluid blend of "in-breaths" and "out-breaths," as described above. The teachers create circles that reflect the cycles of nature and draw upon fairy tales and nursery rhymes. This activity may begin with a morning verse and continue with the delight of a simple finger game. Lively whole body movements follow, along with songs and accompanying gestures. Circle Time may conclude with a cozy rest accompanied by a lullaby. This activity nurtures children's innate ability to imitate, which is the foundation of learning in Early Childhood. Age-appropriate movement patterns foster healthy brain development, while repetition and rhyme create the foundation for memory and sound children will need when they learn to read.

### **Artistic and Craft Activities**

Depending on age and ability, Early Childhood students engage in watercolor painting, crayon drawing, beeswax modeling, woodworking, finger knitting, sewing and other artistic activities. The teacher may lead the children in a group, or a child can initiate an activity during play time. Artistic activities are often done in celebration of the seasons and encourage children's natural sense of beauty and form through the use of high-quality, natural materials. These activities also encourage the development of fine motor skills.

### **Snack**

Community snack preparation is one of many activities of the day. Chopping fruit and vegetables and kneading dough fosters healthy will development, and offers opportunities for the children to

strengthen their fine motor dexterity. As with all activities held at our table, young children gradually expand their ability for task focus and listening.

Snack time itself is an uplifting experience! All of our senses are awakened with thankful songs, delicious smells and flavors, and shared stories. We strive toward healthy table manners as the children learn to pass food to their friends, wait to be served, and eat after the blessing. After preparing and eating the snack, the children participate in various tasks of cleaning up and washing, alongside their teachers. The ability to follow a task to completion is an important skill to develop. It paves the way for later problem-solving and organized thought processing.

Working together to feed ourselves creates a strong sense of belonging, and of caring for self and others. Participating in the whole cycle of a process—from loose ingredients to delicious meals to cleaning up—helps the children make sense of the world and to see that their contribution matters. In some cases, the children have even planted and harvested vegetables used in a snack, ground rice for a porridge, or picked and dried the chamomile buds for tea, further extending their understanding of what food is, and giving them more hands-on opportunities to learn by doing.

### **Puppetry and Stories**

Teachers present puppet plays and stories to the children to foster skills of listening and observing, based on each class's growing attention span. For instance, teachers support the younger children in forming their own "inner pictures" by accompanying simple nature stories and nursery rhymes with loosely formed puppets, settings and props. While continuing to provide these beloved puppet stories to all of the children in our Early Childhood Program, teachers with five- and six-year-olds in their classes will add stories told without visual props, since the ability of these children to form inner pictures has strengthened. These beautiful stories inspired by nature, festivals and fairy tales—and told "by heart"—are food for imaginary play, social empathy, memory, clear speech and rich language capacity.

### **Music**

Singing is not only part of our circles and stories, but also a soothing and joyous way to accompany activities and transitions throughout the day. Songs inspired by nature, nursery rhymes and everyday life are sung to bless our food, give directions ("Now's the time to wash our hands...") and to help children move happily through transition times such as getting dressed to go outside. Teachers may also accompany their singing or stories with the gentle sounds of the lyre or pentatonic harp, and sometimes there are simple instruments in the classroom for children to play. Music helps foster the children's capacity for speech, as well as a sense of rhythm, sequence and memory, all of which are important for later academic learning. Music is also intrinsically rewarding, and connects the class and school community.

### **Eurythmy**

Our Eurythmy teacher visits the older children in the Early Childhood Program weekly. Eurythmy—which consists of meaningful gestures and flowing movement forms set to stories, poetry and songs—is sometimes referred to as "visible speech," and is a movement art form



integral to and unique to Waldorf Education. Watching or doing Eurythmy helps children deepen their ability to enter into the nature of sound, particularly of the vowels and consonants in speech, and the tones and intervals in music. Eurythmy not only develops physical health and mobility, but also an inner flexibility that harmonizes the children's feelings and ability to "think on their feet." On another level, Eurythmy helps to develop spatial and social awareness. Moving together cultivates respect for personal boundaries, responsibility for one's part in the group as a whole, and an artistic feeling for time and space. The social ideal of Eurythmy is to have the children feel at ease in their bodies and at home in the world with others, able to enter wholeheartedly into all they do and to find inner stillness when needed.

### **Outdoor Play**

Reverence for and immersion in all that Nature and its seasons offer are the best gifts we can give our children. Exploring, moving and playing outside in our playgrounds, fields and woods provide a wonderful release for the children, and we spend plenty of time outdoors in all kinds of weather. Nature is the great antidote for both the over-stimulation of today's world and current tendencies toward physical passivity. Sunshine, raindrops, mud puddles and snow are all food for the young child's sensory life. This is also the time during which the teacher may lead the children in seasonal outdoor activities such as woodwork, gardening and playground care. As with indoor play, teachers observe closely and model meaningful work, as the children have the opportunity to let their imaginations unfold and learn social skills through play and exploration.

### **Lunch and Rest**

Children who participate in the full school day bring a lunch from home to eat after the morning session ends at noon. Lunch time, like snack time, is a happy occasion often filled with the children's own stories from home. It's also a chance to learn more about table manners, the art of conversation and caring for one's belongings. The transition from lunch to rest is fluid, as the mood of the classroom gradually becomes quiet and cozy, creating a loving, safe environment that allows the children to securely let go. Some children fall asleep quickly, while others may need time to first digest the activities of the morning or simply rest. Either way, the rest teacher lovingly holds a peaceful mood so that children can find their own way to stillness, which nourishes their growing bodies and contributes to their having a happy, successful day. Rest is followed by play time and afternoon dismissal at 2:45 p.m., for those students staying for the whole school day. Extended care is available until 4:15 or 5:15 p.m. for those families who need it. Email [extendedcare@berkshirerwaldorfschool.org](mailto:extendedcare@berkshirerwaldorfschool.org) for details on how to register for extended care.

### **Daily Transitions and Life Skills**

Transition periods between activities are equally important to the child's learning and well-being. Washing dishes and painting supplies, clearing and cleaning table areas and napping spaces, toileting and dressing are all accomplished with the loving and patient guidance of the teachers. This is the time for the children to learn organizational skills and develop confidence in their abilities as they care for themselves and their environment and work together for a common purpose.

## **Separation**

As the children begin the school year—and for some, the experience of school for the first time—they may have difficulty separating from parents at arrival time. Please know that we are here to support this important transition. Each child will approach goodbyes uniquely. Some handle the separation fairly easily, some show signs of distress and then soon settle into the day, and others are quite upset with parting. It can vary with the child's age, her ability to deal with change or separation in general and with stresses in her life outside of school.

It is helpful if parents can demonstrate through word and action that they trust and have confidence in the teacher and in the decision they have made on their child's behalf. Our teachers are experienced in helping families with the transition to school and are dedicated to offering a safe, nurturing experience for your child. It also helps to make partings brief. We recommend a loving yet quick goodbye and departure. Prolonging the parting prolongs the adjustment and accompanying crying or tantrums. Please do clearly say good-bye. (We understand parents' desire to sometimes tiptoe off when their child seems engaged, but this easily backfires and increases anxiety once the child discovers the parent is gone). You can assure your child that you will return, and leave her with a hug and a confident smile. If more than one adult will sometimes be bringing the child to school, it's beneficial if everyone understands the transition process (your child's teachers will let you know the specific details) and has a similar goodbye rhythm.

## **Birthdays**

We take joy in celebrating your child's birthday at school. Birthdays that happen during the summer are celebrated at the end of the school year on a special day for children with summer birthdays. Your child's teacher will confirm with you the details for the day of celebration.

## **Festivals**

Festivals are a time for us to celebrate the change of seasons and the cycles of our inner lives as we move through the year. Special stories, snacks and craft activities help us to make these events meaningful and joyful for the children.

**Michaelmas**, in late September, celebrates the kindling of inner courage and strength to face the approaching cold and is associated with traditional fall harvest festivals.

**Halloween** is celebrated in school with the children only. We have a special snack and puppet show. No costumes, please.

**Lantern Walk** takes place in November when the light is fading and winter is near. All Early Childhood families are invited to attend this early evening event, which includes a story or puppet show in the classroom and a walk during which we carry our handmade lanterns into the night and sing songs of light.

**Spiral of Light** occurs on a Sunday early evening in December for the older children in our Early Childhood Program. In a mood of expectation and reverence, each child carries a

candle through a spiraling indoor garden to brighten the darkness with his or her light. The room eventually glows with many lights, representing how individuals coming together in community can brighten the world. Ours is a nondenominational festival that reflects traditional ceremonies in which one's inner light warms and illuminates the cold, dark time of year.

**May Day** happens every year on May 1st at 11:00 a.m. The whole school community joins together to welcome spring with a joyful celebration of music, song and dance. The festivities take place around the maypole on the lawn in front of the grades building. May Day revelers bring blankets to sit on and their own picnic lunches. Be sure to bring water to drink and sun protection or, as the case may be, rain gear.

**Assemblies, Holiday Handcraft Fair, Open Houses** and other events occur throughout the year. 'All-school Assemblies' take place in the auditorium at Thanksgiving and in the spring, our annual Holiday Handcraft Fair is in November, and Open Houses and community puppet shows happen throughout the year. Please check the school calendar for specific dates and details.

### **Community Picnics**

To celebrate the beginning and closing of our school year we enjoy a potluck picnic. These picnics occur shortly after dismissal on the first and last days of our Early Childhood Program. This is a wonderful time to meet new families and get to know our community. We begin each picnic with a song or verse and then share everyone's delicious offerings. Once the picnic begins, please remember that your children are in your care and that they do require your supervision at all times.

## **B. BWS Early Childhood Policies and Procedures**

### **School Arrival**

School begins at 8:15 a.m. We encourage you to be on time, since children who arrive late often have difficulty separating from parents and integrating into the group. *Important: Please keep your child with you until you have both (parent and child) greeted the teacher to let her know you've arrived; she will then assume responsibility.* This not only aids safety and clarity, it also supports the child's sense of security in the transition. During the first week of school, please assist your child in finding his or her assigned cubby for extra clothes, blankets and lunch boxes; the cubby will be identified by a special symbol which the teacher will give to your child.

As mentioned under "Separation," creating a simple goodbye routine that is the same every day will help your child during this transition, especially if separation is a particular concern. The teachers will receive your child with warmth and love—tears and all! Tears usually disappear shortly after parents leave but will sometimes continue if the good-bye is prolonged. A warm hug and kiss and an unwavering good-bye will show your child that you know that he or she is in a safe,

loving environment. Once your child feels this trust from you, he or she is free to start a day filled with wonder and delight. If tears last longer or you have worries, we are happy to discuss how to work together to support your child and make the transition smoother.

### Dismissal

Dismissal for the half-day program is at noon\* and the full-day program ends at 2:45 p.m. (later afternoon care is also available, see below). Each teacher will provide specific information on where dismissal will take place for each class. **Important: Please always say good-bye to the dismissal teacher together with your child to make sure she knows that you and your child are leaving.** Any changes you make to your child's protocol for being picked up at dismissal (for instance, if another person will be taking your child home) must be communicated in writing to the teacher in the morning. **For unexpected changes** during the day, please phone the office, (413) 528-4015, ext. 0, before 2 p.m. and leave a message, asking for it to be relayed to EC.

*It is essential to be on time for pick up.* Children left waiting become anxious and teachers have additional responsibilities after school. Please call if you are unavoidably detained.

*\* Please note that if you are picking up students before 2:45 pm, you must leave campus with your child. Picnicking and use of the playgrounds or campus during school hours is not allowed as programming is still taking place for other students.*

### After Dismissal

We ask that you do not stay and play in the green or on the playgrounds after pick-up. This can interfere with the dismissal process and cause confusion for children and adults about 'who is in charge' and whether school rules still apply during the in-between time. Use of the parking lot green for running play also creates safety concerns.

If families wish to gather after-school, please collect the children and meet at a community playground or a family's house. And consider that, while this kind of community time can be fun and festive, by dismissal time the children have had a long day of social play with large groups of children, away from parents or caregivers. Children also benefit from some quieter downtime at home with family or a caregiver, giving them an opportunity to unwind, replenish, and reconnect with the adults and siblings in their lives.

### Parking

Please park your car in the school parking lot and walk your child in and out. *There is no parking in front of the building at any time; that is the fire lane.* Please enter and depart the parking lot slowly and carefully.

### Illness

The best place for a child who is ill is at home. Although our school is a nurturing environment, our days are busy and therefore too rigorous for a sick child. When in doubt about your child's health, please keep him or her at home for the day. While the teachers are very sympathetic to the needs

of working parents, we encourage you to arrange back up child-care for illness. Also, please be sure to leave enough recuperation time after an illness. Notify the main office, (413) 528-4015, ext. 0, by 8:15 a.m. if your child will be out of school that day.

### **Health Information and Emergency Contact (Please Keep Us Updated)**

Since your child spends a large portion of the day at school, we work together regarding the health and well-being of your child. Please inform us of any health concerns and allergies that may arise that are not already specified on your office forms. Similarly, we will inform you of anything we notice at school that might be helpful to know at home. Please see the all-school handbook for any additional information about medical protocols.

Your teacher has a folder with your emergency contact form; it is important that you make sure that the office and your teacher are informed of any changes in your address, phone numbers and e-mail, as well as those of your emergency contacts. We will notify you immediately to pick up your child in the event of illness or injury.

### **Snacks**

Each class follows a snack schedule that will be shared at the orientation evening for parents. For example, Tuesday might be soup day and Wednesday, bread day. We use whole foods, organic when possible, and no refined products. Please alert your child's teacher in writing before the first day of school regarding any dietary restrictions.

### **Lunch and Afternoon Program**

The afternoon program begins with lunch at noon. Your child will need a wholesome lunch packed with a small cloth napkin. Some classes may have food restrictions due to life threatening allergies within the class (ex/peanut free classroom). The class teacher will alert parents to any food restrictions for their particular class. Please do not pack packaged drinks—we provide water. Please choose a lunch box and containers free of media characters and leave out refined sweets and juices that curb a healthy appetite and can interfere with after-lunch rest time. Your child will need a blanket for rest that remains at school and should be laundered at each school vacation. If you are interested in a full-day of school for your child (8:15 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.), starting at the beginning of the school year can be helpful in setting the rhythm, although children may also begin at a later time.

### **Review Period for Transition to Rest Time**

After a brief transitional period many children are able to rest in a group at school. Occasionally a child is unable to rest in a school setting and may need to be picked up at noon to rest at home. If this occurs, we can always try again at a later date when the child may be more ready to rest at school. The teacher will be in touch with you about any concerns. Keeping a relatively consistent nap or rest schedule at home on weekends and during school vacations can help support the daily school rhythm.

## Extended Care

Extended care is provided from 2:45 to 4:15 or 5:15 p.m. and is available for an additional fee. Families may sign up for extended care at the start of the school year. Held in the Early Childhood Building, extended care provides a comfortable, family-like atmosphere for children from our Early Childhood Program through Grade Two. Students must pack their own hearty snack for extended care. Outdoor adventures for all ages led, and lovingly held, by our extended care teachers.

## Clothing

We go outside in all but the most inclement weather. Please dress your child accordingly, layering to be prepared for changes in the weather. Your child will need the following gear.

- **Rain pants and rain boots** are essential for our daily walks throughout the fall and spring, regardless of whether the forecast calls for rain, since young children sit on the damp ground and play among bushes and trees that may be wet from the morning dew or evening rain.
- **In winter, snow pants, jackets (or snowsuits) and snow boots** are essential.
- Also needed, according to the season, are **rain coats, mittens and sweaters**.
- **Hats are needed for every season—warm hats for cold days, and sun hats with brims or visors in the warm weather.**

Your child will also need the following clothing:

- **Sturdy, well-fitting inside shoes** (i.e., no clogs, Crocs or impractical party shoes) will allow for active and safe inside play. For the older children in Early Childhood, tie shoes are recommended so that they can develop their shoe-tying skills. We also ask that children's shoes do not light up.
- **A complete change of clothes, including underwear and socks, remains at school** in your child's cubby. Please launder and replace the spare clothing at each vacation break or whenever used.

Clothing that is unfussy and allows for plenty of movement and play will help your child freely participate in all of our activities.

## Media

For many years teachers have observed that television, video and computer use is detrimental to the health and development of young children and counterproductive to our efforts to prepare them for a successful school experience. Our media policy expects that parents remove this kind of electronic media exposure from the daily experience of their children, particularly during the early years and grades. We are aware that this concept contradicts modern societal demands and may require making changes in your family life; please know that many of the families in our community, both long-time parents and teachers, have successfully met with similar challenges in their family lives. They may be able to offer helpful suggestions for guiding children away from media use.

**It can seem daunting at first,** but the less you offer media to children, the less they will ask for it.

Eventually other more creative activities become much more interesting as the capacity for play flourishes. We encourage you to explore the many alternatives to media that provide nourishment for healthy sensory, cognitive and social development. Examples may be found in various tasks at home that young children love to help with, including gardening, dish washing, meal preparation, carpentry and sweeping. Imaginative play, painting, coloring and crafts are also great alternative activities. We ask that you not entertain your child during grocery trips, restaurant outings, car rides or waiting rooms by giving them your phone or iPad to play with, since this creates a dependency on devices. Your teachers are happy to offer suggestions and address questions and concerns as you become familiar with the media policy and work to create alternatives to media in your home and community life.

**One thought-provoking book** on the subject is *The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age*, by Catherine Steiner-Adair, PhD. She and other modern researchers and child development specialists are noticing the ill effects of electronic media use on children and relationships. For more information see the BWS all-school handbook, or ask your child's teacher for additional resources.

### **Cell Phone Use On- and Off-Campus**

Our efforts to create a calm environment and smooth transitions for the children are greatly aided by parents who are focused and engaged during transition times. In this spirit, we ask that you refrain from using your cell phone while dropping off and picking up your child at school. Before leaving your car, please complete any phone conversations or texts. **BWS classrooms, cubby areas, grounds and hallways are cell-phone-free zones for parents and caregivers.**

With the ubiquity of cellphones and smartphones today, we encourage parents and other adults to bring awareness to their use of these and other electronic devices while in the presence of young children when off campus. We understand that cell phone use is sometimes necessary and often convenient. In these cases, it can be beneficial to develop a practice of asking yourself whether a particular text, call, internet inquiry, weather check or other typical use is truly necessary in the moment when with children. When it is necessary to use the phone in front of the children, please do keep it short and let the children know that you are checking on something quickly and will be with them in a moment (rather than shifting your awareness back and forth between phone and child while keeping your phone in hand). Once your task is done, remember to put away the phone and re-engage in the moment. Since young children learn best through imitation, you will be modeling awareness, presence, boundaries, self-discipline, caring and respect.

### **Toys**

We ask that no toys be brought from home. Our toys at school are for all to share.

### **Discipline**

This all-school family handbook provides a discipline policy that is geared toward children in the elementary school (located in section C on school policies for the grades). It is our task as Waldorf early childhood teachers to provide a safe, harmonious environment in which each child can feel

acknowledged for their own gifts and also know that they are part of a caring community. We strive to help children overcome challenges that may be hindering their social/emotional development so that each child is free to develop into their highest self. In this way we see discipline not as a means of altering behavior but rather as a carefully cultivated social awareness that children are in the process of learning. An essential part of this task is providing a rhythmical day consisting of healthy physical activity, nourishing snacks, inner and outer warmth, loving words and soothing activities that do not overwhelm the young child. It also involves setting clear behavioral boundaries so that the children can feel sure about what is expected of them. Loving boundaries cultivate trust, confidence and a willingness to explore.

The early childhood day fosters imagination, reverence for the world, and empathy for others. Our approach to discipline is to recognize and accept children for who they are, redirect them when they are having social difficulties, remind them of boundaries when needed, and, as adults, to model behavior that is worthy of the young child's imitation. On occasion, a child who is consistently struggling with boundaries at school or exhibiting behavior not conducive to the health of the class may be sent home at their teacher's discretion. If this occurs, the teacher will follow up with the parents to find ways to support the child at school and at home. In general, teachers and parents will ideally share an equal awareness of our discipline approach at home and at school— and work together to create a balance of exploration and healthy limits.

### **Parent Meetings, Welcome Night and Transition into First Grade**

Throughout the year we offer presentations and shared conversations for parents to learn more about Waldorf Early Childhood education and ways to support their child's growth and development. Complementing larger meetings on broad topics, to which all Early Childhood parents are invited, we offer individual class meetings that allow for more intimate discussions of each class. These smaller meetings inform you of your child's classroom experience and help to create a parent community that values the well-being of all the children in the class; we encourage you to participate in the explorations of the Early Childhood stage of your child's life. Your teacher will provide details on meeting times.

### **Transition into First Grade**

Children must be six years of age by September 1 and developmentally ready in order to attend first grade at Berkshire Waldorf School. Children whose birthdays fall close to September 1 will be individually assessed by the kindergarten teachers, the first grade committee and/or the first grade teacher. It is helpful to attend the "Looking Forward to Grade School" presentation for parents.

### **Early Childhood Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-teacher conferences take place at the end of November and the middle of February. This meeting is for the teacher and parent(s), without the child present. We encourage both parents to attend when possible. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss personality, social skills and anecdotes, and a time to make sure we are all working in common.



**There is no school on the day of parent-teacher conferences**, so each family will need to make child care arrangements. (One possibility is for two families with appointments that follow one another to trade child care; that is, one family supervises play in the garden while the other meets with the teacher.) Conferences at other times can be arranged with your child's teacher as needed.

### **Concerns**

If you have any concerns regarding your child's care, we ask that you first bring them to your lead teacher. Many problems can be resolved with open and direct communication. A follow-up meeting a few weeks later may need to be scheduled to discuss the outcome. If after that you feel your concern was not adequately heard, it is best to ask for a meeting with the teacher and early childhood chair. Similarly, if a teacher has concerns regarding your child and together we cannot seem to resolve them, a meeting may be called with the pedagogical lead and early childhood chair.

### **Parent Visits**

Parents of children in our half- and full-day Early Childhood Program are invited to visit once a year on the day of their child's birthday celebration. To visit the class at any other time or to volunteer, please make arrangements with your child's teacher.

## **C. BWS Grades School Policies and Guidelines**

### **1. Attendance & Tardiness Policy**

**The BWS Attendance and Tardiness Policy** utilizes a team approach, if necessary, to explore with the student and family what obstacles are hindering school attendance. Team membership includes the parent(s)/guardian(s), Class Teacher, and Pedagogical Lead.

#### **Early Childhood**

In Early Childhood, we keep attendance records to know who is on campus each day for safety purposes. Frequent absences may be disruptive to the child and class, and as such Teachers may be in communication with parents regarding their attendance.

#### **Grades 1 – 8**

In Grades 1-8 we keep attendance records to know who is on campus each day for both safety purposes and as an official record on students' reports. At BWS it is expected that children in Grades 1-8 attend school on every day that school is in session unless they are ill or have a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours.

#### **Absences**

- If a child is absent from school, it is the responsibility of the teacher to notify the Front Office via attendance sheets first thing in the morning.
- If a child is absent from the school, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the

school by phone or email prior to 8:45 am with the reason for the child's absence.

- If we have not heard from the parent and the child is not in school by 9:00 a.m., the school will contact the parent/guardian at home or at work.
- If a child is marked absent, their absence is designated either excused or unexcused by the Front Office.
  - **Excused Absences** are those that are due to illness, or a medical appointment that could not be scheduled outside school hours.
  - **Unexcused Absences** are those that are made by choice (eg. extending a school vacation by a few days, having a 'home day') or unexplained, meaning that the parent did not let the school know the reason for the absence or was unreachable.

### **Tardiness**

Tardiness is a disruption to the educational process. It sets a tone that de-values education and disrupts the class and the child's schedule for the school day.

Students are expected to arrive in their classrooms no later than 8:10 a.m. in order to be ready to begin class promptly at 8:15 a.m. Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. are considered late and will be marked tardy.

- Any student with **3 or more tardy days** in a month will receive a tardiness reminder email from the Front Office at the end of the month. The Class Teacher and Pedagogical Lead will be cc'd on this email.
- After **7 tardy days**, the teacher and parent/guardian will meet to develop a formal plan of action.
- After **10 unexcused tardy days**, the teacher and Pedagogical Lead will meet with the parent/guardian to determine next steps.

### **LOWER SCHOOL ABSENCES (GRADES 1-5)**

#### **Excused Absences (GRADES 1-5)**

- Throughout the year the Front Office will distribute attendance reports to Class Teachers.
- Any student with over **10 EXCUSED** absences will be highlighted for the Class Teacher's attention. The Class Teacher will assess whether the particular student is keeping up academically and how absence is impacting the student and the class.
- The teacher must fill out a [School Attendance Agreement](#) indicating whether or not they feel the student is keeping up academically and socially. This document will be placed in the student's file.
- For those students who are not keeping up, the teacher and the Pedagogical Lead will meet with the family and develop an individualized plan to increase school attendance. This plan

should be detailed at the bottom of the School Attendance Agreement and must be signed by the parent/guardian and teacher and placed in the student's file.

- Follow-up steps are recommended to assess if the plan is working for the student and the family. Records of all contact with the parent/guardian related to this plan are kept in the student's files.

#### **Unexcused Absences (GRADES 1-5)**

- After **5 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 BWS Attendance & Tardiness Policy. Documentation will be held in the student's record.
- After **10 UNEXCUSED** absent days, a parent/guardian meeting is called with the Class Teacher and Pedagogical Lead to discuss the impact of absences on the 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 Class 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) and added to the student's file.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL ABSENCES (GRADES 6-8)**

##### **Excused Absences (GRADES 6-8)**

- Throughout the year the Front Office will distribute attendance reports to Class Teachers.
- Any student with over **5 EXCUSED** absences will be highlighted for the Class Teacher's attention. The Class Teacher will assess whether the particular student is keeping up academically and how absence is impacting the student and the class.
- The teacher must fill out a [School Attendance Agreement](#) indicating whether or not they feel the student is keeping up academically and socially. This document will be placed in the student's file.
- For those students who are not keeping up, the teacher and the Pedagogical Lead will meet with the family and develop an individualized plan to increase school attendance. This plan should be detailed at the bottom of the School Attendance Agreement and must be signed by the parent/guardian and teacher and placed in the student's file.
- Follow-up steps are recommended to assess if the plan is working for the student and the family. Records of all contact with the parent/guardian related to this plan are kept in the student's files.

##### **Unexcused Absences (GRADES 6-8)**

- After **5 UNEXCUSED** absent days, an email will go out to the family from the Front Office that includes, if appropriate, a request for a doctor's note for any future absences and a copy of the BWS Attendance & Tardiness Policy. Documentation will be held in the student's record.
- After **10 UNEXCUSED** absent days, a parent/guardian meeting is called with the Class Teacher

and Pedagogical Lead to discuss the impact of absences on the 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 Class 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) and added to the student's file.

*In Middle School, absences (whether excused or unexcused) may impact the students ability to receive credit for a block or Main Lesson. In such cases, additional attendance expectations will be communicated from Class and/or Block Teachers.*

### **Punctuality in Grades 1-8**

If we place importance upon attendance and punctuality, our children will learn to be reliable and to respect others. Main lesson begins at 8:15 a.m. and Grades students should arrive between 8:00 – 8:10 a.m. to prepare themselves and have time to greet their teacher and classmates.

At our school, grades 1-8 teachers and students begin the day together with a greeting and verse. Not only is it disruptive for those already present when a child arrives late, but the late child misses something of intangible importance at the beginning of the day.

### **Pro Tips for getting to school on time**

- Have the mindset that “five minutes early is on time.”
- Set all your clocks to five minutes ahead.
- Have your children pack their lunches the night before and set out the next day's clothing the night before.
- Possible consequences if they don't get ready in time in the morning:
  - make bedtime an hour earlier
  - miss after school activities including sports, skiing, parties and playdates

### **Planned Absence**

Waldorf education is an experiential education, and parents are encouraged to schedule doctor and dentist appointments after school hours and to avoid planned absences. The school does not honor 'home days'. If you know in advance that your child must miss school, please inform the teacher and office. Teachers will not provide take-home work for planned, unexcused absences (such as extended vacations and travel).

## **2. Student Dress Code**

At BWS, we don't have a uniform, but we do have a dress code. We expect Berkshire Waldorf School students to be neat, clean, and dressed for their active day.

At our “all weather” school, that includes being adequately dressed and prepared (including footwear) for a variety of New England weather.

- Grades students go out for recess in all weathers, and participate in Games, Farming/Gardening and other outdoor classes, rain or shine.
- Early Childhood programs are play-based, and students spend a good part of their day outside.

It's helpful to look at your child's daily/weekly schedule to understand what clothing will work best for each Grade or Early Childhood program. In addition, keep an eye on the daily weather report, as Berkshire's weather can be unpredictable. Your child's teacher will provide a recommended clothing and gear list.

We request parents' and caregivers' thoughtful collaboration in helping students be ready to fully participate in their active, indoor/outdoor school day, while maintaining standards of dress and appearance that support excellent behavior and concentration.

Here's what we mean when we say "school clothes" at BWS:

- Comfortable and flexible
- Neat & Clean
- Supports climbing, running and jumping - for example, shoes that stay on during all their activities and pants, skirts and shirts that allow for a full range of movement and stay in place during a variety of activities like Eurythmy, Games, Gardening, Woodwork.
- Age-appropriate
- Weather-appropriate
- Functional and practical – will support and protect your child throughout the day (ripped clothing is not functional & practical)
- Lets their individuality shine - no words, slogans, brands or media-inspired graphics (BWS gear and athletic uniforms are OK)
- Enables full participation in learning - for example, hair or clothing should not be in or over the eyes; if necessary, teachers will provide students with a barrett or headband.
- Cleats should not be worn in the building
- If teachers notice a student's clothing or accessories aren't conducive to learning, teachers will contact parents with a recommendation.
- Hair dye is not permitted for students.

### **A Note on Assembly Dress**

For school assemblies, ceremonies and public performances, students are asked to dress up.

Options include:

- Dresses
- Dress tops and skirts or pants
- A button-front, solid or simply patterned, long-sleeved, collared shirt tucked into pants with a belt.
- Denim skirts/jeans and high-heeled shoes are not permitted for performances or assemblies

### 3. Food

Students bring their individual snacks and lunches to school, and eat them outside or in the classroom. We ask that students not share or trade food items. Gum, candy and soda are not appropriate for school snacks or lunches. Some classes may have food restrictions due to life threatening allergies within the class (ex/peanut free classroom). The class teacher will alert parents to any food restrictions.

### 4. Conduct

Students are expected to have respect for themselves, other students, teachers, staff and school property. This is expressed in our unique **STAR CODE**, to which every student and parent is introduced. The five points of the star—**Appreciation, Celebration, Kindness, Respect, and Responsibility**—become a reference point for activities and discussions to raise awareness for the individual and the group. As a form of respect, students are expected to formally address all adults at school, using Ms., Mrs. or Mr. before their first or last name. Students are to arrive at school appropriately dressed and to be diligent in their studies. Students are expected to adhere to the principles of the STAR CODE both in school and while on school sponsored trips, outings, sporting events and bus rides.

#### ***Appropriate Speech and Behavior***

We address one another at all times with respect. Rude, threatening or abusive language or behavior is unacceptable in our school. This includes foul language and cursing. We consider good manners to be an essential part of our students' social skills. In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, students remove their hats upon entering the building, walk within the school building, and move quietly from one class to another. Public displays of affection are not appropriate at school.

#### ***Recess***

Students play outside every day during outdoor recess and should come to school with appropriate outdoor dress. If a parent feels that his or her elementary school child should remain inside during recess, an explanatory note should be sent to the class teacher.

In order to make the playground a safe area, it is necessary for students to be considerate of one another. Wrestling is generally not part of recess activities. On occasion, with a teacher's permission, an even match may be arranged. Tackling, punching and kicking are not permitted at any time. Throwing sticks, stones and snowballs is also not permitted.

#### ***Electronics, phone use, toys, pets***

Teachers take great care to create the best possible learning environments in their classrooms. Parents are asked not to allow toys, cards, electronic equipment and gadgets to be brought to school or on class trips. Knives and toy weapons are also not permitted on school grounds, buses or on class trips.

As school phones and lines are limited, we reserve office phone use by students for emergencies only. See our cell phone policy in the [media guidelines section](#). Coaches have cell phones and update the sports line when necessary.

For the health and safety of all, animals are not permitted on school grounds at any time with the exception of service animals.

### ***Money***

Money not needed for a particular purpose is best left at home. The class teacher may be asked to safeguard larger amounts of money, if bringing money to school is necessary.

### ***Tobacco***

BWS is a tobacco and smoking free campus. If a student is found smoking or in possession of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes or vaping pens, the class teacher, parents and BWS Leadership Team will be notified and the student will be suspended for three days. Further violation may result in probation or expulsion.

### ***Stealing***

The school encourages respect for other peoples' personal space and property. All cases of stealing, whether involving the property of students, teachers, staff, parents, or friends of the school, will be referred to the class teacher and the BWS Leadership Team, and a meeting will be held with the student, class teacher, parents and a member or members of the BWS Leadership Team. Depending on the value of goods stolen, a police and/or internal investigation may be held. In all cases, the student must pay back the value of the stolen goods and may be given a five-day suspension and put on probation for the rest of the academic year. If caught stealing again, the student may be subject to extended suspension or expulsion.

### ***Substance Abuse***

Our school stands for the healthy growth and development of children. To this end, we seek to create a supportive and caring environment of safety and comfort essential to effective learning. Contemporary challenges of substance abuse require the concern of the entire community surrounding the child. In concert with parents and supporting friends, the faculty and staff work to guide students through these elementary years.

We will deal seriously with any infraction in the area of substance abuse. The school stands firmly against the possession and use of tobacco, alcohol, and other non-medicinal drugs by its students.

This policy is designed to protect the individual rights of members of the school community while ensuring that we have the best environment for the developing child. The BWS Leadership Team is empowered to implement this policy.

A student who uses, possesses, sells or otherwise distributes tobacco products, drugs, alcoholic beverages or drug paraphernalia, while on school property or during a school-sponsored activity, will be referred to the appropriate school employee for disciplinary action under this policy.

### ***Definitions***

a) *Alcoholic Beverage*: Alcohol spirits, liquor, wine, beer and any liquid or solid containing alcohol spirits,

wine, or beer which contains one-half of 1% or more of alcohol by volume, which is fit for beverage purposes either alone or when diluted, mixed or combined with other substances;

- b) *Drugs*: Stimulants, amphetamines, depressants, tranquilizers, narcotics, relaxants and hallucinogens or any other controlled substance, including steroids, regulated by the FDA and not prescription medication;
- c) *Use*: The ingestion, inhalation or injection of an alcoholic beverage or drug;
- d) *Possession*: Possessing an alcoholic beverage or a drug or drug paraphernalia i) on one's person ii) among one's personal possessions, such as in a book bag or purse, iii) within the reasonable immediate vicinity of one's person;
- e) *Substance abuse*: The unlawful use or possession of an alcoholic beverage or a drug;
- f) *Contraband*: A drug, alcoholic beverage or drug paraphernalia.

There are several identifiable issues associated with substance abuse experienced by schools:

- a) The student who voluntarily admits to substance abuse and requests help.
- b) The student who i) uses a drug or alcoholic beverage or ii) possesses these substances or related drug paraphernalia and does or does not recognize a problem to self, others, or the school.
- c) The student who sells or otherwise distributes a drug, alcoholic beverage or drug paraphernalia to others.
- d) The student who attends school or a school activity while under the influence of a drug or alcoholic beverage.

#### *Procedures*

1. When a student voluntarily confides to school personnel that he or she is involved with alcoholic beverages or drugs, the BWS Leadership Team shall be notified. The BWS Leadership Team, Council Chair and Class Teacher shall determine what steps will be taken in order to assist the student in discontinuing such involvement. Counseling and treatment shall be specifically considered in making this determination.
2. When a student is suspected of being under the influence of a drug or alcoholic beverage but no contraband is found, the Class Teacher must be immediately notified, and the Class Teacher, in consultation with the BWS Leadership Team, will determine if further action is warranted after conferring with parents. If appropriate, a program of treatment will be worked out with the Class Teacher, child, parents and appropriate helping agencies.
3. When a student is found or admits to using or being under the influence of a drug or alcoholic beverage and no contraband is found, the Class Teacher, parents and BWS Leadership Team will be informed and a meeting held with the student, class teacher, parents and BWS Leadership Team. The student will be sent home and suspended for three days, and will return with parents after the suspension to work out an appropriate treatment. The student will be on probation for the remainder of the school year. Any further violations could result in extended suspension or expulsion.
4. When a student is found to be in possession of a drug, alcoholic beverage or drug paraphernalia the Class Teacher, parents and BWS Leadership Team will be informed. The police will be called immediately and all paraphernalia will be turned over to them. The student will be suspended for five days. Upon returning the student will:



- a. be on probation for the remainder of the academic year;
- b. show evidence of participation in additional drug education;
- c. may be required to present evidence of no further dependence, if appropriate, depending upon the existence of physical or psychological dependence on drugs or alcohol, and depending upon the severity of the particular matter. Any further violations could result in additional police involvement, extended suspension or expulsion.

## **5. Bullying Intervention Policy**

Berkshire Waldorf School expects all members of our school community to treat each other with civility and respect. It is the policy of the School to provide a learning and working environment for students, faculty, staff, parents and visitors that is free from bullying. Although this section specifically refers to the “student” as a possible victim of bullying, the School recognizes that the definition of victim is to include all school personnel, and that any reference to the protection of students, will be afforded to all school personnel as well.

The School recognizes that the reasons for bullying can be complicated and diverse, and that certain students may be more vulnerable than others due to, but not limited to differentiating characteristics, whether actual or perceived, based on race, color, religion, physical appearance, or any disability, be it mental, physical, or developmental.

This bullying intervention policy is an integral part of our efforts to maintain a safe environment for our students, to promote the learning of respectful and acceptable behavior and to prevent behavior that can impede the learning process. It is important that this policy be well understood by all members of the BWS community.

The Board of Trustees and the Council of Teachers, through the BWS Leadership Team, share the responsibility for the implementation and administration of the policy.

### ***Definitions***

The following definitions are drawn from the Massachusetts law against bullying.

- A. “Aggressor” is a student who engages in bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation.
- B. “Bullying” is defined as the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:
  - causes physical or emotional harm to the targeted student or damage to the targeted student’s property
  - places the targeted student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property
  - creates a hostile environment at school for the targeted student
  - infringes on the rights of the targeted student at school
  - materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school.

C. "Cyberbullying" is bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which includes telephones, cell phones, computers, fax machines and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, e-mail, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings, whether on a webpage, in a blog, or otherwise. Cyberbullying also includes:

- the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person.
- the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.
- the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.

D. "Hostile Environment" is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

E. "Retaliation" is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

F. "Target" is a student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

### **Policy Against Bullying, Cyber Bullying And Retaliation**

Berkshire Waldorf School hereby prohibits bullying and/or cyberbullying:

1. On school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the School, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the School; and,
2. At a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned leased or used by the School, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process, the orderly operation of the school or the working environment.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is hereby prohibited. False accusations of bullying or retaliation shall be subject to disciplinary action.

This policy does not require Berkshire Waldorf School to staff any non-school related activities, functions or programs.

### **Legal Definitions and School Policy**

It is important to bear in mind that stricter standards of behavior may apply under BWS's policies, in order that we may prevent inappropriate verbal and physical conduct before a student has been subject to bullying as it is defined under the law. For example, although the law defines bullying as "repeated use" of certain expressions, acts, and/or gestures, the School reserves the right to apply disciplinary

measures and other corrective action in a case of a single expression, act or gesture, if the School determines that it is of sufficient severity to warrant disciplinary measures.

### **Prevention Of Bullying And Cyberbullying**

From Early Childhood through the grades, students and adults need to know that, as members of our community, they have a right to be treated with civility and respect. Our curriculum and our school culture, supported by our Social/Emotional Health Program, emphasize respect for differences among all members of our community. We strive to assure all children and adults that they will be safe and treated honorably, and expect them, in turn, to treat others in a comparable manner.

At the beginning of each school year, standards of conduct, including the Star Code, are reviewed with each class to ensure that students are well-informed about what is expected of them. Throughout the year, positive conduct is reinforced individually and collectively through class meetings/discussions, assemblies, Star Code-centered events, and opportunities for social education as individual situations arise.

The BWS Bullying Intervention Policy appears in our Employee Handbook, in the Parent Handbook, on our school website, and is distributed to families upon admission to the school. The Star Code is posted in every elementary classroom and throughout the elementary school. In Early Childhood, appropriate behavior is consistently expected and corrected on an individual basis when infractions occur. In addition to supporting positive conduct toward others, the school strives to empower students to take action if they feel targeted or if they witness other students engaging in bullying or other unacceptable behavior.

The administration and faculty recognize that it is essential that expectation for student conduct extend to corridors, bathrooms, lunch, recess, buses and the like. The School strives to ensure that ample adult supervision is provided on school premises and on school-provided transportation throughout the school day, as well as at school-sponsored events.

We hope that parents will take the opportunity to enforce and adopt the Star Code at home, and remind their children of expectations for good and respectful behavior both during school and at off-campus school functions such as sporting events, school bus rides, etc.

### **Bullying Intervention Plan**

#### ***Reporting***

Any student who is the target of bullying or cyberbullying or has witnessed an incident of bullying or cyberbullying or otherwise has relevant information about bullying or cyberbullying prohibited by this policy is strongly encouraged to promptly report the matter orally or in writing to any faculty or staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. Also, any student who is subject to retaliation in violation of this policy or who knows of another student who has been subject to retaliation is urged to report it as soon as possible.

A parent of a student who is the target of bullying or cyberbullying, or of a student who has witnessed or otherwise has relevant information about bullying or cyberbullying, is strongly urged to promptly notify the BWS Leadership Team or a faculty member at the School. Furthermore, any parent who has witnessed bullying or cyberbullying, or has relevant information concerning such an incident, is strongly urged to report such to the BWS Leadership Team or a faculty member. A parent should also report any incident of retaliation in violation of this policy to the BWS Leadership Team.

Any member of the faculty or staff of the School, including but not limited to athletic coaches, advisors to extra-curricular activities, teachers hired to teach a particular block, or substitute teachers, who witnesses or otherwise becomes aware of bullying or cyberbullying in violation of this policy, or who becomes aware of retaliation against a student who reported information concerning a violation of this policy, is **required to report it immediately to the BWS Leadership Team**. There are no exceptions. A member of the faculty or staff may not make promises of confidentiality to a student or parent who informs him/her of an allegation of bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation. Faculty and staff may not make reports under this policy anonymously.

The School also urges students and their parents not to make reports anonymously. Although there are circumstances in which an anonymous report can be better than none at all, it is far more difficult to determine the facts of what occurred if complaints are made anonymously. Students and parents are encouraged to bear in mind that the School takes its policy against retaliation seriously. Also, while the School cannot promise strict confidentiality, as information must be shared in order to conduct an effective investigation, the School releases information concerning complaints of bullying, cyberbullying, and retaliation only on a legitimate need-to-know basis.

The BWS Leadership Team, or their designee in charge of receiving complaints, is to keep the following, accurate documentation of all complaints received.

- a. the name of the complainant;
- b. the status of the complainant (i.e. student, staff, third party);
- c. the name of the alleged bully;
- d. the date the complaint was received;
- e. how the complaint was received (i.e., written, oral);
- f. the nature of the complaint (i.e. facts of the complaint); and
- g. the names of witnesses.

Reports of bullying are best if given in writing, although this is not a requirement. No disciplinary action shall be taken against a student solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

### ***Investigation***

1. The BWS Leadership Team must inform the Chair of the Council of Teachers and the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The BWS Leadership Team or an appropriate designee should conduct an investigation within 24 to 48 hours of the complaint, if possible.

2. The BWS Leadership Team, Council Chair and Board Chair will decide if and when the full Council and Board need to be informed. Right to privacy and confidentiality must be respected.
3. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee will ask all appropriate questions of the complainant in order to get the full story.
  - a. who, what, when, where, how;
  - b. is there any physical evidence (documents, texts, voicemail);
  - c. effect of bullying - what will restore the complainant's sense of safety; and
  - d. assess the complainant's need for protection and, if needed, determine what form the protection should take.
4. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee shall notify the parents or guardians of the alleged bully and the victim.
5. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee will caution all witnesses and the alleged bully that retaliation is also a violation of school policy.
6. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee will interview the alleged bully and fairly warn him/her that the conduct will, if appropriate, be reported to local law enforcement.
7. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee will interview witnesses.
8. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee will establish the following:
  - a. if the alleged bullying occurred;
  - b. when the alleged bullying occurred;
  - c. how frequently the alleged bullying occurred;
  - d. specific facts about the type and severity of the alleged bullying;
  - e. if the bullying has affected the complainant;
  - f. what action will restore the complainant's sense of safety;
  - g. if the complainant is in need of protection and if so what type;
  - h. what professional services are appropriate to recommend or require;
  - i. if notification to local law enforcement is required.

### **Decision**

1. Based upon a thorough investigation, the BWS Leadership Team and Council Chair will make a decision that is appropriate for all parties concerning whether bullying occurred and, if so, the appropriate response from the School. This will include decisions regarding informing the Council and Board, discipline of the perpetrator, appropriate educational and counseling remedies, and protection of the complainant.
2. Depending on the circumstances of the case, if it is determined that bullying has occurred the BWS Leadership Team and Council Chair, in collaboration with the Council of Teachers, may discipline the offending party by ordering:
  - a. counseling;
  - b. stay away order;
  - c. an educational component;
  - d. a verbal warning;
  - e. a written warning;
  - f. suspension;
  - g. expulsion, or;

- h. any other remedy deemed appropriate by the above mentioned parties.
- 3. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee shall notify local law enforcement if they believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the alleged perpetrator.
- 4. Any discipline should be viewed in the light of balancing accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior.
- 5. If the incident involves students from more than one school, the school first informed of the bullying or retaliation shall, consistent with state and federal law, promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or schools. If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21, the school shall inform local law enforcement when appropriate and consistent with this policy.
- 6. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee will confer with the complainant and his/her parents to explain the action being taken including what if any actions are being taken to create a sense of safety for the complainant, and implementation of any protection plans and to make counseling referrals if appropriate.
- 7. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee shall confer with the alleged perpetrator and his/her parents. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee shall explain the discipline, if any, make any counseling referral, explain plans for creating a sense of safety for the complainant, explain any protection plans and reiterate that any retaliation by the alleged perpetrator or family/friends may subject the offender to further discipline, up to and including expulsion.
- 8. The BWS Leadership Team or their designee should follow-up on this decision in order to ensure that their recommendation has been put into effect.

#### ***Educational and Professional Development Components***

- 1. This bullying prevention plan shall be reviewed and updated biennially. There shall be notice of the plan updates to each family of a student attending the School.
- 2. Parents and guardians will be informed about the bullying intervention policy of the School, specifically:
  - a. how parents and guardians are expected to reinforce the policy at home and support the School and School plan;
  - b. dynamics of bullying; and,
  - c. online safety and cyberbullying.
- 3. The School shall provide to students and parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms, annual written notice of the student-related sections of the plan.
- 4. The School shall provide annual written notice of the plan to all faculty and staff.
- 5. All faculty and staff shall be informed of the policy, including their respective duties, and the policy shall be included in the School's employee handbook.
- 6. The Plan shall be posted on the School's website.
- 7. The BWS Leadership Team and Council Chair shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of the plan.

#### ***Conclusion***

This Plan is intended to:

- (a) prevent bullying and cyberbullying among our students,

- (b) encourage students and their parents to have confidence in the School's procedures and to come forward promptly whenever a student is subject to conduct that is prohibited by this or any other School policy; and
- (c) implement appropriate discipline and other corrective measures when they are found to be warranted.

## **6. Discipline**

All discussion of discipline should be prefaced with the intention that teaching and learning discipline creates inner discipline and a student's own standards of excellence. Guidelines are necessary for the common good of the whole school. They help to create a healthy environment in which children can learn and grow in harmony.

Examples of forms that help maintain healthy discipline at BWS include the daily/weekly/yearly rhythm and our STAR Code. (For more about the STAR Code, refer to the opening pages of this handbook.)

When it comes to discipline for a particular situation, behavior or action, we strive to create balanced correction that is appropriate to each situation and to the individual student. The purpose behind any disciplinary action is not to punish students, but to bring students and their families' attention to responsibility and accountability.

If parents/guardians have a question about discipline, the BWS Leadership Team strongly encourages you to speak directly with your child's teacher. When that isn't possible, please bring concerns and inquiries to the Leadership Team ([leadership@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:leadership@berkshirewaldorfschool.org)), and the Leadership Team will set up a meeting with the concerned individual and the Class Teacher to work out a solution.

## **7. Probation**

A student may be placed on probation if he or she has consistently demonstrated poor effort with respect to schoolwork, or if his or her behavior has been unacceptable. The probation is intended to bring about a measurable and lasting change.

At the start of the probation, parents will be advised verbally and in writing about the problem and conditions of the probation. An official letter, a copy of which will go into the student's file, will describe the conditions that caused the probation, state the duration of the probationary period, include a record of communication between parents and school during this time, and delineate the terms and conditions of the probation (for example, expected behavior changes or work to be finished by the end of the probationary period).

If expectations are not met, a meeting will take place with the teacher, a member or members of the BWS Leadership Team and parents to decide the next step.

## **8. Suspension and Expulsion**

A Class Teacher or Subject Teacher, together with the BWS Leadership Team, may suspend a child from school for seriously inappropriate behavior. A letter informing the child's parents of the suspension will be sent, which will also contain the conditions under which the student will be permitted to return to school. The student, parents, teacher and BWS Leadership Team must meet before the student is readmitted. If a student continues to exhibit behavior that led to the suspension, expulsion may follow. A child may also be expelled when, in the opinion of the Council of Teachers, a child's interests or those of the other students would best be served by such action.

## **9. Withdrawal**

Withdrawal is a serious step, and ample time should be allowed for consideration of the circumstances by the parent and the class teacher. Please contact the class teacher if you are considering withdrawing your child.

Occasionally, the school finds it necessary to ask a family to withdraw a child. The school reserves the right to ask for the withdrawal of a child for academic or other reasons.

## **10. Media and Technology Guidelines**

### **Taking the Long View:**

#### *Electronic Media in Childhood*

*Our sincere goal as teachers, administrators and staff at BWS is to work collaboratively with families to encourage a mutually supportive relationship between school and home. One area in which this is especially important concerns children's use of electronic media\*. Together we can look closely at various media and technology and its effects on children, and find ways to develop and maintain strong parental boundaries for whether and when certain tools may become available as students grow.*

*The pages that follow offer an overview of the topic and describe our media guidelines for children at different ages. By working in partnership—and engaging in an ongoing conversation—we can thoughtfully navigate these realities on behalf of the children.*

In our work with children at the Berkshire Waldorf School, we strive to create an environment that encourages flexible thinking, empathy and enthusiasm for life. We intentionally support these fundamental capacities in children so that they can grow to have the inner resources they will need to confidently meet whatever the future brings.

BWS teachers at all levels observe that children's use of electronic media\* can work against the development of these capacities. This is why we have created guidelines concerning our students' engagement with electronic media and technology.

While we recognize that technology can be a valuable tool when used properly and age-appropriately,



we feel strongly that young children are best-served by interacting directly with the real world and people around them, not with screens or electronics. In the upper grades, a *limited and supervised* introduction to various forms of media and technology can help students learn how to work with these tools intelligently and ethically.

*\*‘Electronic media’ is a broad term, and what falls under it will need to be updated regularly. It includes television shows, movies, videos, video games, social media, texting and instant messaging, and is accessed through devices such as televisions, computers, cell phones, portable media players, tablets, and other devices, including electronic wristwatches with functionality beyond timekeeping.*

### **What does Waldorf Education Do?**

Waldorf Education engages students’ growing abilities at optimal times so that new expectations and subjects are introduced just when children are most open to absorbing them. This kind of developmentally sensitive education helps children become balanced in mind, body and spirit. This is the long view we take on childhood, and why our educators actively strive to foster the following qualities in children:

- Enthusiastic engagement in life and a “can do” attitude
- The ability to think creatively and deeply
- Task focus and follow through
- Appreciation for a rich sensory life
- Innovation and problem solving skills
- Empathy and care for others
- Appreciation for the natural world
- A lifelong sense of wonder and curiosity

### **Why Limit Media?**

Educators within and beyond the world of Waldorf Education, as well as researchers of brain and human development, increasingly support our outlook that limiting media in childhood fosters healthy development. The bibliography that follows suggests resources for further study and consideration. These educators and researchers have found that children’s use regular of electronic media and technology is linked with:

- Detrimental effects on the nervous system and brain function
- Anxiety, distractibility and poor listening skills
- A passive need to be entertained, listlessness
- Inability to engage in imaginative, interactive, real-world play
- Rigid thinking and decreased creativity
- Erosion of conversational and interpersonal skills
- Weakened eye muscles, compromised vision
- Physical weakness due to inactivity
- Aggression and impulsivity due to repressed energy

When children accept media figures as models for their own attitudes and actions, they begin to judge their own meaning, dignity and worth—and that of others—accordingly. Social networking and other developments have created new safety hazards for children. And the seemingly anonymous nature of social networking—for example, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram—can lead to new forms of social exclusion and harassment when used among classmates. This can be particularly detrimental to the social fabric of a class.

### Leading by Example

"How many times have you noticed that it's the little quiet moments in the midst of life that seem to give the rest extra-special meaning?"  
— Fred Rogers

Children are affected by adults' media use, including cell phones and handhelds. In her research for the book, *The Big Disconnect*, Catherine Steiner-Adair asked children how their parents' use of mobile devices made them feel. Children reported that they felt "sad, mad, angry, lonely, and 'like I'm boring.'" Bringing more awareness to our own use of devices

has the potential to preserve and strengthen the parent-child bond.

It is our hope that a shared exploration into the topic of electronic media use in childhood will have a positive effect on our school community.

Limits on media and technology help safeguard children's highest capacities for thinking, feeling and willing. When these capacities are protected and nurtured in childhood, people are better able to realize their thoughts, dreams and potential. That is the long view we hold for our children.

### Media Guidelines: Early Childhood through Fourth Grade

- The daily experience of the youngest children in our school—Early Childhood through grade four—should be free of interaction with electronic media and technology, including computers and cell phones or other handheld devices or screens.
- Providing a media-free environment for the youngest children will require a new level of awareness on the part of adults regarding when, where and for how long to use devices in the presence of children. While these devices are often necessary, thoughtful boundaries can guard not only our children's early exposure to media, but also the quality of our relationships with them.
- We encourage parents in each class to work together to form agreements on media-free playdates and parties. Open parental discussion and shared exploration on this important topic are helpful, and our teachers and administrators can suggest resources for group study.
- We ask that parents not let children use an adult's cell phone or iPad to distract them during trips to the grocery store, restaurants, while waiting for an appointment, during car rides, etc., since this practice creates dependence on devices from an early age. Instead, we suggest putting together a "to go" bag of simple activities and small toys to bring along when needed. Children can also be encouraged to be curious about what is happening around them, giving them the chance to observe and wonder about the world, develop skills for waiting and traveling that don't rely on electronics, and gain practice and comfort in participating in social life.

"Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them."  
—James Baldwin

- We understand that children will occasionally—at family gatherings and community events, for example—be exposed to electronic media you might not have chosen. Acknowledging this, please keep your child’s regular home life, play dates, and rhythms media free—and do your best to work with relatives and friends to support our media guidelines. If this admittedly sticky issue is approached with tact and grace, loved ones opposed to this view may soften their stance when they begin to notice how engaged, creative and resourceful children are without electronic media and technology.

### **For Students in Fifth Grade and Up**

Children in the upper elementary grades may begin to have some occasional and carefully considered exposure to media. Older middle school students—reflective of the Waldorf curriculum—are ready to consider the ethics and impact of various technological tools. In this spirit, a new media awareness program about digital literacy and citizenship, CyberCivics, has been introduced for our seventh and eighth graders. This resource, based on published academic research, provides our teachers with developmentally appropriate questions and discussion points for educating students about media use and its associated implications (responsibility, reliability of information, cyberbullying, “digital drama,” addiction, etc.).

Media guidelines for Fifth through Eighth Grades are as follows:

- It remains important for media use to remain limited. This will take commitment and resolve on the part of parents, who must take extra steps to remain aware of the content and source of media that may be introduced into the child’s life. We continue to expect that the daily life of the student does not include regular access to electronic media and content. Please monitor access. If a middle school child very occasionally uses the computer at home for an agreed-upon purpose, please have her work in a visible family space.
- *Limited* viewing of carefully selected and supervised TV shows, videos or films may take place on an occasional weekend (not on school nights, including Sundays). Again, please be aware of content.
- School research assignments will be based on library research or sources provided by the teacher. Learning generally takes place in direct, hands-on ways. If there is any exception—as occasionally occurs for middle school students—the teacher will provide clear directions and parameters on what is permitted. If a teacher considers an online search necessary for a particular topic, students will receive specific guidance from the teacher on how to engage in responsible internet-based research and teachers will communicate this exception to parents.
- We expect that our students do not engage in online gaming or video games.

### **Cell Phones and Handheld Devices**

We expect students to refrain from cell and watch phone use during the school day. Parents may call the front desk to communicate a message to their child during the school day.

- All devices must be turned off and kept in a backpack.
- In the instance that a device is used, it will be taken and given to the BWS Leadership Team. Parents will be contacted and a meeting set up to jointly decide the next steps..

- To model awareness and boundaries around media use, ***we ask that adults also refrain from using cell phones, texting or using other electronic devices while moving through the school buildings, walking on campus grounds, and while in the process of dropping off and picking up children.***
- Many of our middle school parents have made the commitment to wait until Eighth Grade or beyond to offer their children a smartphone. **For more about the “Wait Until Eighth” pledge, visit: [waituntil8th.org](http://waituntil8th.org).**

### Social Networking

- Our students should not use electronic social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tiktok, etc.). These not only pose safety threats, but the disassociative quality of these interactions also hampers students’ ability to interact with their peers in socially healthy ways.
- So that they can cultivate empathetic and genuine interpersonal skills, students should not interact through email and texting. If a group email needs to go out to a class regarding a party, practice, etc., it should be sent directly to parents, not to students.

### Consequences of Media and Technology Misuse

For the well-being of individual children and all students in our school, students misusing electronic media and technology will meet the following consequences:

- **Misused cell phones** will be confiscated and parents will be contacted.
- **Personal audio or visual devices** used at school will be confiscated and parents contacted.
- **If a teacher observes a negative impact** on a child’s individual or social behavior or on academic performance due to media use, they will invite the parents to attend a meeting. Together the teacher, parents and BWS Leadership Team will determine a solution.

### Working Together

If you are struggling to follow the media guidelines and would like support, please contact your class teacher. Many families in our community have met similar challenges and can offer helpful, realistic suggestions. New after-school activities and offerings at BWS help children stay active and engaged after the school day, and we encourage parents to consider what media-free rhythms at home make sense as the children grow.

Many classes have created study and discussion groups on this topic, and our school library contains relevant books and articles. The BWS Parent Association, school administration and faculty will keep you updated about opportunities such as informative speakers, thought-provoking documentaries on children’s media use and new study-groups. We are committed to working with you to create a community that honors childhood and promotes imagination and engagement.

## 11. Photography

In support of limiting technology and media use within the school we strive to minimize photography and filming at school events. We appreciate that many parents like to photograph or film special events in their children's lives and as such, attempt to arrange photography for special events and ceremonies

on behalf of the school. Additionally, teachers are happy to arrange photo ops after performances and events. In support of respecting individuals' privacy, under no circumstances may photos be shared without explicit permission from all documented individuals.

## **12. Visitors to the School or Picking-Up Students During the School Day**

In order to maintain a secure environment for our students, we require all visitors to the grade school, including parents and visiting students, to check in at the front desk in our main building upon arrival at school. Parents and other guests need to sign the Visitor's Log and receive a Visitor's badge to wear throughout the School. Please remember to sign out and return the badge before you leave the building. Parents who are picking up children in the grades during the school day are asked to go to the front desk, and a staff member will get the student from class and deliver him/her to the parent.

Anyone wishing to visit a class must make prior arrangements with the teacher.

## **13. Emergency Crisis and Management Plan**

BWS has an emergency crisis and management plan that addresses school safety and annual training for employees. The plan includes safety procedures such as fire drills, weather-related emergencies, evacuations, lock-down procedures and medical emergencies. BWS maintains a higher percentage of employees trained in CPR and First Aid than is mandated, and ongoing training each year keeps employees current on their certifications.

## **14. Guidelines for Birthday Parties**

### *Elementary School*

As parents and teachers work together to create a positive social life in each class, we find that birthday parties have a notable impact on the students. Birthday parties are a wonderful opportunity to model sensitivity and social inclusion for children. If inviting the entire class is not possible, children can invite one guest, to avoid hurt feelings and divisiveness. Invitations are to be mailed, not distributed at school, and it is best to not have the party begin with pick-up at school. This draws obvious attention to who has and who has not been invited to the party. Parents should be aware of special dietary needs/allergies/restrictions when sending in a birthday snack. Please check with your child's class teacher regarding this.

### *Early Childhood*

We recommend that home celebrations be kept simple. It can be enough at this age to celebrate the birthday with only family members. If an extra party is desired, a good rule of thumb is to have the number of guests be equivalent to your child's age. If your child is three, invite three others.

## **15. Teacher Gifting Policy**

Parents who wish, may give a gift to any teacher for a birthday, holiday or end of year. Classes may give a

gift as a group or parents are welcome to give a gift on their own, if they prefer. Traditionally, class reps leave cards for their teachers at the front desk and arrange for all class parents to sign it. Parents may contribute money to the card if they wish. *There is no set dollar amount, and all monetary contributions to the card are anonymous.* Money may be used to purchase a gift, gift card, or given as is. Class reps are responsible for collecting the cards once signed, and arranging for parents to gather and give to the teacher as a group when possible.

Students often wish to give a small handmade gift to their teacher, and teachers greatly appreciate these lovely gestures.

Donations in honor of a teacher may be made directly to the *Annual Fund*, earmarked for a specific purpose if desired. Contributions to the *Annual Fund* may be dropped off with any office staff person, and should be clearly labeled to ensure appropriate acknowledgement of gifts for tax purposes.

The school gifting policy is regularly reviewed by the PA Chair and Leadership every new school year to ensure that it reflects our values and appropriate practices.

## **16. No Pets Allowed on School Grounds**

For the health and safety of students, employees and all community members, no pets are allowed on school grounds at any time, including during the summer, unless they are a service animal with proper documentation.

This includes all community events and after school hours such as May Day, the Holiday Handcraft Fair, school picnics, sporting events and during the summer.

## **III. ABOUT OUR SCHOOL**

### **Over 50 Years of Waldorf Education in the Berkshires**

Berkshire Waldorf School, like Waldorf schools all over the world, was founded as a kindergarten, and grew with the children. In 2021, BWS celebrated 50 years of Waldorf Education in the Berkshires, serving students from toddlers through 8th grade. Our 32-acre natural campus of “outdoor classrooms” features forests, meadows, playing fields and gardens, bounded by the Green River. The Betty Szold Krainis building provides indoor classrooms for Early Childhood classes. And the Grades School Building, built around a classic Berkshires timber frame barn, welcomes Elementary and Middle School grades. This antique barn is the heart of our school, now a library, and a cozy place to visit in all four seasons! Learning spaces also include art studios, an auditorium which is both theater and community gathering space, a science lab, playing fields and biodynamic gardens.

### **1. History**

On January 13, 1971, our school, originally called Pumpkin Hollow School, opened its doors to twelve kindergarten children. We now enroll more than 200 students from Berkshire County, Massachusetts, Columbia County, New York, and northwestern Connecticut.

Our school's founder and first teacher, **Betty Szold Krainis**, grew up in New York, the third of four daughters. Her father, Robert Szold, was a lawyer who was deeply concerned with social issues. He worked to establish child labor laws, and helped to start Co-op City (co-op housing) in New York. In addition, he was the president of the World Zion Foundation and Palestine Economic Corporation, which channeled money into Israel for practical applications such as agriculture and factories. He helped to found the state of Israel, and created the Robert Szold Center for Applied Technology there. All the talk at the dinner table as Betty was growing up related to Zionist issues; Betty's mom was involved in Hadassah, the women's Zionist movement. Betty grew up surrounded by "Working for the Good of the World," with a keen understanding of these and many world issues.

Betty attended Bryn Mawr College. Once she married and had three children, they attended the Waldorf School of Garden City (NY) and then the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City. Betty was a very involved parent, as part of the PTA and groups that studied the work of Rudolf Steiner. Patti Livingston (who was also a parent at the Steiner School/NYC) and Betty worked together on committees. Patti had a house in Great Barrington, and Betty and her family found a nearby place on Pumpkin Hollow, with 47 acres and three houses: the main house, the white cottage, and the barn. After they moved to the Berkshires full time, an idea developed about the importance of healthy food, and the barn became the Good Food Coop. Families wanting good food began to want a good education for their children, too, and the barn became a school.

The school started with a kindergarten teacher, who came for a short period and then had to leave. At this point, Mrs. Krainis stepped in and became the kindergarten teacher for 14 years. Betty did her teacher training at Columbia Teachers' College, and on the job training at the Steiner School in the City. Betty's warmth, love, energy and openness were apparent from the beginning. She was a very passionate and engaging person.

A nucleus of teachers came up to Great Barrington from the NY school. Delores and Tilo Kaufman came to Stockbridge. Werner Glas was an adviser. Thorn and Jean Zay built a house nearby, and they had two boys. **Pumpkin Hollow School**, which began as a kindergarten in 1971, grew into the **Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School** (fondly known in the region as "Steiner"). Betty spent nearly 20 years at the school, and retired in 1988, but still served as an advisor. The Betty Szold Krainis Early Childhood building was dedicated in 1992, and Mrs. Krainis's dynamic photograph hangs in the front hall today. In 2019, the 100th anniversary year of Waldorf Education, our school became **Berkshire Waldorf School**, "sibling" school to the Berkshire Waldorf High School in Stockbridge, MA. Together, both schools provide a full twelve year Waldorf Education to families. BWS is one of over 1,000 international Waldorf schools, the fastest growing independent school movement in the world.

## 2. Waldorf Education

Based on Rudolf Steiner's insights into the nature of human beings and the developmental stages of childhood, the Waldorf curriculum fosters each child's natural curiosity, presenting material to appeal to the imagination as well as to the intellect. Care is taken to balance intellectual growth with emotional growth and the development of a capable will. Lessons are rooted in experience as well as intellectual concepts; a botany lesson, for example, begins with a close look at a living plant and continues with a thorough study of that species.

Although our school includes many elements of a classical independent school curriculum, Waldorf Education is unique in that art, drama, Eurythmy, sports and handwork are fully integrated with the sciences, math, reading and writing, World Language, and the study of diverse cultures, from their foundations in myth and legend to the study of modern history.

What else is different about Waldorf Education?

In a profound collaboration between class and subject teachers, Waldorf Education guides the unfolding of each child's capacities from the knowledge of each child's unique gifts and challenges. The Class Teacher teaches the Main Lesson, a two-hour morning class in which one subject is studied in depth for a three to four-week block.

Waldorf Education respects and nourishes the liveliness, wonder, and interest in the world that are natural to the growing child. Classroom blackboards glow with color, and classrooms are alive with storytelling, music, poems, drama and games.

Waldorf Class Teachers deliver their daily lessons as stories, in a lively and engaging manner, often accompanied by colorful illustrations and texts drawn on the blackboard. From these lessons, students create their own illustrated Main Lesson books. These colorful, individualized books are made with great care by the children, and are treasured by them into adulthood. Occasionally, standard textbooks are used for math, grammar and World Languages in the upper grades.

There are no computers for students in our school. Although the use of computers is nearly universal among our graduates, for Elementary School children, it is the relationship between student and teacher that brings a deeper understanding to a history, geography or math lesson. Also, watching videos and playing computer games at home is not compatible with their daily classroom experience, especially for children in the younger grades. See our [Media Guidelines](#) for more information.

Our graduates appear regularly on the honor rolls of both [public and private high schools](#), and go on to some of the finest colleges and universities in the country. Beyond the achievements of our individual graduates, our alumni as a group share an enthusiasm for lifelong learning. We prepare them to apply their insight and imagination to the world's communities, natural resources, art and literature, scientific achievements, and its future.



### **3. Waldorf Schools**

Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian philosopher, scientist and educator, who was born in 1861, founded the Waldorf school movement. By the turn of the century, Steiner had become well known in European artistic and intellectual circles as an original thinker in many fields. In 1923, he founded the Anthroposophical Society to bring philosophical and spiritual awareness to a great number of practical initiatives in art, science, medicine, agriculture and education.

Steiner felt that contemporary education did little to develop clarity of thought, sensitivity of feeling and strength of will. One of his supporters, industrialist Emil Molt, invited Steiner to form a new school for the children of the employees of one of his factories in Stuttgart. Thus the opportunity arose for Steiner to create a school curriculum and teaching methods that would educate the whole child—head, heart and hands. In the autumn of 1919, the school, sponsored by the Waldorf-Astoria factory, opened its doors.

Within a few years other schools followed—in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Britain, Scandinavia and the United States. The movement in Germany suffered a setback in the 1940's when the Nazis closed Waldorf schools. But they reopened in 1945, and many new ones followed.

The early 1970s, when BWS was founded, saw extraordinary growth in the Waldorf School movement. The number of Waldorf schools tripled between 1973 and 1983 in Holland, Britain and North America, and doubled in Germany. This growth continues today, and there are now over 1000 schools in many countries, making it one of the largest independent education movements in the world.

### **4. Teaching and Learning**

In Kindergarten, children develop the capacity for creative thinking, problem solving and social skills through their free, imaginative play. Hearing stories told aloud and watching puppet plays develops a love of language and the ability to listen and concentrate. Preparing snacks and cleaning afterwards encourages competence and a sense of responsibility. Children's natural feelings of wonder and trust are nurtured in many ways, creating openness toward life and learning. Painting, beeswax modeling, bread baking, songs and games, and plenty of outdoor play all enrich the Early Childhood experience in daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms that create a bridge from home to school.

In the Elementary Grades, our teachers are aware that the natural curiosity and creativity of children need to be nourished by their schooling. Intellectual achievement should rest on a foundation of moral values, imagination, reverence for life, and knowledge of humanity's cultural development. Children are strengthened and prepared for life's challenges through the daily rhythm of activities and a diverse curriculum designed to educate a well-rounded human being. Each child begins every school day with an individual greeting and a handshake from his or her teacher. A non-sectarian verse before meals encourages a feeling of gratitude and an awareness of community.

Because each class is a community, in which every member has strengths and talents to share with the

rest, the composition of the class is based on chronological age and not on unusual development or giftedness. The gifts of each child are nurtured in the context of the whole class. Teachers guide children in their interactions with each other, helping them to develop communication and problem-solving abilities. Rather than competing, the children are taught to help and learn from each other. They are challenged and encouraged to work to their full potential as individuals and as a class.

“...nothing should enter the lesson that is not, in one form or another, to be retained for all of life, instead of what is generally done today, including whatever coalesces into skills....This is what will characterize the education of the future most strongly, that all these things which are brought to the child, will also remain with that human being for all of life.” — Rudolf Steiner, 1919

## **5. Curriculum**

### **Grade 1**

*Main Lesson:* Introduction to the alphabet, simple spelling, introduction to reading, elements of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, fairy tales and nature stories (retold and dramatized by the class), form drawing, painting.

*Subjects:* World Language, Eurythmy (movement), Handwork (knitting), Music, Games (physical education), Biodynamic Farm and Gardening.

### **Grade 2**

*Main Lesson:* Spelling, reading, introduction to elements of grammar, arithmetic (the four operations), fables and legends (retold and dramatized, leading to composition in the child's own words), form drawing, painting.

*Subjects:* World Language, Eurythmy, Handwork (knitting, crocheting), Projects/Woodwork, Music, Games (physical education), Biodynamic Farm and Gardening.

### **Grade 3**

*Main Lesson:* Spelling, reading, elements of grammar, introduction to cursive writing, arithmetic, measurement, study of housing and farming (including First American lifeways), Old Testament stories (leading into history), form drawing, painting.

*Subjects:* World Language, Eurythmy, Games (physical education), Music (strings ensemble), Library, Handwork (simple sewing, crocheting, embroidery), Woodwork, Biodynamic Farm and Gardening.

### **Grade 4**

*Main Lesson:* Composition, grammar, spelling, reading, arithmetic (fractions), local geography, study of mankind in relation to animals, telling of Norse myths and sagas, form drawing, painting.

*Subjects:* World Language, Eurythmy, Music (strings ensemble), Woodwork, Library, Games (physical education), Handwork (embroidery, cross stitch), Biodynamic Farm and Gardening.

### **Grade 5**

*Main Lesson:* Composition, grammar, spelling, reading, arithmetic (decimals), North American geography,

history of ancient civilizations (culminating in Greek history), botany, form drawing, painting.

*Subjects:* World Language, Eurythmy, Music, Woodwork, Library, Games (physical education), Handwork (knitting with 4 needles), Biodynamic Farm and Gardening.

### **Grade 6**

*Main Lesson:* Composition, grammar, spelling, literature, arithmetic, geometry, South American geography, Roman and Medieval history, physics (sound, light), earth sciences, painting.

*Subjects:* World Language, Eurythmy, Music, Woodwork, Library, Games (physical education), Handwork (original stuffed doll), Biodynamic Farm and Gardening.

### **Grade 7**

*Main Lesson:* Composition, grammar, spelling, literature, geometry, algebra, European geography, Renaissance, Reformation, the Age of Exploration, physics, astronomy, inorganic chemistry, physiology.

*Subjects:* World Language, Eurythmy, Orchestra and Chorus, Woodwork, Painting, Games (physical education), Library, Handwork (hand sewn garments), Biodynamic Farm and Gardening.

### **Grade 8**

*Main Lesson:* Composition, grammar, literature, algebra, geometry, world geography, American history, physics, organic chemistry, physiology.

*Subjects:* World Language, Eurythmy, Orchestra and Chorus, Woodwork, Games (physical education), Handwork (machine sewn garments), Library, Painting, Biodynamic Farm and Gardening.

## **6. Subject Classes**

### ***Eurythmy***

Eurythmy lessons at Berkshire Waldorf School start with kindergarten students and go all the way through Eighth Grade. Eurythmy supports the educational goals of our school because it furthers the development of every aspect of the human being. Eurythmy is a movement art unique to Waldorf Education that serves our students in many ways.

When students learn the techniques of Eurythmy they develop awareness and control of their body, depth and flexibility in their feelings and focus and creativity in their thinking. Since students do Eurythmy as a class, the practice also benefits the group dynamics of the whole. Students gain confidence, sensitivity and respect for each other as they strive to move harmoniously within the forms and choreography of Eurythmy. In fact, it is not unusual to see shy students overcome their reticence, the comfort-bound their inertia, and the fiery leaders the continuous desire to 'Be first'. Eurythmy intrinsically works to bring the 'higher self' of the group to expression.

### ***Eurythmy Curriculum***

The Eurythmy curriculum (Early Childhood through Eighth Grade) follows a developmental progression that meets our students' need for healthy movement, artistic enrichment and mental challenge.

In the early grades, students explore the polarities of forward/back, right/left, and up/down by imitating

the teacher in a circle formation. (Eurythmy is practiced to the accompaniment of a live pianist, adding to the rich sensory experience of “becoming the music.”) As the students grow and develop, they also work on concentration and memorization exercises.

Beginning around Fourth Grade, a frontal orientation reflects students’ developing awareness and they are ready to move independently in every direction. Later, as adolescence approaches, the capacity to move in free-flowing curves and lines opens the door to a whole new level of Eurythmy. Students learn to read the form as it is drawn on the blackboard, and follow it as a map while the musical or poetic landscape unfolds. As the forms become more complex, with various individuals or groups going different ways (portraying the treble and bass parts in music, for instance), students must truly think on their feet to maintain a harmonious whole.

### ***How Eurythmy Supports Academic Achievement***

Eurythmy supports achievement in many other areas of our students’ education. For example:

- Eurythmy exercises that cross the midline plane strengthen young students’ mathematical capacities. Later, active geometric thinking—required to move complicated group forms from eurythmy ‘maps’—strengthens complex math ability.
- Eurythmy enhances language arts, such as speaking, writing, and reading. Although the teacher doesn’t explicitly explain to students through the Second Grade that Eurythmy gestures correspond to sounds, they happily live in the imagery and imitate the movements while hearing the language. Many a young child later enjoys repeating certain vowels or consonants (or even replaying whole stories on their own) because a strong feeling has developed for the sounds. This is a rich benefit when children are learning the alphabet and reading in early grades. Children with speech and auditory difficulties particularly benefit from this creative approach to language. As students advance through the Grades, this enhanced awareness of speech enriches their own writing and acting abilities, as well as their appreciation of those abilities in others.
- Beautiful handwriting and drawing have much in common with the smooth, flowing, full-bodied gestures practiced in Eurythmy lessons. And when keyboarding enters students’ lives, Eurythmy is there to reawaken the living quality of language that the keyboard can tap away. Doing Eurythmy to poetry and literature from diverse cultures and times enriches the study of geography and history. And at the request of the teacher, Eurythmy is part of class plays and World Language lessons.
- Eurythmy enriches music knowledge and appreciation. In tone Eurythmy, students learn to embody various aspects of music. They feel and express not only pitch, rhythm, beat, and phrasing, but also the differing qualities of the scales and intervals. Both beginning and advanced musicians benefit from the active listening and skillful moving required in tone Eurythmy.

Through the study of Eurythmy, students have the opportunity to sense the flow of life force that extends beyond their physical bodies and connects them to each other and to the world. In our time—a

time in which peer pressure, consumerism, and technology surround our families with life-draining options—engaging in Eurythmy may be more of a *necessity*, if we hope to give our children the chance to become the human beings they are striving to be.

### ***World Language***

Our language program fosters understanding and an awareness of our world through the study of World Language and culture. Children study World Languages from First through Eighth Grades. This year, students study German in First through Fifth Grades, and Spanish in Sixth through Eighth Grades. (Once students enter Berkshire Waldorf High School, they may choose to study German or Spanish, which includes optional travel study to German- and Spanish-speaking nations.)

In First and Second Grade, the children experience world languages through poetry, songs, drama, verses and games. Gradually, the written language and its grammar are introduced, culminating in speaking, reading and writing in the upper grades. World Language study complements the Main Lesson curriculum.

### ***Handwork***

Handwork, an essential element of Waldorf Education, is a subject class in First through Eighth Grades. While learning to dye, knit, crochet, embroider and sew practical and beautiful things, from hand-knitted socks to wool felted slippers and shirts, the children develop courage, patience and persistence, as well as eye-hand coordination and manual dexterity. Handwork also cultivates an appreciation for natural materials and authentic handmade objects.

### ***Woodwork***

Woodcarving starts in Second Grade, with two periods each week. Using wood carving tools, the children learn to make useful and beautiful objects out of wood. Similar to Handwork, Woodwork develops an appreciation for beauty, as well as a sense of competence and accomplishment. Woodworking projects, such as a class building project in Third Grade (such as last year's Farm Stand and Community Garden beds), are incorporated into the curriculum, when appropriate. Modeling in clay also enhances the child's experience of cultural Main Lesson topics, such as making a cuneiform tablet.

### ***Music***

Berkshire Waldorf School students experience the joy of musical expression and greatly benefit from the dedication and discipline inherent in the study of music. Our comprehensive program provides classes for all levels, from beginners to students with years of musical training, and offers a variety of performing ensembles.

Every child is a born musician. The goal of our Music Education program is to nurture the inborn musical capacity of our students, so that they may develop their full musical potential. Music is a language and, like a Native or World Language, it comes alive and supports children in their expression when it is taught in a systematic, rigorous and age-appropriate way.

One of the greatest gifts of music is its ability to bring us together. By learning an instrument, playing an

instrument in an ensemble and joining in choral singing, students receive a social education much like the sense of camaraderie and pride they experience by participating in sports activities. Added to that, students experience the joy of giving the gift of music to the Berkshire Waldorf School community through our seasonal and festival life, and the wider Berkshire community through public and private performances.

Starting in First Grade, students sing songs with their Class Teacher. They dance and play interval flutes, then Pentatonic flutes with the Music Teacher.

In Third Grade, students begin playing Choro diatonic flutes. Violin, viola and cello group instruction also begins in Third Grade. Emphasis is on pitch development and ear training, tone production and basic positioning and technique. We strongly encourage families to begin students' private instrument lessons in Third Grade, with the expectation that students will practice their instrument regularly, as part of healthy "homework."

In addition to in-school music and class string instruction, students have the opportunity to participate in Middle School Symphony, recorder ensemble and Middle School Chorus, as part of the Sixth through Eighth Grade curriculum, and performance groups by invitation, including "Allegro," an early reading string ensemble and "Presto," an intermediate string ensemble.

#### *After-School Private Lessons*

Private lessons on a variety of instruments are recommended for students in Third Grade and up. Professional instrumentalists from the area, as well as our own faculty, provide a rich and varied program of individual lessons and chamber ensemble coaching.

For local private music teacher recommendations, please contact our Music Director. Many instructors hold lessons on campus after school, or at their homes nearby.

#### *Recitals*

School-wide and class recitals are scheduled at Berkshire Waldorf School throughout the school year. Additionally, we plan various community outreach and festival performances off-campus.

#### *Library*

The BWS school library has a fine collection of books, including children's literature classics, nonfiction and World Language books. Children in Second through Sixth Grades have a library class once a week. Upper Graders use the library frequently for research, study and reading enjoyment. Students are encouraged to take out at least one book each week.

Teachers and our school librarian assist students in finding books that correspond to each child's reading skills and individual interests. We take care to cultivate a lifelong enthusiasm for reading and studying. As part of their classwork, students use the library to complete oral book reports, as well as beautifully illustrated written reports. In the upper grades, students learn library systems and research skills, always starting with physical, hands-on systems (card catalog and Dewey decimal system), and moving

to more abstract and carefully cultivated online research and Cyber Civics skills in late Middle School. Students are expected to respect and take good care of books. Should a school library book be lost, the student is required to replace it. The library also offers a Parent Library, which includes a collection of books and periodicals on Waldorf Education, parenting and the works of Rudolf Steiner.

## **Science**

Science learning is integrated into curricula at all levels of our school, including Early Childhood. Scientific topics and presentations are tailored to the unfolding awareness of students in their path of development.

Nature stories and imaginations of the natural world are told in first and second grades. Studies and experience with farming and house-building are part of the third grade curriculum. The 'life sciences,' i.e. biology, begin in the fourth grade with zoology ("man and animal") and continue in the fifth with botany. The students are encouraged in observation and experience of the world around them. Looking ahead to the transition of puberty, the teacher uses science and the orderly laws of nature to help stabilize the emotional turbulence of this wonderful change.

The 'physical sciences,' including geology, astronomy, and physics begin in sixth grade, when Middle School students are ready to take a more careful and considered look around themselves. Earth's structure and processes, and its minerals, are the focus on the geology block. In astronomy, students look far from the earth to the sun, moon, and stars, and hear myths and legends about the constellations. The phenomena of heat, light, sound, and magnetism/static electricity form the basis of observation for the physics block. Students are exposed to the distinction between a sensory observation and a subsequent conclusion. Physics, and chemistry, both include a strong lab component with demonstrations and experiments throughout the middle school years.

As the students' bodies continue to change in the seventh grade, the biology curriculum shifts to the study of human physiology. Core topics include health, hygiene, and human development. Physics in this year builds on the topics from sixth grade and introduces mechanics, taking great care to show the machine as an extension of human form. The great unification of magnetism and electricity is introduced by having students build a simple electromagnetic motor. Chemistry, reflecting the history of this science, begins with the study of fire and combustion. Focusing on inorganic chemistry, students also make and test acid, base, and salt solutions.

Eighth grade continues the progression in human biology with the study of anatomy. Personal experience and artistic work is utilized to enliven the subject. The physics topics reflect students' growing interest in mastery of their world with the study of practical applications of physics, particularly in hydraulics and pneumatics. Chemistry in this year explores organic chemistry- the nature and use of carbon. Water, the birthplace of life, is studied in detail. Then the chemistry of the plant kingdom is taken up by studying photosynthesis and its products.

Science teaching at Berkshire Waldorf School has three primary objectives.

1. By careful and disciplined observation, students are led to the discovery of the physical world

around them.

2. Working through the scientific process (hypothesis, observation and conclusion) supports accurate thinking.
3. By gaining a deeper appreciation and understanding of the world, students feel a greater sense of connectedness to and care for their environment.

Main lesson blocks in science have titles such as “chemistry” and “physics,” but teachers use every opportunity to connect these topics. In fact, a deeper lesson of science is the interconnectedness of all things. A simple but poignant example is the carbon-oxygen cycle between animals and plants. Also, the chemistry of combustion yields a picture of biological processes in human digestion and respiration. Thus, the curriculum provides a framework for the exploration, both inner and outer, of the surrounding world. The study frequently references the human being- our nature, achievements, and responsibilities. The teacher and the curriculum aim to guide the students towards feelings of wonder and reverence for the natural world.

Every other year, a Science Fair for seventh and eighth grade takes place, allowing students an opportunity to further explore topics learned in school or to investigate topics that have not been covered in school.

### ***Physical Education / Sports / Outdoor Education***

Berkshire Waldorf School's physical education program offers a comprehensive, age-appropriate curriculum. The curriculum is divided into three areas: games, sports and outdoor education.

#### ***The Physical Education Program***

This program begins in First Grade, with games that foster physical confidence and healthy play. As students mature, the focus shifts to team building and the improvement of individual skills, and eventually to competitive sports.

All students are expected to participate in physical education activities. They are not required to change into athletic clothing, but must wear appropriate footwear and clothes that do not restrict their movement. Sixth through Eighth Graders must wear sneakers or athletic shoes. It is important that students dress appropriately in winter, with snow pants, jacket, a warm hat and winter boots. Teachers will still expect students who do not have appropriate clothing to participate.

In the event of injury or illness, a note in advance of the absence may excuse a student. Please address a note to both the class teacher and physical education teacher, and have your student give it to the class teacher at morning attendance.

#### ***Sports***

The after-school sports program is available to students in Sixth through Eighth Grades. It is geared toward healthy competition against other public and independent schools, including Waldorf schools. The Athletic Director may also invite one or more members of the Fifth grade to join a team in the spring. They will only do this if the team is noticeably lacking in numbers or experience, in order to keep the team competitive in our local league. This offer will only be extended to students who already have a



few years of experience playing the sport, as learning a new competitive sport is still a middle school experience.

One sport minimum per year is required by each student in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in more than one. Once a commitment has been made students must attend all practices and games against other schools. Students who participate in all the available sports in their time at Berkshire Waldorf School will receive a Bobcat Pride award. Parents will be notified at the beginning of the season of the game schedule and pick-up times. They are asked to help by scheduling appointments so as not to conflict with their child's sports schedule. **Students participating in after-school sports must attend school the day of practice and/or a game in order to attend practice or a game.** The school calendar (in Educate Parent Portal) also contains information regarding the schedule for games, but they change frequently. The Athletic Director will contact athletes' families to notify them of changes directly. **Please expect changes to be made due to inclement weather. Call the Sports line (413-528-4015, ext. 110) for the latest updates.**

Soccer is offered in the Fall; basketball in winter; and boys' baseball and girls' lacrosse in the spring. Students must change into appropriate athletic clothing and footwear. A student who is injured but who attends school that day is expected to attend the practice as a spectator.

Downhill skiing is offered for six weeks in the winter for Third Grade and up. Sign-up forms will be sent home in the late Fall.

**After school organized sports starts in the sixth grade at BWS. *Here is a year's overview:***

**Soccer** - Season: Fall

Begins September and ends October.

Practice and games are on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

Practice is from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Game schedules are given out during the first week of practice

**Basketball** - Season: Winter

Begins mid-November and ends mid-February

Practice and games are usually Mondays and Wednesday (Tuesday on occasion)

Practice is from 3:15 – 4:30 p.m. (at Kilpatrick Athletic Center at Simon's Rock College)

**Ski program** - Six Fridays, January to mid-February

A bus takes students to Catamount after school. Parents pick up students by 8 p.m. This is not a team sport but is an activity available for students in Third through Eighth Grade. This optional activity enables students to learn to ski, snowboard or merely practice these sports. Volunteer chaperones are provided by the school. There is a Catamount fee for the program. This information is given out in October.

**Boys Baseball and Girls Lacrosse** - Season: Spring

Short season begins the end of March and ends mid-May  
Practice and games are on Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
Practice is from 3 - 4:30 p.m.  
Teams are comprised of students in Grades 6-8

### ***Outdoor Education***

The school offers an outdoor education program during the fall and spring. The sixth graders go caving led by a qualified instructor. Sixth through eighth graders participate in backpacking and hiking and camping as part of the outdoor program.

In addition, seventh graders attend an outdoor center in New England for a week of camping, paddling, hiking and outdoor challenging experiences.

Participation in the outdoor education and sports programs is contingent upon permission of the physical education teacher and satisfactory performance in school.

Fun, social integration, healthy competition and new skill development are the joint aims of all three components of the physical education program.

## **7. Academic Standards**

The school curriculum is designed to assist each student in thinking creatively and sensitively about the world, developing the self-confidence and courage to meet its challenges, and acquiring the knowledge and skills that will develop his or her physical, intellectual and artistic gifts.

In our school, motivation to excel arises from within, rather than from the pressures of competitive testing and rewards. In grades one through eight, all of the basic skills of literacy and mathematics, as well as a World Language, are imparted in a creative and lively manner, which cultivates a child's interest, imagination and intellectual capacities.

Standardized tests and texts are used in the upper grades at the discretion of the teacher. Small groups of students are tutored when necessary to assist them in acquiring the academic skills appropriate to their grade levels. If individual tutoring is necessary, the teacher will confer with the parents regarding steps to be taken. (See [Educational Support Program](#) following.)

At the successful completion of eighth grade, our graduates are well prepared for high school work. Many of our students complete high school with honors and high honors in private and public schools. In addition, many of our graduates go on to play leading roles in high school sports, music and drama productions, student government, and other extracurricular activities.

### ***Homework***

Both class teachers and subject teachers assign homework for practice, memory and research skills. Homework usually begins in grade three or four at the discretion of the teacher in the form of

occasional short assignments. By middle school, students may be assigned nightly preparation in several subjects. Parents can help by making sure that space and time are available for homework.

### ***Middle School Homework Policy***

In order to support middle school students in completing their homework and turning it in on time, this policy is designed to be a teaching tool that is pedagogically appropriate for middle school students (seventh and eighth grade with an introduction to it part-way through sixth grade). **Any seventh or eighth grade student who fails to turn in homework on time will be scheduled for after-school detention.**

- Detention will be supervised by faculty and held on school days from 2:50 - 3:20 pm.
- On the day of missed homework, the student will receive a detention slip which the student, teacher, and parent/guardian must sign and return to the teacher the following day.
- We are well aware that detention is a serious matter involving inconvenience and disruption for everyone. That is why the *third time* a student receives detention within one semester, the student is placed on academic probation and is not permitted to participate in afterschool sports and/or extracurricular activities. (The teacher, parent/guardian, student and Pedagogical Lead will meet to discuss the specifics of the academic probation.) Academic probation ends when the student completes two full weeks in good academic standing.

### ***Make-Up Work***

The school expects students to be up-to-date in assigned work. Teachers use their discretion in setting make-up time for unfinished classwork or homework. It is important for parents and teachers to be in close communication when a student requires make-up time.

### ***Reports***

Evaluation of a child is shared with parents through parent-teacher conferences. Parent/Teacher conferences are in October. At the end of the year a written report is sent to the parents describing the child's progress in all subject areas. Mid-year reports are sent during the year to parents of children in grades one through eight. Parents are also encouraged to make appointments with teachers whenever the need arises.

## **8. Social/Emotional Health Program**

The Social Emotional Health Committee, formed in the fall of the 2007/2008 school year by the Council of Teachers, consists of the BWS Leadership Team, middle school teacher representatives, and a consulting psychologist, as needed. One of the primary roles of the Committee is to develop policy and programming in areas related to the social and emotional well-being of our students. The resulting programs involve the education of faculty and parents, as well as students, and are formulated appropriately for each age level.

The assumptions that inform this program are as follows:

- Teachers, parents and children all play an important role in creating a healthy social/emotional educational environment.
- Today's complex societal issues require an educational setting that adequately prepares children and parents to be informed and to make responsible decisions.
- The implementation of a sound plan will enable teachers, parents and children to work together to create a nurturing school setting that is fully responsive to social/emotional development needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The school has instituted programs to address Internet safety, media literacy, healthy human sexuality and identity development, a school media policy, practices to address bullying and teasing, and substance abuse prevention. In time, there are plans to address the challenges of blended families, and responsible decision making/conflict resolution.

Parents are asked to participate in this work by attending school-wide presentations and workshops, class meetings where these topics may be specifically addressed, and thoughtfully reading mailings pertaining to these topics. It is most important that parents take these issues seriously and work with the school to meet them responsibly.

## 9. Educational Support Program (ESP)

The Educational Support Program (ESP) offers support to children who are experiencing some level of difficulty in school. The program works in collaboration with the Educational Support Coordinator, teachers, tutors and parents to develop plans for each child and to regularly evaluate progress.

The Educational Support Program offers the following services **at no cost to parents**:

- Small group academic support for children in grades one through eight, focusing on reading or math skills (one to three times weekly);
- Consultation and support for families who would like to pursue standardized assessments, testing, therapeutic and tutorial work
- Sharing our list of tutors and other professional specialists.

The ESP offers therapeutic eurythmy at an additional cost to parents. Some children may require more help than can be given in a small group setting. Parents may need to financially subsidize extra remedial work.

As stated above, the school is able to offer educational support to students who are experiencing a low level of difficulty in math or language skills or who have minor learning issues. However, when it becomes apparent that a student requires one-on-one tutoring, it is then necessary for parents to provide this support. This can sometimes be accomplished during the school day. We work jointly with parents in learning assessment and in tutor selection.

When students enter our school after first grade, it is often necessary for them to be supported in reaching the level of their class in World Language or music, and occasionally in other academic subjects. Our faculty members are able to support these students with extra help outside of class for a

limited number of sessions. Depending on a number of factors, it is often necessary for the family to provide individual tutorial help for these students to reach grade level.

***How can parents tell if their children might need the services of the ESP?***

Although there are many potential problems that might precipitate a referral, examples of common referrals include children:

- who repeatedly complain that they do not understand what is being taught in school;
- who consistently do not want to go to school;
- who have significant delays in learning to read;
- who are confused by math problems that are at the appropriate developmental level;
- who frequently have difficulty sustaining attention or are easily distracted;
- who have poor planning and organizational skills that impact their school performance;
- who have speech delays or problems (e.g., difficulty analyzing sound sequences, poor grammar, frequent mispronunciation of words);
- who have a range of other difficulties (e.g., disliking/avoiding paper and pencil activities, frequently dropping, spilling or knocking things over, poor small motor coordination)

***What should parents do if they have a concern about their children?***

The first contact about any problem a child is experiencing or any concern that a parent has is always the child's class teacher. If a child is experiencing a problem in a subject class with another teacher, the parent can contact either the subject teacher directly or the class teacher.

## **10. Berkshire Waldorf High School**

Beginning in 2004, our high school became a separately incorporated school. The two schools, however, are educationally connected. Our schools often share teachers, and the High School continues our tradition of excellence in Waldorf Education, enabling students to complete their journeys through 12 grades in the Berkshires. Dr. Stephen Sagarin is the High School Executive Director.

You may contact the High School at:

**Street Address:**

14 Pine Street  
Stockbridge, MA 01262

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 905  
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Phone (413) 298-3800

Fax (413) 298-5132

**Website:**

## **IV. SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

### **1. Administration**

The BWS Community has renewed its leadership model to be deeply rooted in partnership and shared responsibility.

The **BWS Leadership Team** represents the school in the community, works closely with the Council, Board, and administrative team on policy matters, serves as liaison for parents and teachers, assists with student discipline, and oversees the healthy day-to-day functioning of the school. The BWS Leadership Team holds full accountability for all school-related issues. Letters to the school should generally be addressed to the BWS Leadership Team.

The **Operations Lead** is responsible for financial operations, facilities management, insurance, tuition agreements, and communicating with parents, the Council of Teachers and the Board of Trustees on financial matters.

The **Council of Teachers** works closely with the Pedagogical Lead and is responsible for holding the pedagogical and spiritual life of the school. It ensures that the ideals of the school are upheld academically and socially. The Council, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, School Leadership Team and administration is responsible for the long-range vision of the school. The **Council Chair** coordinates the work of the Council and is the liaison between the Council and the faculty.

The **Board of Trustees** carries legal responsibility for the school and ensures its financial health. It oversees the budget-making process, finalizes and approves the budget. It oversees annual and capital fundraising and expenditures. The Board works closely with the Council, School Leadership Team and the administration on long range planning and development in order to realize the vision of the school.

The **Director of Admissions** works with prospective parents and manages the school's marketing. The Director sees that open houses, inquiries, tours, and interviews are carried out, and that prospective families are guided effectively through the admissions process.

The **Director of Enrollment** works with families once they have been accepted into the school, assisting families navigate the enrollment process along with the Registrar. The Enrollment Director works with family retention and communications to families

The **Facilities Manager** oversees the care and use of school buildings and grounds as well as coordinating renovation and building for the school.

The **Executive Assistant** assists the Leadership Team in their administrative duties.

The **Registrar** is responsible for collecting and holding student records and enrollment information for all grades as well as extended care programs. The registrar also handles records transfer requests.

The **Front Desk Receptionist** is the point of contact for students if they are in need of administrative assistance or medical care. The Front Desk Receptionist also handles communications with parents and caregivers about illness, pick-up changes, parent-teacher conferences and directs visitors and phone calls to the appropriate party for questions.

## **2. The Role of The Early Childhood Teacher**

Early Childhood teachers are specialists in the developmental needs and care of children under the age of seven. Teachers strive to support young children and their parents as the children make the important transition from home to kindergarten and eventually from kindergarten to first grade. It is the task of the Early Childhood teacher to provide a secure, rhythmical environment in which the child can grow and develop skills in many areas, both physical and social. The learning done in these early years gives a firm foundation for the academic work that follows in the elementary school.

## **3. The Role of The Class Teacher**

In First through Eighth Grades, the Class Teacher accompanies the children through several, if not all, eight grades. Traditionally in Waldorf schools, a Grades class teacher started in First Grade and continued through Eighth Grade. Teachers loop for several consecutive years to promote strong relationships between children and teachers and build a strong community in the class. It is his or her task to guide and teach this group of children through these important and impressionable years. From introducing the letters and numbers in first grade, to the study of English literature and algebra in eighth grade, the class teacher has an unusual opportunity to combine a fresh outlook on each year's curriculum with a deep understanding of the individual children in the class. This continuity for the children, as well as security for the parents, is one of the unique and outstanding aspects of a Waldorf school.

There are circumstances in which the eight-year class teacher model is not possible. The school will then support the class and the parents through this transition. The school has found both models to be successful.

## **4. The Role of The Subject Teacher**

Artistic and practical disciplines accompany intellectual activity in our curriculum. In addition to studies covered by the class teacher, specialists in their fields teach the following subjects: World language (Spanish or German currently), handwork, woodwork, music, library, eurythmy, physical education and biodynamic farming and gardening. also know the children through their years at our support and are a consistent support to your growing children. All our teachers are committed to the health and well-being of our students as they grow and become themselves.

## 5. The Role of The Parent

The relationship between child and teacher works best when parents and teachers are in communication and working actively together in a spirit of mutual trust and cooperation. When children experience the adult world as a unified whole, the most beneficial conditions exist for their growth and well-being. This requires tact and diplomacy in front of the child. Any questions and concerns should be discussed in private between the parent and teacher.

Parents are welcome to visit a main lesson or a subject class. Teachers will arrange for special visiting days for their classes throughout the year.

## 6. The Parent Association (PA)

The Parent Association is open to every parent and caregiver as their engagement is essential to the success of the school. The purpose of the PA is straight forward: Enhance the education of the children and the well-being of the school. It provides opportunities to work closely with faculty, staff and the greater BWS community.

The Board of Trustees and the BWS Leadership Team are committed to providing an open and continuous environment of consistent communication and feedback with parents. To ensure this, members of the community, especially PA members, are invited to attend the monthly Board of Trustees meeting during open session. In addition, the PA Chair and PA Committee Chairs will have direct access to the BWS Leadership Team, via the Community Lead, on an ongoing basis throughout the school year. The PA is a full partner with the Board and the BWS Leadership Team to achieve the goals and aspirations of the school.

The PA meets once a month, generally on the first Wednesday of the month, and is led by a school selected Chair. There are four general areas that the PA focuses on:

- Development / Fundraising
- Teacher/Student Support

- Parent Education
- Community Building

### **Class representatives (Class Reps)**

Class representatives (Class Reps), generally two per class (including EC) attend the monthly PA meetings and then communicate important information to all class parents. This information will include specifics related to the class as well as school wide activities and announcements that come from the Leadership Team and the Board of Trustees. Class reps will also be asked to recommend parent volunteers to work closely with staff in the areas of admissions outreach, external community relations and fundraising. These volunteers may often work directly with staff on specific projects or initiatives that are important priorities to the school.

Class Reps also assist the teacher in organizing volunteers for field trips, send notes from class meetings to other parents, or generally assist the teacher as needed in communicating with the class parents.



**Fair representatives (Fair Reps)**

Fair representatives (Fair Reps), generally two per class (including EC) attend the monthly PA meetings and/or Fair specific meetings with the Fair Coordinator. They communicate important information about the Holiday Handcraft Fair to their class's parents and organize the class's Fair volunteer assignment. It is expected that every parent or guardian at the school volunteers in some way in Fair preparations. It is also expected that parents and guardians in Grades 1-8 volunteer for shifts on Fair Weekend. Volunteering is a great community builder and of tremendous support to the school as well as to the class parent body as a whole. The Fair Reps make sure that all parents/guardians in the class are aware of this expectation from the school, and organize their class's volunteer efforts for the Fair.

**PA volunteers can serve in any of the following areas:**

**Fundraising & Development** – Working with large strategic planning goals for the school as well as ongoing fundraising efforts such as the Annual Fund, Handcraft Fair, Spring Gala, Scrip, Cafe Night, and such.

**Parent Education** - Organizing talks, presentations and speakers on a variety of relevant topics to further an in depth understanding of a Waldorf Education.

**Teacher & Student Support** - Identifying, in partnership with the Leadership Team, projects or needs that will support the students and teachers.

**Community Building** – Organizing ways of bringing both the BWS and the wider community together in joy and meaningful relationships. Taking up a particular community cause to instill the value of philanthropic gestures in our children.

**Admissions Outreach** - Parent volunteers will be school Ambassadors and interact externally with prospective parents, alumni, families making the transition from Early Childhood to the grades.

**New Family Welcome Mentors** - Building a strong welcoming network of support for new parents.

**Fairs and Festivals** - help support faculty and staff around Fair and Festival times

Parents are invited to join any committee that interests them. It is our hope that the formation of these committees will provide volunteers the opportunity to get involved in concrete ways that will strengthen our school and community. Welcome!

**7. Festivals and Celebrations**

Since ancient days, human beings all over the world have celebrated festivals to mark familiar milestones in the circling course of the seasons. These festivals help to link humankind in awareness and

wonder to the cycles of warmth and cold, light and dark, birth and death, and sowing and reaping within the rhythms of nature. Individuals are inwardly nourished and community life is strengthened in the celebration of festivals.

Children delight in festivity. BWS, like all Waldorf schools, enjoys a vibrant festival life that often includes the full community, such as:

- Michaelmas
- Lantern Walk
- Spiral of Light
- Holiday Handcraft Fair
- May Day

Students also celebrate seasonal and cultural in-school assemblies and festivals such as:

- Day of the Dead
- Sukkot
- First Nations Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day

These festivals are wide in scope, celebratory of the larger human experience and seek to honor particular cultures and events in the cycle of the year. Classroom decorations as well as school festivals and events honor and celebrate a diversity of cultural experience and expression.

## **8. Class Nights and Parent –Teacher Conferences**

Class nights are held for parents of each class several times a year. These are important times for parents and teachers to explore aspects of the children's school experience and at least one parent from each family **is expected to attend**. Both teachers and parents leave these evenings having learned more about individual students, the class as a whole, the Waldorf curriculum, child development, and each other.

Twice a year, the School sets aside one evening and one day for parents to meet with their child's class and subject teachers by appointment. Check the current calendar for specific dates. All class teachers have weekly office hours for immediate conversations.

## **9. Parent Education**

Study groups, lectures, and workshops on Waldorf Education, parenting, anthroposophy and related topics are offered on an ongoing basis by teachers, parents and friends of the school. Sometimes a group of people with a particular interest will begin meeting together. Early Childhood discussion groups explore the joys and challenges of parenting young children.

## **10. Development and Philanthropy**

Developing a culture of philanthropy is central to the sustainable success of the school and the ability to provide a vibrant Waldorf Education. It is not only a means to support and strengthen the educational experience, but it is also a value that we hope to cultivate in our children. How do we build that culture?

### **The Annual Fund**

Contributions to our annual fund provide the resources that bridge the gap between funds that are needed to operate the school and the income received from tuition. It is typical of private schools to have a 15% gap. The annual fund provides the financial resources to support tuition assistance, faculty and staff salaries and professional development, and specific improvements to the campus infrastructure. PA class reps help communicate these priorities and encourage participation from all families. Every year it is our goal that the school achieve 100% participation from all community members, parents included.

### **Annual Fundraising Special Events**

The **Holiday Handcraft Fair** is the single biggest community event and fundraiser and is held annually in November. Every family shares their skills creating, organizing, and enjoying a festive day at the Fair, while getting a jump on Holiday shopping! Proceeds from the Fair are added to the Annual Fund, which allows us to maintain excellence in school programming and uphold our commitment to accessible Waldorf Education for all.

### **Other Opportunities to Support BWS:**

**Betty Krainis Planned Giving Society** – Provides the opportunity to bequest a gift in a will, create a charitable trust or name BWS as a beneficiary or transferee of an insurance policy. The Society acknowledges the foresight and generosity of those who include BWS in their planned giving.

**Contribute by Shopping** - Many of us already shop on **amazon.com**, but did you know that you can go to **smile.amazon.com**, designate BWS as your charity of choice, and the school will automatically receive a percentage of your purchase? The same login information and Prime membership benefits apply, and the exact same merchandise is available at smile.amazon.com.

**Scrip Program** - Purchase gift cards directly from our school and buy your groceries as usual at Big Y, Guido's, The Berkshire Co-op, and the Hawthorne Valley Farm Store. Gift cards are also available each year at a variety of local businesses, as well as online at hundreds of national retailers. BWS receives up to 10% (or more at some online retailers) of each sale. Each year SCRIP provides the opportunity to earn the school thousands of dollars at no cost to you! Email program coordinators at [scrip@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:scrip@berkshirewaldorfschool.org) with questions or orders.

## **11. Volunteer Opportunities**

The school depends on parents' engagement to support the life of our school and the education of our children. When parents participate, they not only support the successful functioning of the school, they

strengthen their relationships with other parents, faculty and administration. The school deems it essential to the life and strength of a learning community that all parents engage in some capacity, as volunteering positively benefits the whole community and provides positive role modeling for our children. We find that, as with most things in life, the more you give, the more you get out of being part of this wonderful community.

Waldorf educator Rene Querido said that parents "create a mantle of warmth around a school." There are many opportunities to do so, including:

### **Class Rep**

- Each class has a representative (or two who share the role) who is the bridge between the class teacher and the class parents
- Helps to communicate news, arrange class events
- Assists the teacher with class goals
- Attends Parent Association meetings once per month and informs their class parents of PA news (For more about the Parent Association, see that [specific section](#) in the Handbook.)

### **Holiday Handcraft Fair Rep**

- Is the point person that communicates with the class about their assignment, with help from Fair Coordinator(s)
- Take the lead on organizing activities around the class assignment
- Ensures there are enough sign ups/coverage for set up, fair day, and clean up

### **Admissions Ambassadors**

- Greet and welcome prospective parents at open houses and outreach events
- Tour school with prospective families to help shepherd large groups and answer questions  
Speak to prospective parents about their experience via phone or email
- Crossover with members of Parent Association and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

### **BWS Alumni Ambassadors**

- Attend school events (e.g., Grandparents Day, Soiree, Looking Ahead to High School) to share their experiences of BWS/Waldorf Education
- Willing to speak to current or prospective parents or offer blog posts/interviews about outcomes of BWS education
- Serve as think tank for outreach, PR and communications goals

### **Event/Outreach Ambassador**

- Can be students, past students and parents
- Join faculty and staff for a shift at public events such as Berkshire Harvest Festival, crafting with visiting children and talking with parents
- Assist with entertainment, such as contributing to puppet show or Presto playing at an event
- Assist with Grandparents and Special Friends Day

**EC Ambassador**

- Current or experienced Early Childhood parents
- Attend Handcraft Fair, Harvest Festival, EC Puppet Show/Play Date events
- Willing to discuss their BWS experience; especially helpful if they have older children who have transitioned to the grades

**Transition Ambassador**

- Current, experienced families with older children
- Attend events such as Portfolio Exhibition, Science Fair or “looking ahead to high school/ middle school” evenings
- Willing to discuss their experience and answer questions

**Mentor Parents**

- Current parents
- Willing to help welcome new families joining the school
- Answer questions by phone or email, especially in the beginning
- Invite to events
- Become a friend

**Photographer**

- Shoots school Events on site approximately 6 times a year
- Shoots professional quality action photography of all grades during school day
- On call for major events such as May Day and Assemblies
- Possible revenue stream for parents/grandparents to download pro photos

**Social Media Street Team**

- Capture short video clips or interviews of life at BWS
- Create short, compelling and shareable content for our social media channels
- Partner with Community team to create content around seasonal events
- Partner with other regional organizations via social media

**Videographer**

- Event videographer
- Cover meaningful events in the life of the school (e.g., graduation speeches, Science Fair, plays)
- Possible revenue stream via live streaming footage or log in for a small fee

**Video/Sound Editor**

- Partner with our resident documentary filmmaker to produce short cuts for website and/or social media (goal: 1/3 website content)
- Help to produce one 3 minute or less short film/ year
- Edit already extant interviews and “B” roll

**Flowers and Greenery for Events**

- Provide and arrange flowers for open houses and other events, either store bought or harvested from home or BWS gardens

### Other Volunteer Opportunities

- Many more volunteer opportunities are available through the Parent Association. To find out more or to express your interest, please contact the PA Chair at [pa@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:pa@berkshirewaldorfschool.org).

*Many lifelong friendships begin with a crafts workshop or a committee meeting, and our children always benefit when parents are involved. If you are looking for ways to be more engaged in the school community, please feel free to contact anyone on our administrative team.*

## 12. Holiday Handcraft Fair

The Holiday Handcraft Fair is held each year in November and is our single largest fundraiser, benefitting the Annual Fund. Parents, grandparents, students, teachers and friends create a festive day of family activities, entertainment and refreshments. We are proud to host one of the only holiday fairs where almost everything is handmade or donated by our talented, generous community. We offer one room to community artisans to sell their wares and add to our inventory of handmade treasures. Each class is responsible for a room or area of the Fair; see the list below for your class's assignment, which is, however, **subject to change**. (Fair coordinators will communicate early and often, especially if there is an assignment change.) Craft workshops are held for several weeks preceding the Fair, providing opportunities for parents, teachers and friends to share skills, make friends and learn something new.

EC	Prizes for Little People's Shop & Pocket Person
1	Little People's Shop
2	Children's Crafts
3	Silent Auction
4	Raffle
5	Lunchroom
6	Lunchroom
7	Country Store
8	Games/Activities, Parking

## 13. Staying Informed: Week-At-A-Glance

At the end of each week, we email a detailed update to parents and caregivers, informing them of news and events scheduled for the coming week.\*

**It is the parents' responsibility to carefully read all communications from the school, in order to remain current on what is happening in their child's school life.**

\*We generate these emails using constant contact; make sure to add [info@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:info@berkshirewaldorfschool.org) to your

*address books and if you have gmail, check your “promotions” tab to receive these important communications.*

#### **14. Website [www.berkshirewaldorfschool.org](http://www.berkshirewaldorfschool.org)**

The school’s website is a wealth of information for parents and visitors. It not only contains information about BWS, but also provides a link to the AWSNA site, Why Waldorf Works, the school newsletter, calendar and current event listings. Parents are invited to visit it often. School updates and news are also available for parents on

- Facebook - [facebook.com/BerkshireWaldorfSchool](https://facebook.com/BerkshireWaldorfSchool)
- Instagram - [instagram.com/berkshirewaldorfschool](https://instagram.com/berkshirewaldorfschool)
- Twitter - [twitter@Berkshirewaldorf](https://twitter/Berkshirewaldorf)

#### **15. Educate Parent Portal**

Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, we adopted a new school management software to organize family and student contact information and make it accessible to registered users online, enable teachers to write reports and parents to view them online, and more.

The website for the parent portal is [educate.tads.com/educate](https://educate.tads.com/educate). If you are signing up for the first time, email the registrar at [registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org](mailto:registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org) for a unique sign up link.

## V. Directory 2024-25

### Early Childhood Teachers

Star Nursery - Lead Teacher	Rebecca Ruof	<a href="mailto:rruof@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">rruof@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Star Nursery - Asst. Teacher	Cassandra Siegenthaler	<a href="mailto:csiegenthaler@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">csiegenthaler@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Rose Room – Lead Teacher	Elizabeth Oakley	<a href="mailto:eoakley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">eoakley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Rose Room – Asst. Teacher	Penni Greene	<a href="mailto:pgreene@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">pgreene@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Robin’s Nest – Lead Teacher	Soheireh Meier	<a href="mailto:smeier@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">smeier@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Robin’s Nest – Asst. Teacher	Holly Tierney	<a href="mailto:htierney@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">htierney@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Sun Room – Lead Teacher	Kirsten Hascup	<a href="mailto:khascup@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">khascup@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Sun Room – Asst. Teacher	Rachel Dworkin	<a href="mailto:rdworkin@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">rdworkin@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Rainbow Room – Lead Teacher	Charlotte Hoppe	<a href="mailto:choppe@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">choppe@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Rainbow Room – Asst. Teacher	Naima Hill	<a href="mailto:nhills@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">nhills@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
EC Support Teacher	Prim Ormanovich	<a href="mailto:pormanovich@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">pormanovich@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Floating Asst. Teacher	Christian Limberger	<a href="mailto:climberger@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">climberger@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Floating Asst. Teacher	Ruth Plumb	<a href="mailto:rplumb@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">rplumb@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Floating Asst. Teacher	Emmett Nelson	<a href="mailto:enelson@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">enelson@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>

### Grades Teachers

Class of 2032 - First Grade	Anna Taiga	<a href="mailto:ataiga@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">ataiga@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Class of 2031 - Second Grade	Victoria Cartier	<a href="mailto:vcartier@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">vcartier@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Class of 2030 - Third Grade	Sam DeMello	<a href="mailto:sdemello@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">sdemello@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Class of 2029 - Fourth Grade	WindRose Morris-Keating	<a href="mailto:wmorriskeating@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">wmorriskeating@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Class of 2028 - Fifth Grade	Safina Alessandra	<a href="mailto:salessandra@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">salessandra@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Class of 2027 - Sixth Grade	Christine Good	<a href="mailto:cgood@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">cgood@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Class of 2026 - Seventh Grade	Ariel Capasse (advisor)	<a href="mailto:acapasse@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">acapasse@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Class of 2025 - Eighth Grade	Alessandra Profumo	<a href="mailto:aprofumo@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">aprofumo@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
First Grade Assistant	Eleana Peterson	<a href="mailto:epeterson@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">epeterson@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Floating Assistant	Katie Bovard	<a href="mailto:kbovard@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">kbovard@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>



## Subject Teachers

Biodynamic Gardening	Hadley Milliken	<a href="mailto:hmilliken@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">hmilliken@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Eurythmy, Chorus, Recorder Ensemble	Patti Regan	<a href="mailto:pregan@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">pregan@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Eurythmy Accompanist	Bonnie Nordoff	<a href="mailto:bnordoff@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">bnordoff@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Games	Kevin Crowley	<a href="mailto:kcrowley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">kcrowley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Athletic Director	Kevin Crowley	<a href="mailto:sports@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">sports@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Handwork	Krista Palmer	<a href="mailto:kpalmer@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">kpalmer@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Library	Andrea Patel	<a href="mailto:apatel@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">apatel@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Middle School Math & History	John Helmke	<a href="mailto:jhelmke@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">jhelmke@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Middle School Math & Science	Lynn Arches	<a href="mailto:larches@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">larches@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Music Director	Eileen Markland	<a href="mailto:emarkland@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">emarkland@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Woodwork	David Ree	<a href="mailto:dree@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">dree@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
World Language - Spanish (Gr. 7-8)	Julia Nunez	<a href="mailto:jnunez@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">jnunez@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
World Language - German (Gr. 1-6)	Joanne Bockemuehl	<a href="mailto:jbockemuel@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">jbockemuel@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>

## Administrative Staff

<b>Leadership Team</b>	<b>Renée, Christianna, Kendra</b>	<a href="mailto:leadership@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">leadership@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Community Lead	Renée Far	<a href="mailto:rfar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">rfar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Pedagogical Lead	Christianna Riley	<a href="mailto:criley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">criley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Operations Lead	Kendra Smallwood	<a href="mailto:ksmallwood@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">ksmallwood@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Director of Admissions	Robyn Coe	<a href="mailto:admissions@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">admissions@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Director of Enrollment	Renée Far	<a href="mailto:enrollment@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">enrollment@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Facilities Manager	Josh Fisher	<a href="mailto:campus@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">campus@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Executive Assistant	Jenna John	<a href="mailto:jjohn@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">jjohn@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Registrar	Philip Ormanovich	<a href="mailto:registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">registrar@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Assistant Business Manager	Janet Lee	<a href="mailto:bookkeeper@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">bookkeeper@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Administrative Assistant	Reagan Smith	<a href="mailto:rsmith@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">rsmith@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Front Desk	Dayle Welch	<a href="mailto:frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>

## Council of Teachers

Krista Palmer, <i>Chair</i>	Rebecca Ruof	Patti Regan
Safina Alessandra	Kirsten Hascup	Christianna Riley
Victoria Cartier	Alessandra Profumo	Charlotte Hoppe

## Board of Trustees

Yvonne Perez-Zarraga, <i>President</i>	<a href="mailto:yperezzarraga@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">yperezzarraga@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Sarah Gottlieb, <i>Vice President</i>	<a href="mailto:sgottlieb@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">sgottlieb@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Peter Stanton, <i>Treasurer</i>	<a href="mailto:pstanton@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">pstanton@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Megan Blancato, <i>Secretary</i>	<a href="mailto:mblancato@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">mblancato@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Safina Alessandra	<a href="mailto:salessandra@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">salessandra@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Emily Kasten	<a href="mailto:ekasten@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">ekasten@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Charles Miller	<a href="mailto:cmiller@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">cmiller@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Elizabeth Oakley	<a href="mailto:eoakley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">eoakley@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Krista Palmer	<a href="mailto:kpalmer@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">kpalmer@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>

## Other Contacts

Parent Association	<a href="mailto:pa@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">pa@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Scrip	<a href="mailto:scrip@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">scrip@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Extended Care	<a href="mailto:extendedcare@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">extendedcare@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Athletic Program	<a href="mailto:sports@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">sports@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>
Handcraft Fair	<a href="mailto:fair@berkshirewaldorfschool.org">fair@berkshirewaldorfschool.org</a>