



Berkshire Waldorf School Family Handbook



Welcome from the BWS School Directors

Welcome to Berkshire Waldorf School! We are glad you are here with us. As we once again join together in community, we would like to propose a simple theme for the coming school year – one word to hold in our hearts and our minds as we venture forth into this new academic year, the 54th in the history of our school.

That one, simple word is... Balance.

As School Directors, we have spent the summer settling into our new roles and planting our feet firmly on the ground. As we now move into fall, we pledge to lead our school community forward with a strong sense of balance and direction.

As ever, our first priority is to maintain the strong, secure foundation of Waldorf education at BWS. This is the balanced ground upon which our students have grown and flourished for decades.

We also aim, in the coming year, to continue the school's work toward the three strategic goals identified by our community last spring: functional stability, financial stability and connective stability. One cannot achieve stability, of course, without first gaining a strong sense of balance.

So as we venture forth into another school year, let us all hold onto this idea of "balance." May this simple theme guide us and strengthen us as we come together to build a brave, bold future for our school community.

In humble service,

Lisa Profumo
Pedagogical Director

Joshua Fisher
Administrative Director

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Why BWS?

BWS Mission Statement

Berkshire Waldorf School educates children to...

- think with clarity
- feel with compassion
- act with courage and conviction.

Our curriculum weaves...

- intellectual rigor
- artistic expression
- hands-on work

...to develop and expand the full human potential of each child.

Values

- We instill a love of learning, a sense of wonder, an appreciation of beauty, and a connection to the natural world.
- We teach an integrated curriculum that reflects the developmental stages of childhood and is grounded in artistic and practical work to develop intellectual curiosity, social sensitivity, and physical stamina.
- We explore the beauty, potential and resilience of the human spirit, giving students tools to become thoughtful, clear-thinking adults who act with integrity and moral responsibility.
- We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment rich in natural esthetics, where the interests and strengths of all students are honored and encouraged.
- We promote a social education and cultivate authentic, enduring relationships that foster renewal through respect for the individual, the group and the world.
- We use open, clear and direct communication with families to facilitate continuity between school and home.
- We work cooperatively with community members to build a vibrant, healing social life that contains and reflects the virtues of each human soul.

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 all 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.

BWS Land Acknowledgement

We remember that we are gathering and learning on the sacred, unceded Homeland of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok, the People of the Waters That are Never Still, now known as the

Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Nation, who are living and striving in Wisconsin and the Berkshires.

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.

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.

School Administration: Who to Contact?

Absences, late arrivals and general school questions: Darcy Turner, Front Desk Receptionist
frontdesk@berkshirewaldorfschool.org

Student, faculty, classroom or curriculum questions: Alessandra Profumo, Pedagogical Director
aprofumo@berkshirewaldorfschool.org

Development, Finance, Buildings & Grounds: Joshua Fisher, Administrative Director
jfisher@berkshirewaldorfschool.org

Human Resources, Enrollment, TADs/Educate issues: Dayle Welch, HR & Enrollment Manager
dwelch@berkshirewaldorfschool.org

Tuition or business office questions: Janet Lee, Business Manager
jlee@berkshirewaldorfschool.org

Community events, development or alumni: Reagan Smith, Advancement Manager
rsmith@berkshirewaldorfschool.org

BWS Daily Schedule

Grades School	
8:00- 8:10	Arrival
8:15-10:15	Main Lesson Main Lesson begins promptly at 8:15 a.m. and students are expected to be present and ready.
10:15 - 10:40	Snack/Recess
10:45 - 11:30	First Period
11:35 - 12:20	Second Period
12:20 - 1:00	Lunch/Recess
1:05 - 1:50	Third Period
1:55 - 2:40	Fourth Period
2:40 - 2:50	Home Room
2:50	Dismissal Students are dismissed and should be picked up from school by 2:50 pm

Early Childhood	
8:00- 8:10	Arrival Please keep your child with you until you both have greeted the teacher to let them know that you have arrived.
8:15	Morning Program Begins School begins at 8:15 a.m. Being late can cause difficulty separating from parents and integrating into the group.
12:00	AM Student Pick Up Your individual teacher will give you pick up instructions.
12:15	Lunch / Afternoon Program
2:45	Dismissal Your individual teacher will give you pick up instructions.

BWS Drop Off Information

When is drop off?

8:00a.m. - 8:10 a.m. Students arriving before 8:00 a.m. must be attended by their parents.

Where do I drop off?

- EC Lead teachers will give specific instructions regarding drop off by class.
- 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).
- **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.
- Students may enter through the front door, the front porch door, or the front hall door ONLY.

What happens if I am late to drop off?

- Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. will be marked tardy and will miss the opening exercises of class.
- Beginning at 8:15am, students will need to enter through the front door only (alternative entry doors will be locked).

BWS Dismissal Information

Pick up for Early Childhood

Dismissal for the half-day program is at noon and the full-day program ends at 2:45 pm. Each teacher will provide specific information on where dismissal will take place for each class. Please always say goodbye to the dismissal teacher together with your child to make sure that they know that you are leaving.

Pick-up Grades 1-4

Parents/Caregivers must park in the North or overflow parking 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.

Change in pick up time?

To ensure the safety of your child at pickup time, send any changes in schedule via email to the front desk, and their class/lead teacher. Contact the front desk **well before** dismissal, so that we can responsibly supervise your child's transition from school to home.

Change in pick up person?

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.

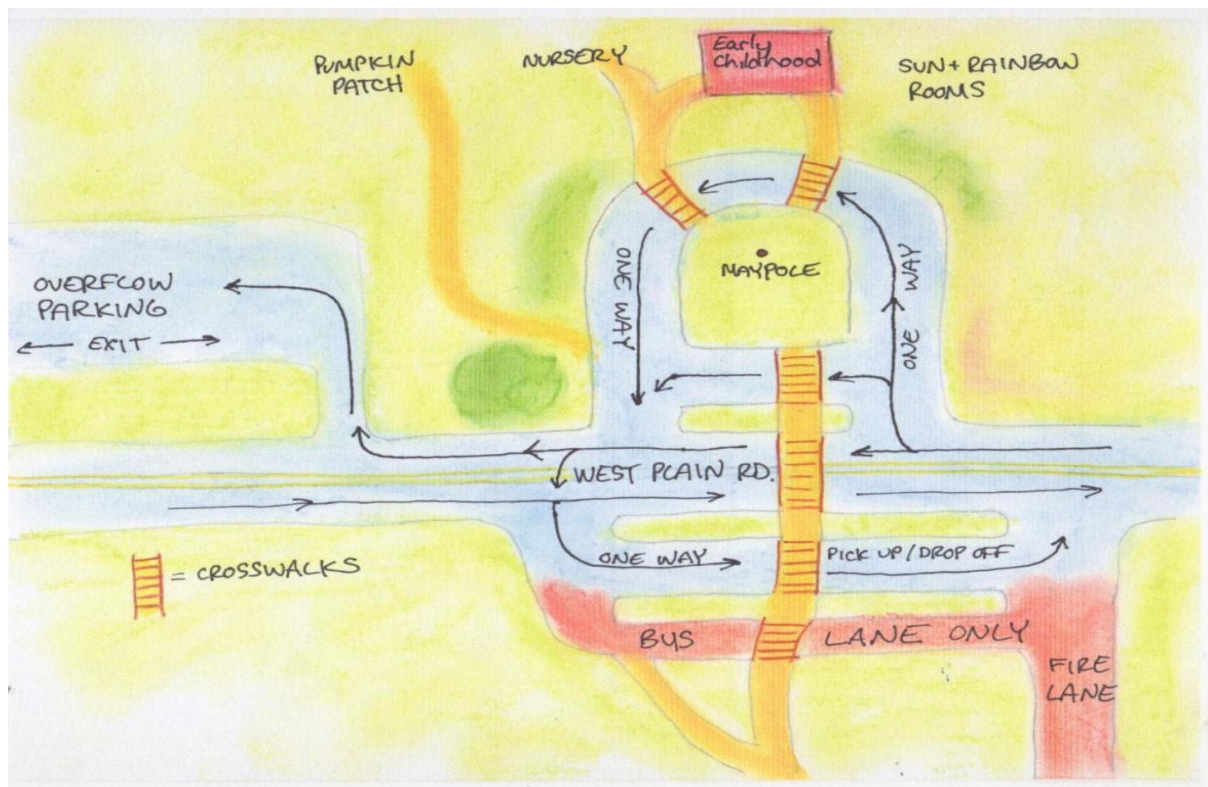
Late Picking up?

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.

Early Picking Up?

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.

Cars on Campus Policies



1. Family parking is in the North Lot, on the north side of West Plain Road, surrounding the community green and the Maypole. Parking on the south or Elementary Grades Building side of the road is for employees, school buses and commercial deliveries only.
2. If the North lot is full, additional parking is available in the Overflow Lot, the grass field to the west of the North lot, near the BWS community garden and greenhouse. Please enter the Overflow lot from West Plain Road. (Do not drive across the lawn from the North lot.)
3. Do not leave your vehicle unattended with the motor running.

4. Observe the crosswalk. Be especially careful of children darting into the lanes. When possible, remind your children to walk in between the wooden posts in the pedestrian walkway.
5. Do not use your cell phone for texting or voice calls while driving on or near campus.
6. Use all available parking lot spaces before using the lawns.
7. There is no parking in front of the EC building at any time; that is the fire lane.
8. Conscientiously observe the 35 mph speed limit on West Plain Road, as well as **20 mph in the school zone**.
9. Be considerate of our neighbors.
10. Handicapped Parking is for handicapped persons **ONLY**.

Bus 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. (518-392-1520).

For more information or to sign up for bus service, please contact the front desk before April 1.

Bus Rules:

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.
2. **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.**

Alternative Transportation

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. We will need written permission for your child to ride a bicycle to/from school.

School Cancellations

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 and delays typically inform our decision. 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.

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.**

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.

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:

- Post the school closing on our [website homepage](#).
- 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.
- Bookmark [this site](#), which contains a list of school closings and delays in Berkshire County, as well as the [Berkshire Hills Regional School District web page](#). If they're closed for weather, we're typically closed, too.

Health and Wellness 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.*

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. **If your child**

has any of the symptoms below, 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 or injured 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.

If your child misses school for an extended period of time (5+ days) or acquires accommodations due to illness or injury, we require a signed and dated doctor's note on file. This note must outline all accommodations necessary from the date of injury/illness to release date.

Symptom Checklist

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)

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).

Immunization Records

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. Read [MA state immunization requirements](#) here.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Attendance Policy

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 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 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.

Excused Absences

- Any student with over **10 EXCUSED** absences will be highlighted for the Class Teacher's attention.
- The teacher will 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 Director 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.

Unexcused Absences

- After **5 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.

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).

Tardiness

Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. are considered late and will be marked tardy. 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.

- 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.
- 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 Director will meet with the parent/guardian to determine next steps.

Communication

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, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Questions or Concerns

Please contact your teacher with your question or concern via email. Your teacher will respond within 24-48 hours to answer your question, or find a time to schedule a meeting. If you prefer to speak to a School Director directly, the School Directors have an open door policy, and are available by phone (413-528-4015), email 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.

Staying Informed: Emails

Your class teacher and the administration will send out important information via email. **All families must have one reliable email address that the school can reliably communicate with.**

Staying Informed: Week-At-A-Glance

At the end of each week, we email an 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 to your address books and if you have gmail, check your "promotions" tab to receive these important communications.*

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.

Grades 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.

Grades 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.

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 and February. 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.

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.

Student Policies

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. **If teachers notice a student's clothing or accessories aren't conducive to learning, teachers will contact parents with a recommendation.**

- 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.

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

- Comfortable and flexible
- Neat & Clean (No pajama pants)
- Supports climbing, running and jumping
- Age-appropriate
- Weather-appropriate
- Shoes with back straps that are sturdy enough to run and play. Ex: sneakers, chacos/tevas, boots. (NO flip flops, crocs, slides)
- 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.
- 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. Denim skirts/jeans and high-heeled shoes are not permitted for performances or assemblies. 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.

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.

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. 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.

- It is necessary for students to be considerate of one another.
- Wrestling is generally not part of recess activities.
- Tackling, punching and kicking are not permitted at any time.
- Throwing sticks, stones and snowballs is also not permitted.

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. Additionally, the student's teacher must be informed of this.
- In the instance that a device is used, it will be taken and given to the BWS School Directors. 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.

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.
- 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.

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 School Directors, and a meeting will be held with the student, class teacher, parents and a member or members of the BWS School Directors. 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.

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 School Directors will be notified and the student will be suspended for three days. Further violation may result in probation 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.

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 School Directors shall be notified. The BWS School Directors, 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 School Directors, 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 School Directors will be informed and a meeting held with the student, class teacher, parents and BWS School Directors. 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 School Directors 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.

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. To read our full bullying policy, please click [here](#).

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 School Directors strongly encourage you to speak directly with your child's teacher. When that isn't possible, please bring concerns and inquiries to the School Directors and they will set up a meeting with the concerned individual and the Class Teacher to work out a solution.

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 School Directors and parents to decide the next step.

Suspension and Expulsion

A Class Teacher or Subject Teacher, together with the BWS School Directors, 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 School Directors 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.

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.

Media Guidelines

BWS recognizes that electronic media and technology can serve as valuable tools when used responsibly and age-appropriately. However, as a school which stands for childhood, teachers ask BWS families to commit to deferring screened media for their children, and focus on interaction and first person experience both at school and at home. Our teachers work with great care to develop students' imagination, creativity, memory and will. It is now common practice to refrain from media during childhood if your aim is to bolster all of these qualities in children.

In order to maximize the value of the Waldorf Education your child is receiving they should not be interacting with screened media during the school week. Our Media Guidelines Chart below provides a helpful scaffolding for understanding our slow and thoughtful roll out of Media for young children. In the Middle School years students may use forms of Media for research or other educational purposes should their teacher recommend it in class.

If you are struggling to follow BWS media guidelines, or would like support on how to begin, please contact us! Many of our community members, parents and teachers alike, have met similar challenges in their family lives and can offer helpful, realistic suggestions.



BERKSHIRE
WALDORF SCHOOL

Media Guidelines

Supporting a screens-off, hands-on education.

Grade & Age	Non-Participatory Media					Participatory Media					
	Movies.	TV / Videos.	Recorded Music, Podcasts, Audiobooks.	Radio.	News.	Video-Call w/ Family.	Search Web for Homework, Reading, Educational Content.	Emailing.	Texting.	Personal Devices. (i.e: phones, tablets, video game consoles, smart watches.)	Social Media, Video Games.
Early Childhood Star Room	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Early Childhood Nursery / Kindergarten	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Grades 1-2	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Grade 3	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Grades 4-5	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Grade 6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Grade 7	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Grade 8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



None: Not aligned with BWS Pedagogy.



Strictly Limited: Age appropriate, with parent/guardian present, non-school days.



Supervised: Age appropriate, strong parent/guardian awareness.



With Agreements: Parent/guardian set and enforce conditions.

Parent/Guardian Policies

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.

Visitors to the School

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.

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.

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 School Directors every new school year to ensure that it reflects our values and appropriate practices.

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.