

Appendix C: Kindergarten Routines

School Hours

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

8:30am-1:30pm on Fridays

Rhythm of the Day

Kindergarten students may arrive from 8:30 am onward. Please bring your children by 9:00am. Parents are asked to accompany the children to meet their teacher in the morning.

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

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

Lunch and Snack

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

Sharing Basket

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

Attendance and Absence

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

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

What Your Child Needs for the School Year

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

Grade One Readiness and Importance

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

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

Children entering Grade 1 are assessed for readiness again in September by the class teacher in conjunction with the kindergarten teacher. This assessment should be completed after one month. In unusual circumstances, a child deemed unready may be asked to complete a further year in kindergarten. A second month of probation and observation might also be suggested if, for example, there has been a change in the home that may have affected the child's ability to adapt.

Acceptance into preschool and kindergarten does not automatically ensure acceptance into grade school.

Adjustment Period

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

Kindergarten Behaviour

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

Guidance and Discipline in the Kindergarten

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

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

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

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

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

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

Challenging Behaviours That Can Become Issues

Fighting or aggressive behaviour, bullying or violence.

Harmful or threatening behaviour.

Exclusion of other children.

Teasing or name calling.

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

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

Disrespecting the Daily Rhythm of the classroom.

Running in the school or classroom.

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

Rude or aggressive language.

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

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

Overcoming our Harmony Addiction

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

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

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

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