

PARENT HANDBOOK

APPENDIX 3: HIGH SCHOOL

WALDORF PEDAGOGY IN HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction

Waldorf pedagogy is truly unique. While careful attention to individual students' needs is widely brought forward as a mark of forward thinking and 'cutting-edge' pedagogy, Waldorf education has over 90 years of successful practice in this domain, and thousands of graduates worldwide to attest to the excellent results of its pedagogical orientation. The Waldorf curriculum is designed and subtly adapted to reflect our changing times in order to present students with each subject at a time and in ways that best awaken, nurture, and fulfill their faculties and capacities. Teachers present the subject matter in ways that suit the experience, abilities, and individual qualities of their particular class, while abiding by standards of excellence monitored and supported by virtue of the school's evaluation, mentoring and evaluation policies. In this way, the curriculum truly meets the individual and develops the capacities of each unique student.

A central aim of Waldorf Education is to harmoniously nurture all of a child's faculties to provide a foundation for initiative and moral strength in adult life. Each individual's physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual needs are considered of equal importance, and the Waldorf curriculum combined with its unique teaching methods have nurtured young bodies, hearts and minds in the greater Vancouver area for over forty years.

From the sense of wonder of the toddler to the intellectual awakening and thirst for knowledge of the young adult, Waldorf education is designed to meet all stages of growth and development of children in ways both unique and proven.

Waldorf Education pays particular attention to the developmental stages of adolescence. As students enter that phase, school policies pertaining to students' life are adapted to their growing inner sense of responsibility. All High School students are invited to participate in a Student Council.

The Main Lesson

The Main Lesson is the heart of the school day for every student from Grades One through Twelve and lasts for approximately two hours, from the beginning of school to the morning recess. Subject Teachers guide the students for a three to four week period through a concentrated exploration of a subject allowing them to become deeply familiar with it. The focused presentations and research combined with a wide scope of artistic activities, movement, and personal research enable students to deeply connect and to develop long lasting relations with the subjects studied.

Each school year comprises around ten Main Lessons providing a leading theme for each grade directly related to the phase of development of the students.

Track Classes

In addition to daily main lessons, Waldorf students encounter several other teachers daily in Track Classes. These subjects include Math, French, English, Physical Education, Choir, and Eurythmy.

Weekly Schedule and Calendar

The High School sometimes holds events independently of the rest of the school. You will be informed of these special occasions via letters or communications from the High School Reception, Class Advisors or Class Representative, and/or through The Current newsletter.

Weekly Assemblies

The High School has weekly assemblies every Friday from 10:00 to 10:20 am. This is a time for students to share their work and for announcements and contributions.

The Class Advisor

Each grade is guided by a class advisor who takes responsibility for the well-being of that class from Grades 9-12. They conduct a weekly class meeting and parent meetings once/term. Their long lasting commitment secures a very strong sense of mutual respect, confidence, and trust in students and teachers alike.

All questions, concerns and observations regarding a High School student should be directed immediately to the class advisor.

Reports, Conferences, and Parents Evenings

Regular communication between parents and teachers is vital to the success of Waldorf education. Written reports are sent out three times a year in the High School. Although these reports are comprehensive, they cannot replace regular meetings between parents and teacher for an objective review of the student's work and well-being. Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled at such times as to enable most parents to attend. Please make sure to sign-up for a conference with your child's teacher. In addition to Parent/Teacher conferences, Parent Evenings are scheduled three to four times per year. The purpose of these evenings is to nurture parents' connection and understanding of the Waldorf curriculum and their child's work in the context of his/her own class. These evenings are an invaluable opportunity to share concerns and observations of a social nature with other parents of the same class, and to bring questions and suggestions to both teachers and fellow parents. It is expected that all parents attend Parent Evenings.

Assessment of Student Development

In the High School, students are assessed through both oral and written work including Main Lesson books, individual projects, essays, quizzes, and tests. A critique is given of the students' work in arts and crafts.

VANCOUVER WALDORF SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY INCLUDING ANTI-BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

VWS is committed to the personal growth of its students by providing the opportunity to develop self-discipline and positive behaviours in a caring, supportive environment. Our school's approach to student behavior management is primarily an educative one. That is, the fundamental aim is for students to learn to be responsible for themselves and their actions and to make genuine, positive contributions to their/our school community.

HIGH SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

The truest discipline is that which we impose upon ourselves: the ordering of our lives so that we can do those things we most deeply love and want to do. One of our tasks in the Vancouver Waldorf School is to educate in our students the capacity to discern, in order to make such self-discipline possible. The following code of conduct is intended to support students and teachers in doing their work.

General Behaviour

Students are expected to conduct themselves in ways that show respect for and sensitivity toward the dignity and freedom of others. In our school, responsibility extends beyond the classroom and hallways, since we are part of the Highlands United Church and Edgemont Village communities.

Eating

Students may not eat or chew gum during class time.

Dress

Students are required to wear clothing and shoes that permit them to participate in a range of activities throughout the day (artistic courses, crafts and physical education). Loose fitting clothing is most appropriate. Students are expected to dress with appropriate restraint.

Use of Electronic Equipment

Students are not permitted to use electronic devices during school hours, and they must restrict the use of cell phones, for calls only, to breaks. This includes text messaging.

Student Attendance

Students are required to attend a minimum of 80% of main lessons or subject lesson blocks to attain credit. Unexcused absences from school will result in a 5% deduction from the overall mark for a given main lesson or subject lesson block.

Full attendance is essential and required of all students. Although we strongly discourage students to make personal appointments during school hours, it may exceptionally happen that a student requests to be dismissed early. In that case, the student must provide a written note from their parent or guardian and hand it in to the High School office. In case of a school early dismissal, the Class Advisor or Office Administrator will confirm the dismissal to the students' parents or guardians.

Parent Obligations

Parents have the authority to excuse their child(ren) from attending school.

Parents who take their child(ren) out of school for purposes of family holidays do so without the consent of the faculty.

Student Obligations

Students must ensure that the high school office is informed of all absences or early departures from school or classes. This communication must happen before the student leaves the school premises.

Students who are absent for any reason are responsible for catching up on all missed work. Assistance may be received from teachers and classmates. Main lesson books are due on the final day of the main lesson.

Lateness

Students are required to arrive punctually for all class and events. Lateness will result in a 2% deduction per incident from the overall mark for a given main lesson or subject lesson block.

Motor Vehicles

Students who use cars to go to and from school are not permitted to drive students of the Vancouver Waldorf School during school hours or for school events. They may not use the Church parking lots.

Appropriate Language

Use of offensive words, in intent or effect is unacceptable — especially words of a derogatory, abusive or racist nature, and words that are sexually explicit, bear sexual innuendos, or bear sexual harassment.

Threatening or Undermining Behaviour

If a student threatens the physical well-being of a teacher or subjects a teacher to verbal abuse, that action constitutes grounds for immediate suspension and will be dealt with as per the discipline policy.

Vandalism and Willful Destruction of Property

Vandalism and willful destruction of property are grounds for immediate suspension and will be dealt with as per the discipline policy.

Smoking

Students are not permitted to smoke on or near the Church property, on Edgemont Boulevard, or anywhere near the Grade School. This includes all school related events. Any violation constitutes grounds for immediate suspension and will be dealt with as per the discipline policy.

Alcohol and drugs

Students are not permitted to possess, deal in or consume alcohol or drugs.