



The Denver Waldorf School Program Handbook

Grades 1 - 5

2014 - 2015

Founded on Rudolf Steiner's humanitarian curriculum,
The Denver Waldorf School awakens and inspires students' critical thinking,
emotional intelligence and artistic expression,
preparing them to bring relevant contributions to the world.

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Grades 1 – 5 Curriculum

In the grades each academic subject, including math and science, is introduced in an artistic manner through poetry, drama, story, drawing, and music. An artistic portal is created in which students of many learning styles and abilities can enter into and engage themselves actively in a subject area. The Class Teacher often teaches a class of students from Grades 1 – 8 and grows with the students as an atmosphere of familiarity and trust is built. The Class Teacher is responsible for teaching the morning curriculum. The morning lesson is taught from 8:30 – 10:30. Lessons are taught in blocks typically lasting three to four weeks and including the core academic subjects in the curriculum. Subject Teachers teach the majority of the curriculum taught after main lesson including Foreign Language, Games and Physical Education, Handwork, Eurythmy, and Instrumental and Choral Music.

Grade 1

There is a conscious difference between the Kindergarten and the Grades. The children leave behind a day dominated by free play, story, and circle games to a day that introduces a more structured curriculum. The Class Teachers move towards guiding students in their work. First graders spend a lot of time developing social skills, whether in the circle activities of main lesson or the circle games of the games class. The Class Teacher works with body orientation (right/left, up/down, forward/backwards, and diagonals), developing spatial coordination and fine-motor skills. In addition to the movement of circle time, the teacher guides a spatial awareness in the students when knitting, flute playing, form drawing, and writing. Through playful exercises (bean bag games, zoo exercises) the students integrate midline boundaries. Rhythm imbues all activities. First graders learn to be guided in drawing and in painting, learning from the teacher as a model. They are also guided in learning to do independent work for the first time, moving away from the group activities of Kindergarten. As the straight line develops into the curved line, then into a letter of the alphabet, the student's artistic language, through the rendering of the Class Teacher, is also developed as students grapple with learning the alphabet, written and orally, and the new sounds and phonics of language and numbers.

The students are told stories that present archetypes found in fairy tales, creating a sense that although there are dangers and challenges, the world is a safe and good place to be. The teacher fosters a sense of wonder and devotion for the natural world by the stories that are told, using natural materials in the classroom, and leading nature walks. The experience of painting, singing, drawing, flute playing, and beeswax modeling awakens an aesthetic sensitivity to color, form, and musical tone. The teacher wants the child to experience and feel that life is beautiful.

In addition to work with the Class Teacher, students also participate in Eurythmy, Games, Handwork, Spanish, and Russian.

Grade 2

The second grader begins to experience the polarities in life, and the story curriculum addresses this inner experience, presenting these polarities as characterized in fables and stories of saints. Second graders can be extremely noble, altruistic, and honest, as well as callous and hurtful toward each other. Through these stories, the students are taught to strive for balance. Similar to Grade 1, a basic lesson includes a review of the previous day's academic lesson, the presentation of new material, an artistic rendering of the material, and then creating a written composition and an artistic drawing in their main lesson books.

The students continue to have subject classes in Eurythmy, Games, Handwork, Spanish, and Russian. In addition they meet twice weekly to explore *King of Ireland's Son*, an imaginative story that matches the developing consciousness of the second grader.

Grade 3

Third graders experience what Waldorf educators refer to as the “nine-year-old-change”. Many experience for the first time that they belong to something greater than their birth family. The story curriculum introduces students at this time to the family of human civilization. They often experience alienation, loss, and a sense of being cast adrift. This significant transition in their consciousness is

supported through hearing stories of the expulsion from Paradise as well as the wanderings of the Hebrew people after their flight from slavery in Egypt. It is important to conclude the school year with the people of Israel finding a new homeland, establishing farms and an independent cultural life. These stories can be very healing for the troubling and sometimes turbulent feelings many children experience.

The Grade 3 curriculum awakens the students to their surroundings and environment by presenting them with a rich array of farm activities and practical arts. The children sow, harvest, can, cook, bake, and dry the bounty of garden and field. The students learn many of the basic skills of farming, working with textiles, cooking, and house building through story, writing, drawing, and a wide range of activities which include tending a garden and carrying out an age-appropriate building project.

Students continue to have subject classes in Eurythmy, Games, Handwork, Russian, and Spanish. Now, instead of lyre, they learn to play violin, viola, or cello in a strings class.

Grade 4

The theme of rebirth out of disintegration and destruction, characterized in Norse Mythology, is emphasized in Grade 4. This destruction, however, leads to a new order in the divine worlds. In the aftermath of the nine-year-old-change, the children begin to experience new capacities, both inwardly in their thinking, and in their academic work. At the same time, students address the questions: “What makes us, as human beings, unique? What is our place in the greater scheme of creation?” The students grapple with these questions through a comparison between the human being and the animal kingdom. Students learn that while humans are more evolved beings, more spiritual beings, they lose the individual characteristics, traits, talents that the animals maintain. A dog has a keen sense of smell; a predatory bird can see a tiny mammal from high above. Humans take these gifts from the animal kingdom and find their own unique relationship to nature.

In Grade 4, also learn about Colorado History through an exploration of geography. The students learn the history of the land and how people over the course of history have shaped and been shaped by the land, from the Ancestral Pueblo People to cattle ranchers, farmers, and miners. They learn about the early Native American dwellers, as well as the white settlers, prospectors, pioneers, and cowboys that followed and then disappeared in the course of time, to give way to a new society and culture that is our modern society. As with the Norse Mythology, these stories show students that something dear can be lost, but we can also recover and create something new.

Students continue to have subject classes in Eurythmy, Physical Education, Handwork, Spanish, Russian, and Strings. In addition, students now begin to meet with our Music Teacher.

Grade 5

The fifth grader enters into the “golden age of childhood” characterized by a balanced physical body. As students train for the Greek Pentathlon, in which Grade 5 students from regional Waldorf schools compete in javelin, discus, wrestling, long jump, and foot races, they learn to experience coming in and out of balance, developing a greater spatial awareness, and discovering their individual strengths and challenges in finding that balance. Students study ancient civilizations that mirror the awakening consciousness of the fifth grader. This is also a time when students gain training in planning their work out spatially (map-making, geometric drawing) as well as intellectually (essay writing).

In the music curriculum, this is the year that students are invited to switch to wind instruments. Students continue to have subject classes in Eurythmy, Physical Education, Handwork, Music, Spanish, and Strings. In addition, students now begin to have classes in Woodwork.

English and Language Arts

First graders are introduced to the upper case alphabet, simple phonics, and the writing of sentences. This is all done through a “language experience” approach to reading. The students are given an imaginative experience of a story that is told by the teacher; they retell the story verbally; and then an abstract concept or symbol is derived from an artistic rendition of the story. This is how all of the

letters and subsequently written stories are introduced. The story material includes, but is not limited to, fairy tales and simple folktales related to nature. Through poetry and alliterative verses, the children partake in the spoken word on a daily basis. Stories from classic literature are read to the children (which continues throughout all grades). Toward the end of the year the class performs a play derived from a fairy tale or a nature story, which includes mostly choral speaking.

Second graders are introduced to the lower case alphabet, more complex phonics, formal reading, and the writing of stories that have been told by the teacher. Together with the teacher, the class composes abbreviated stories from folktales, saint stories, and fables. Students are introduced to a variety of skills such as learning to write from dictation, spelling, correct penmanship, simple grammar, punctuation, and correct use of English. All stories are interwoven with artistic renditions from the story such as drawing, painting, beeswax/clay modeling, and poetry. About mid-year, the students begin reading books that are carefully chosen for aesthetics and content. Reading groups are formed, and the students develop at a variety of paces. Writing from the story experience continues through the year. The class performs a play, derived from saint stories, folktales, or fables with choral speaking and some individual parts.

The Grade 3 curriculum's story content is drawn from the Old Testament and the legends of the Hebrews. The students continue to listen to and retell stories and now begin to engage in class discussions on their response to the story material. Poems and verses recount the seasonal changes, the work of farmers and tradesmen, and may include psalms from the Bible. The class play, often dramatizing a Bible story, has some choral speaking, yet most parts are now individual. Cursive handwriting is introduced. Children write short paragraphs and begin to create their own sentences and short descriptive passages. Spelling is improved through work on word families, phonics games, and dictation of simple sentences.

Fourth graders are immersed in Norse mythology, local, regional geography, and history. The students recite longer verses taken from the Nordic traditions, Native Americans, early Colorado history, as well as poems bringing to life the animal world. The play that students will perform is usually inspired by these themes, and most students now have an increased focus on grammar and punctuation, especially learning parts of speech and tense usage. The students proceed from development of the sentence to narrative writing and letter writing. Outlines and paragraph form are introduced. There is a greater emphasis on spelling skills, and use of the dictionary is introduced, while grammar work intensifies. The first short research report is written on an animal of the student's choice and based on information from one or two books. Assignments in reading and comprehension are extended and students will report back to teacher and peers about the materials read.

From stories and mythologies of ancient civilizations, botany, North American Geography, and math, fifth graders engage in active recall including question and answer and class discussion with emphasis on sequence and detail. Poems and verses come from ancient India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. A longer class play drawn from one of these mythological sources is presented. A third to a half of the written work is now student composed following clear paragraph format. One or two reports on a North American geography and botany further expand the writing and research skills as do letter writing, longer narratives, and poems. The students do assigned readings and are asked to present book reports on reading in written, oral, or artistic forms.

Mathematics

Topics are introduced in an imaginative way and at a developmentally appropriate age. Studying Mathematics plays a central role in developing the students' thinking and also helps the students to develop a feeling of trust in the world through the order, regularity, and clarity found through numbers and mathematical laws. Mental math, which is emphasized in the grades, works on mental quickness, memory, and concentration. Form Drawing, unique to Waldorf education, and Geometry cultivate spatial imagination and visualization abilities. Integrating history into the math lesson awakens an awareness of the interconnectedness of various subjects. Review is important in order to

maintain solid skills and is done every year. We endeavor to graduate students with solid skills, a healthy imagination, and enthusiasm for learning.

In Grade 1, Mathematics is brought through pictures from a child's world. The quality of numbers, as a child experiences it, is explored: one sun, two hands, four seasons, five points on a star. The concrete representation of three fingers in the Roman numeral III becomes the abstract number 3. Rhythmical work with clapping, stomping, and songs enhance the child's multi-sensory experience in counting, number patterns, and multiplication tables. From this foundation, the children are introduced to all four processes (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division), each one brought through enlivened stories, imaginative pictures, and movement. Flexible thinking is of utmost importance. For example, 6 is explored as $5+1$, 2×3 , $8-2$, $1+1+1+1+1+1$, and as two triangles.

Grade 2 builds upon the foundation laid in Grade 1. The major step taken in Grade 2 is place value, which leads to carrying and borrowing (with addition and subtraction). Multiplication and division are further developed through the use of number patterns in geometric forms. By the end of Grade 2, children are capable of solving any of the four processes and have started to become firm in addition and subtraction facts up to twenty.

In Grade 3 the students further solidify the concepts of borrowing and carrying. Multiplication as a vertical process is introduced, leading to multiplying with two- and three-digit numbers, where carrying is a part of the process. Emphasis is then placed on rhythmical counting as a means for learning the times tables. The study in division is then expanded to learning short division which progresses to long division. A key new theme in Grade 3 is measurement: linear, weights, and volume. This leads naturally to the study of our monetary system and then to time. Teachers strive to have their students memorize all the times tables by the end of the third grade year.

In Grade 4 student's knowledge of the times tables continues to solidify. The unity of number is now broken with the introduction of fractions. The work with fractions includes all four processes, thereby reviewing all previously learned skills and giving a sense of relevance to earlier lessons. Students also learn to estimate.

Further work is done in Grade 5 with multiplication (with numbers up to four digits) and with long division (with divisors up to three digits). The introduction to decimals satisfies the students' developmental need for more precision. Grade 5 also marks their first formal introduction to geometry as they draw freehand and identify various angles, polygons, and other geometric forms.

Science

Waldorf science education emphasizes a phenomenological approach in which scientific concepts are based on sense experiences. Throughout the grades, students use sensory experiences as the entry point into an exploration of the science topics. As students progress through the grades, their scientific work culminates in the development of a scientific approach that includes keen observation, detailed mental picturing of the phenomena, and a meeting of the phenomena with clear, logical thinking. Their scientific knowledge is based on experience and logic.

The science curriculum reaches the students from two directions. One is by addressing content that falls into three main categories: science in the human body, science in industry and technology, and science in nature. The other is in the development of critical thinking skills. These skills include both direct analytical skills such as observation and quantification, and concept building, such as seeing relationships among observations. Types of critical thinking styles addressed are divergent, convergent, predictive, sequential, associative, and affective thinking.

The science curriculum in the first five grades helps the students become acquainted with and aware of their environment as well as their relation to it. The students gain awareness through hands-on activities and experiences. This wealth of sensory experience helps to develop capacities for scientific observation and forming theories. These lessons are primarily auditory in nature, and an emphasis is placed on kinesthetic experiences.

In Grades 1 and 2 students participate in farm/field trips where they experience the complexities and richness of plant and animal relationships. Stories heard in these early years emphasize transformation, a necessary concept for later studies in chemistry, physics, and biology. Through farming and gardening Grade 3 students experience how the farmer and gardener work with the forces of nature. In textiles and house building, a similar preliminary sense for geometry and the lawfulness of structural integrity is instilled.

4th Graders study the bridges between animals and humans. This begins with a study of the human body. Later, zoology is studied, and the two are integrated. Students study the geography of their home surroundings and local city and state geography. Students also explore body geography and often make a map of themselves. The geography lessons are integrated into the zoology lessons about animal habitats and dwellings. The 5th Graders study botany, and the lessons journey between the pole and the equator, exploring the climate zones from sea level to beyond the mountain tree line and through the plants, from fungi to ferns to conifers. The study of geography expands on the Grade 4 geography curriculum to include all of North America.

Library and Media

We have a full-time Reading Specialist who also oversees the operation of our Library for Grades 3 through 5; students can check books in and out. Here students develop a love of story and reading through their access to the library. Each classroom, Kindergarten through Grade 12, has grade-appropriate resource materials accessible to the students.

From the academic side, a reading inventory is done with each student yearly in Grades 3, 5, and 7. The Grade 3 observation looks to see if a solid foundation of basic skills and phonemic awareness for reading development is in place. Weaknesses can then be addressed in reading tutorial sessions with the Reading Specialist. Inventories in Grades 5 and 7 evaluate progress from the Grade 3 baseline and give a picture of reading achievement compared to normal grade level.

Assessment and Evaluation

The school's greatest asset in evaluating students' progress is that every classroom teacher comes to know the students intimately. Careful observation, faculty meetings with child studies and class discussions, daily reflection on each student, and ongoing communication with parents, including parent-teacher conferences twice a year, make it possible for teachers to evaluate students not only academically, but also emotionally, behaviorally, artistically, and socially. Letter grades are not given in Grades 1 through 5. Instead, teachers write End-of-Year Reports. Students begin receiving a few grades and mid-year or end-of-block reports in Grade 6 and continue to receive an End-of-Year Report through Grade 8.

Developmental Observations

Several observations are administered each year under the auspices of the Care Group. All preschool aged Kindergarten children are screened with a developmental, sensory motor assessment. This is not used as a diagnostic tool but rather creating a developmental baseline from which future growth and development can be observed. The Kindergarten 5/6 year olds “play first grade games” to demonstrate developmental readiness to enter the grades in the next regular screening. This looks to physical, sensory, and cognitive indicators of readiness. Additionally, signs are looked for which may suggest need for future sensory motor support to assist development. Developmental progress is observed during second grade with the Second Grade Developmental Observation. Compared with the First Grade Readiness screening, one can see if even progress is noted with each child and if the child has achieved expectable maturation in the foundational sensory systems and movement body. If inconsistent maturation is noted or if there are signs of significant sensory immaturity, a child can then be referred to developmental support lessons—Care Lessons and/or reading tutorial.

World Languages – Spanish and Russian

For Grades 1 - 4 the program focuses primarily on vocabulary acquisition gained through song, game, and movement activities. Culture is introduced through storytelling, singing, dancing, and cooking. In Kindergarten the teacher starts with introductions, then transitions into movement songs introducing body parts. Other activities include group games, singing a counting song, and listening to stories in their native tongue. In Grade 1 an expressive conversation is developed in class. Vocabulary now includes colors, clothing, counting, body parts, and animals. In Grade 2 students engage in short conversations asking names, feelings, favorite colors, and ages. New sounds of the alphabet are introduced.

Grade 3 focuses on vowels, teaching students that no matter what combination of consonants and vowels, the vowel sound will always stay the same. Vocabulary now includes family trees and parents' occupations. Students begin writing words. By Grade 3 students have created an alphabet book with words written under the alphabet letters. By Grade 4 students create a dictionary, putting words together in sentences, learning sentence structure and punctuation. Poems and songs introduced in earlier years are now written and illustrated. Students are introduced to the grammatical concept of gender and number agreement. Students begin writing their own stories, using familiar words, enforcing the grammar. They also begin reading short and simple stories. Vocabulary pertaining to the calendar and time is introduced. Students recite the months, days of the week, and seasons.

In Grade 5 students focus on Spanish as their primary world language and now use worksheets, transferring important information to the lesson books. Reading involves looking for cognates as they read in Spanish. Folklore from Mesoamerica is introduced. The music and dance of Mexico is compared to that of Europe. Through studying the cultural influences, the beginning of political insight emerges. Dance movements are compared to the movements of the Celtic culture of Europe. Syncopation moves from hands to feet while fancy and rhythmic footwork from Mexico is introduced.

Performing Arts

Music

Music is an integral part of the Waldorf curriculum. Studying music gives students an inspiring aesthetic experience while also developing focus and discipline. Performing music requires the synthesis of aural, kinesthetic, and cognitive skills. While singing and playing an instrument in a group, students must listen to, evaluate, and adjust the tones they create in order to match their pitch and balance their individual sounds within the group. Both singing and playing in ensembles strengthens the ability to work within a social group, developing awareness and cooperation. Will forces, perseverance, and patience are exercised in the mastery of music.

In the early grades Class Teachers are largely responsible for music instruction integrating music into many activities with singing and the playing of the pentatonic flutes. Children learn the concepts of pitch and rhythm in circle activities in the classroom. In Grades 1 and 2 students learn to play Waldorf school lyres, stringed instruments that are tuned pentatonically, providing an opportunity to the children to create harmony regardless of which strings are touched simultaneously or at random.

In Grades 3 and 4 students play the diatonic soprano recorder. Songs can now include two-part rounds. Twice a week students learn to play either the violin or cello. Formal music reading instruction also begins in Grade 3 and continues in Grade 4.

In Grade 5, along with continuing their work on the soprano recorder, students now learn to play on the alto recorder. They play and sing in two parts. Woodwind and brass instruments are started at this time.

Eurythmy

Eurythmy is taught in Grades 1 through 8. Eurythmy incorporates movement, spatial awareness, language, poetry, and music into one artistic form of expression. Eurythmy embodies a language of gestures that personify the sounds and moods of poetry and verse. This artistic movement transforms body movement into speech and music. Tone Eurythmy, a variation of Eurythmy, incorporates gestures that show musical tones and intervals, choreographed to interpret a piece of music.

In the early grades, simple Eurythmy gestures exemplify the vowels and consonants creating the elements of a story through movement. Eurythmy transforms the students into the physical embodiment of speech and teaches them social awareness and integration as they coordinate their movements within the group. In Grade 1 Eurythmy lessons follow the curriculum using classroom fairy tales, seasonal verses, and songs as the basis for gestures. Other elements of the class include movement with straight lines, curves, and simple rhythms. Gross motor skills such as hopping, jumping, skipping, and running are developed. Fine motor skills are enhanced through finger plays. All of these skills are learned by imitating the teacher. In Grade 2 the stories about saints and fables replace the fairy tales. More intricate footwork and rhythms round out the class. Grade 3 highlights include the introduction of tone Eurythmy including the C scale. Music in major keys has predominated until this point, but now minor keys become part of their developing musical experience. In Grades 4 and 5 Eurythmy lessons continue to reinforce the main lesson work done in the morning. Discerning between rhythm and beat, learning to hear pitch, and moving to the different voices (or melody lines) in music are all elements of the tone aspect of Eurythmy.

Fine and Practical Arts

In Grades 1 through 5 the Handwork and Practical Arts Curriculum in the Waldorf school stimulates the creative powers. At the same time, the curriculum strives to establish aesthetic confidence through directing the students' developing will forces to harmonious artistic expression. The ability to bring desire and thought into constructive action lays an important foundation for literacy. Training of the hands in the Waldorf curriculum enhances students' cognitive abilities.

The Class Teacher, who is the sole art teacher in the early grades, carries the Visual Arts Curriculum, integrating art into the main lesson curriculum, guiding the children as they illustrate stories, math concepts and so forth. The students in Grades 1 through 5 paint with watercolors, draw with crayons or colored pencils, and model with beeswax or clay. The Grade 3 curriculum heavily integrates the Practical Arts throughout all lessons: gardening, food preservation, carding, spinning, felting and dyeing wool, simple weaving, traditional crafts, cooking, animal care, and house building.

Woodwork

In our Kindergartens and lower grades woodwork activities are available to the children for free play. Saws, wooden blocks, work tables with clamps are all available for students in Grades 3 and 4 to use. In Grade 3 the Class Teacher will guide the students in a building. Individual teachers might also encourage a woodworking project in alignment with the curriculum, such as log cabins in Grade 4 when they are studying Colorado history and homesteaders.

Woodwork as a special subject begins in Grade 5 and continues through Grade 12. Grade 5 students meet twice weekly and begin woodwork with three required projects. They must complete a hickory carver's mallet, a maple serving-spoon, and a bowl or chest of various shapes and woods. The fundamental tools they use are handsaws, chisels, gouges, rasps, files, and sandpaper. With these tools, they learn to shape, smooth, and polish wood. The underlying goal is to teach the students patience, perseverance, and pride in their work.

Handwork

Handwork has been a part of the Waldorf curriculum since the inception of the very first school. It plays an important function in helping to develop the will of the child and in fostering self-esteem and an appreciation for beauty. It also plays a critical part in helping to establish and activate pathways in the brain. These pathways not only help link the left and right side of the brain but also act as a general network in each hemisphere. The hands are the primary instrument that growing children use to inform themselves about the world they live in. Hands are their means of exploring their environment. What the hand feels the brain knows. In Grades 1 through 5 the Handwork Teacher instructs the children in various textile crafts using materials of the highest quality.

In Grade 1 the Handwork Teacher might start the year with a sewing project since the children have done some sewing in Kindergarten. They then learn to knit, which is an activity that helps them

develop their reading skills since knitting uses both hands equally, helping to create the left-right brain connection, and because it moves from left to right and uses a long continuous thread much like reading. Grade 2 students develop their knitting skills further, learning to purl, add and decrease stitches, and add on colors. The Grade 3 curriculum dovetails the main lesson curriculum in that the teacher brings more active work into the class, including carding and spinning, natural dyeing, and crocheting. The Grade 4 curriculum turns to sewing, embroidery, and cross-stitch. Grade 5 students return to knitting, learning to use four needles, and knitting socks and then felted slippers.

Social Studies and History

In the first two to three years of school, students are taught through experience to live as contributing members of the classroom community. This socialization, although incomplete, becomes evident by the beginning of Grade 2. First Graders become familiar with their environment through the simple act of taking walks with the class. In Grades 1 and 2, a universal order and morality are expressed through fairy tales, nature stories, and saints' stories. In Grade 3, the children discover how, through developing the skills of practical living, house building, and making of clothes and farming, human life has been sustained.

With the fourth graders developing sense of individuality, we begin the formal study of geography and history. The typical Grade 4 year will have blocks on the history and geography of Colorado. Our emphasis is on how people have lived on the land from Native American times to the present day. Whenever possible, relevant biographies are used to enliven factual material. The students engage in their first mapmaking experiences by drawing maps of the local surroundings, as well as the state of Colorado. This work is augmented with the reading of books containing stories of Colorado and/or western history and geography.

In Grade 5, mythology gives way to history. There are blocks in the mythology and history of ancient India, Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, and finally ancient Greece, up to the time of Alexander the Great. Especially with ancient Greece, the students are shown how many of our ideals of art, education, and government are inherited from that ancient culture. Grade 5 geography focuses on the United States. Each region of the country is studied, emphasizing the environment, its products, and the people and their livelihoods. Students may memorize states, their locations, and their capitals. We also include our musical and historical heritage through songs and poems.

Parent/Teacher Conferences and Reports

Parent/Teacher Conferences are conducted twice a year. These conferences are the formal arena where teachers and parents partner together in meeting the needs of the students. Teachers also share an update on the child's academic, social, emotional, creative, and physical skills.

In addition to these conferences, parents will receive a formal report at the end of the year that provides a comprehensive review of the year's main lesson and special subject curriculum including goals and expectations for the class as a whole. Teachers also provide a summary of how the individual child meets the goals and expectations for the year.

Policies and Procedures

Dress Code

The teachers at The Denver Waldorf School are committed to the full growth and development potential of each and every student. The dress code is designed to support this endeavor and can be boiled down to two important aspects: **the preservation of childhood** and **the provision of an environment conducive to learning**.

The preservation of childhood. Our culture today sometimes seems to encourage children to be older than they are. For example, heels on the shoes of young girls may be arguably "cute", but they

restrict the work of a child – play. Children are not free to move and run as they would in more comfortable shoes. The child may want to wear this type of shoe, but parents are asked to trust the intent of the teachers in creating the dress code – a child cannot be where they need to be in their growth and development if they are wearing shoes they cannot run and play in comfortably. These shoes can remain home for dress-up play, but they are not for school time. Another example may be a little boy who wants to wear his Led Zeppelin t-shirt. The culture encourages our devotion to specific entities whether they are sports teams, brand names, bands, etc. Children in the Grades do not have the full capacity to be true fans of these entities – they are more likely imitating the adults around them, therefore, we ask that parents refrain from dressing their children in clothing inspired by any particular entity at school.

Provision of an environment conducive to learning. The school as a whole and the classrooms in particular at a Waldorf school are designed to provide a safe, warm, beautiful, and inspiring environment for children to learn in. What children wear into the classroom impacts that environment and can distract from the work of learning. For example, “bling” is meant to attract and therefore distracts from the learning environment. If children begin to pay attention to what each other wears, it can result in a contest to see who can wear the shirt with the most bling. This is not supporting the teacher’s intent in reducing self-consciousness and focusing on what the class is learning for the day. The teachers ask that clothing with “bling” be worn at other times than school and that parents dress their children for school in a way that supports the children to blend in rather than stick out when it comes to what they wear.

A frequently asked question is, “I thought this school supported freedom and self-expression. Where is the freedom and self-expression in this dress code?”

The teachers would answer that the freedom is in the form. At this age children need more form that supports the development of the capacity toward freedom as they get older – hence a different dress code in the high school. In the words of our beloved founder, Ina Jaehnig, as she discussed this issue with her granddaughter, “You would not want to see Grandma in a bikini and short mini skirt. There may have been a time when that was appropriate, but that is not where Grandma is right now.” Where are our children now in their development? In other words, there is an appropriate time and place for them to wear the heels, bling, and to express themselves through logos. During the time children are in the Grades, school is not the place for this kind of self-expression. The Denver Waldorf School asks parents to support the following dress code and to support well informed requests through the year either regarding your specific child’s dress or the dress of the class as a whole. This includes understanding that each teacher is different and the dress code may be “enforced” a bit differently at different times depending if there is a different “dress code issue” in any particular class. This is especially important when siblings are involved -- we request that you simply say, for example, “Yes, Mr. Matuszewicz lets his class wear camouflage, but Mrs. White thinks it might be good for her class to take a break from wearing camouflage for now. I know you feel it’s not fair, but we need to support our class and follow Mrs. White’s instructions.”

Our intent is to provide a school environment that protects childhood and nurtures the imagination. Student appearance should be in keeping with this environment and so we ask you to follow these guidelines to support this endeavor.

- Students need to be dressed in neat and clean clothes with no rips and dressed appropriately for the weather.
- Shirts are to be free of large logos or any lettering. Solid colors, stripes, small patterns and plaids are acceptable. Printed graphics (animals, fantasy characters, museum graphics, rock and roll symbols or media characters etc.) are not allowed on school clothing. Children may wear sleeveless shirts with straps that are at least two inches wide. All shirts must be of a length so that when arms are raised, the midriff is not exposed.
- Skirts and shorts need to be at least fingertip length when held at the child’s sides.
- Please avoid trendy or glitzy clothing (adult clothing made in children’s sizes).

- Children may not wear makeup or nail polish, dye their hair or have tattoos or piercings, except for pierced earrings, which need to be post or studs. Dangling earrings are not acceptable as they can be ripped out during play. No other jewelry is allowed.
- Children in third grade and up may wear watches, after the children have learned to tell “time”. Watches need to be non-digital and without alarms.
- Children need to have shoes that are sturdy and that allow them to run and play safely. They may not wear open-toed or flip-flops. All shoes must be without heels (flats).
- Winter hats and sun hats are encouraged, as are gloves during winter. Hats may not be worn indoors.
- For comfort, warmth and classroom cleanliness please send your child to school with a pair of indoor shoes.
- Please send your child with snow pants on snowy days.

Electronics

Electronic items may not be used at school. (Communication between parents and students during the school day should be made through the office, ext. 100.) Any electronic items found at school outside of students’ backpacks will be taken to the Main Office where they can be retrieved only by the parents.