

# Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School COVID-19 Returning to School Plan 2020-2021

DRAFT: August 19, 2020



During this pandemic, we hold the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff with the highest regard. As a Waldorf School, we also want to honor our Anthroposophical community and roots and stay true to our mission, which includes protecting the child. The choices we have made are a best effort at meeting this task of our time mindfully and carefully. Much work goes into adapting our Waldorf education to the current world we live in, and we are doing it with energy and a focus on meeting the needs of all our children and community members. We rely on information and guidelines from our public health leaders to determine the best practices for a safe learning and working environment. This plan lays out how we will operate during the 2020-21 school year in adherence to the requirements and recommendations from these authorities. As always, we are driven by our Mission Statement and Vision.

### **Our Mission Statement**

At Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School our mission is to provide a full Waldorf education to children in early childhood through grade eight and to be a vital and active part of the Driftless region through the spiritual and cultural opportunities we bring to the greater community.

### **Our Vision is:**

A full Waldorf curriculum, carried by dedicated and compassionate teachers, staff, and parents who tend to the dignity and wellbeing of the children, helping them develop physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.

- A safe and beautiful physical environment, overseen mindfully and carefully by all the adults in the school community.
- A harmonious and diverse school community that is ecologically sustainable, financially responsible, morally diligent, socially renewing, and spiritually striving.
- A strong, vibrant, and self-renewing pedagogy centered in anthroposophy and living within a community of loving human beings who hold deep reverence for each other, for themselves, for nature, and for the spiritual world.

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## A. Overview of PRWS Approach

Each of us understands the endless complexities and challenges involved in the attempt to plan for the unknown. Today's world, however, demands adaptability at an unprecedented level. Our commitment to return to school is tempered by the reality of the changing public health situation at the local, state, and national levels. We will continue to be guided by public health agencies and experts' recommendations to determine safety guidelines and protocols for operating the school. We will remain in communication with local officials and the Vernon County Health Department throughout the school year and expect to modify our plans in response to constantly evolving epidemiological evidence and best practices for mitigating risk of transmission. We are working to ensure that our students will be the least affected by the changes we need to make. This means that the adults will carry the extra work and care as much as possible. This will look different as we move up through the grades and we will empower our students to participate in school safety measures in an age-appropriate way, but at no level will students be asked to take on the primary cleaning and distancing tasks. Instead the adults will carry the responsibility for managing the changes needed to mitigate risks.

During the 2020-21 school year, we will need to be ready for several scenarios. We are preparing plans for the following scenarios:

1. **In-Person Learning with Safety Considerations** – In this scenario, we can be together in-person for full days of class, five days per week. We would continue COVID-19 safety protocols, although be able to utilize indoor spaces.
2. **Blended Learning** – With this scenario, we would plan to meet for in-person learning in the mornings in our outdoor classrooms only (with the exception of severe weather), with take-home assignments and distance learning provided for the afternoons at home.
3. **Distance Learning** – During a distance learning scenario, the children, faculty, and staff will spend their days at home, rather than in-person at school. Faculty have been refining our distance learning plans to provide the richest student experiences in the event that conditions make this mode necessary for periods of time. We plan to only be in this scenario if:
  - The State of Wisconsin requires it because of a state-wide “Safer At Home” order or the Vernon County Health Department recommends it based on one or more positive COVID-19 cases within the school or because of a local outbreak.
  - There is a positive COVID-19 case within the school. We will close for a deep cleaning and airing out of the building for two days, with the possibility of closing up to two weeks if deemed appropriate after consultation with the Vernon County Health Department.
  - We have more teachers absent than can accommodate in-person learning. We will do all we can to avoid this, but because of our small numbers it is possible that we may need to offer distance learning for a short period of time due to teacher illness.

As we prepare our plans for all of these approaches to teaching for the 2020-21 school year, we are also thinking about how to transition as efficiently and seamlessly as possible between different scenarios. The Returning to School Task Force will review public health metrics weekly and provide recommendations bi-weekly to the faculty to decide when to move to a different scenario. When the decision is made to move to a different scenario we will work to provide ample time to notify our families for planning purposes.

The following information will be factored into our recommendations:

- Prevalence of new COVID-19 cases within our community and region (school, town, and county/neighboring counties predominantly) and if those rates are staying stable, increasing, or decreasing
- Local public health measures related to contact tracing and the ability to respond to requests for PPE
- Local testing capacity for COVID-19
- Regional hospital capacities
- Anything else that becomes relevant as we continue to observe our community and our school in these ever-changing times

If you would like to review some of the references we are following to inform our recommendations: [Massachusetts General Hospital COVID-19 School and Community Resource Library](#) [Harvard Global Health Institute](#)

Please note that the procedures outlined in this document will take precedence over procedures outlined in the PRWS Directory and Handbook. Finally, as you read through these plans please remember that it is a working document. As we receive community input, more guidance from state and local health officials, observe what is happening around us, and experience the first few weeks of reopening, our understanding and planning may change.

The work to develop these plans is carried out by PRWS Faculty and Staff and supported by the PRWS Returning to School Task Force. Members of the PRWS Returning to School Task Force are:

Joe Lenarz	Board President, Facilities Committee, and Parent
Stephanie Brown	Board Member, Growing for Good Committee, and Parent
Aaron Schmidt	Board Vice President, Faculty Chair, and Upper Grades Teacher
Carrie Treviranus	Finance Committee and Lower Grades Teacher
Marinella Pro	Early Childhood Teacher
Stephanie Pedretti	Subject Teacher
Melissa Madura	Subject Teacher
Mark Brudos	Board Member, Finance Committee, IT, and Parent
Dr. Martha Karlstad	Health Care Representative and Parent
Robin Kottke	Development Director
Jordan Brudos	Enrollment & Outreach Coordinator

Any questions regarding this document, or anything related to COVID-19 planning, can be emailed to [covid19@pleasantridgewaldorf.org](mailto:covid19@pleasantridgewaldorf.org) and a member of the PRWS Returning to School Task Force will be in touch with you.

## **B. Making this work as a Community**

Please know that our overarching goal is to provide a safe environment for our community. The successful return to in-person learning and return to campus relies heavily on our communal cooperation in strictly observing the policies and procedures outlined in this document.

Over the past few months, we have done a great deal of work together to prepare for the coming 2020-21 school year, and we will be as prepared for this next year as any community can be. However, there are things that we can all do that will help us stay healthy and connected to our future. These include:

- Having patience with ourselves and each other as we learn a whole new way of being at school. As we have all experienced as we moved from the “Safer at Home” order to a slightly more normal life, it is not normal at all - and at times feels as if we are in a different space or time. The more patient and caring we can all be for ourselves and each other through the stress and anxiety of returning to school, the more we can grow as a community and ensure a nurturing experience for the students.
- Following the Vernon County Health Department guidance around health and when to stay home. This means faculty and staff members who might have worked through illnesses in the past need to take the time off this year, and parents need to keep children home when they are unwell. We acknowledge how hard this will truly be at times.
- Refraining from judgment and curiosity if someone does test positive for COVID-19. We need to be supportive of anyone in the community that has tested positive.
- Considering how our personal behavior may open up risk for community members with whom we are in contact. The choices we make in our personal life will have more of an impact on those around us than usual, so please make every effort to limit exposure to COVID-19 to protect the school community.
- Sharing when things are not working well for us – faculty, staff, parents – we can work collectively to solve problems, whether school-related or more general. We all need to be able to ask for support when we need it, address concerns, and support each other.

Together we will meet and move through this coming year in the best way possible – supporting and nurturing ourselves, our children, and one another.

## C. School-Wide Health & Safety Plans

The policies and procedures related to COVID-19 are intended to mitigate, not eliminate, risk. We know that no single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, but by implementing these policies, we aim to greatly reduce that risk and keep our community safe.

These policies are intended to be temporary, either due to the timeframe of State/local guidance or orders, the science that informs these policies advances, or because once the pandemic runs its course, these policies will no longer be needed. At this time, we are unable to predict how long these policies will be in effect. As with other school policies, we may amend or remove these policies as circumstances change.

PRWS will follow the State of Wisconsin and Vernon County guidelines for reopening schools and will meet these expectations in the way best suited for teaching our students on our grounds. We are committed to teaching an in-person, five days per week schedule unless guidelines from the State or County contraindicate this.

### Monitoring of COVID-19 Symptoms

Students, faculty, and staff will be asked to screen daily for the following:

- Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19: fever (100.4 or greater), chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea?
- Have you been exposed to anyone that has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 14 days?
- Does anyone in your household have symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19?

Parents will need to screen their child/ren, including a temperature check, before each school day. Faculty and staff will also complete a self-screening before the beginning of each school day. If any of the above questions are answered “yes”, please stay home, notify the school, and contact your healthcare provider for further guidance.

### Symptoms Observed During a School Day

Students will be monitored throughout the school day for any signs of possible illness. If a student displays any possible COVID-19 symptoms, an administrative team member will bring the student out of their class and wait with them until a family member or caregiver picks them up. We ask that families have a plan in place to allow their child to be picked up **within 30 minutes** of being notified.

### Testing and Returning to School After Illness

If COVID-19 testing is *recommended*:

- **Positive Test Result:** Vernon County Health Department will contact you with instructions. Please alert the school of the positive result and keep all family members home until received further guidance from the health department or your healthcare provider.
- **Negative Test Result:** stay home until 72 hours symptom-free, the last 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. Please alert the school of the negative test result. Any family members who were never symptomatic may return to school right away.

- **Note** - please consult with your healthcare provider regarding keeping other family members home while awaiting test results.

If you do not wish to consult a healthcare provider, you decline recommended COVID-19 testing, or testing is not currently available please stay home for 10 days and 24 hours symptom free without the use of fever-reducing medications.

This is also documented in a Returning After Illness Flowchart - [see here](#).

If you have been notified that you have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you will be given instructions by the Vernon County Health Department. At the time of this writing, they ask identified close contacts to stay home for 14 days. We will rely on collaboration between our families and the Vernon County Health Department to determine the best plan in these cases.

### **Exceptions for Chronic Conditions**

Healthy students, faculty, and staff with chronic conditions such as well-controlled asthma or allergy symptoms (no fever) that cause coughing and clear runny nose may remain in school if they have a healthcare provider's note or a medical diagnosis and treatment plan on file with the school.

### **Disclosure**

As part of our health and safety policy for this year, we ask that families promptly report all COVID-19 related symptoms, as well as COVID-19 test results (positive or negative) to the school. This would include reporting any close contacts with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

In the case of a positive COVID-19 test within the school, we will notify the school community of the *positive test result only*, holding respect for individual privacy. Cooperating in contact tracing efforts will be an essential part of our school's ability to navigate this successfully. The school will work with the Vernon County Health Department to provide timely and accurate information regarding class lists and schedules to aid them in their contact tracing efforts. The Vernon County Health Department will specifically notify students in the same class and any faculty or staff with whom a COVID-19 positive individual had close contact (closer than six feet for greater than 15 minutes). For more information on the process of contact tracing, please refer to the [Wisconsin DHS](#) and [CDC](#) guidelines, which are available and routinely updated on their respective websites.

### **In Case of COVID-19 Infection in the School Community**

If a student, faculty, or staff contracts COVID-19 during the school year, we will immediately contact the Vernon County Health Department and **close the school for two days** for deep cleaning and airing out of all spaces. We will communicate as soon as we are able within those two days what additional interventions we are taking, which could include closing the entire school for 14 days. Teachers will communicate distance learning plans during this time directly to class parents. All extended closure decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the Vernon County Health Department.

## Key Protective Measures

There are three primary protective measures that we can take to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in public settings:

1. Wearing protective face coverings
2. Keeping physical distance (at least six feet)
3. Being outside

Faculty and staff will ensure that **two out of three** of these protective measures are being practiced at all times while at school. In the limited cases that parent volunteers or guest speakers are allowed on campus, they must bring a face covering and be prepared to follow two out of three protective measures, or all three key protective measures if requested.

## Protective Face Coverings

All students are required to bring a face covering with them to school each day. We ask that each child arrives wearing a face covering, and their teachers will guide them on when they may remove them. Please send your child with an extra face-covering in a plastic bag each day. We ask that face coverings follow the PRWS dress policy. Cloth face coverings should be washed daily.

We will ensure that students get regular breaks from wearing face coverings. Our plan to capitalize on outside instruction as much as possible will allow for these breaks and ensure the general safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff.

## Keeping Physical Distance

Students in kindergarten will not be expected to stay six feet away from each other or from their teachers. To support this, the classes will be maintained in “pods” of ten or fewer students. The very nature of young children leads them to come into close contact with one another, and teachers will be able to touch and even hug their students. However, we will be working to shape the classroom activities to reduce unnecessary contact between students and maximize time spent outside.

In the grades, desks will be positioned six feet apart (facing the same direction), and the curriculum will be adjusted to avoid unnecessary physical contact between students. Within the small “pod,” the children will be able to socialize together freely, provided that two of the three key protective measures are maintained. At times, certain activities within pods will require closer spacing for a limited amount of time, whether indoors or outdoors. Examples are the teacher helping with or checking a student’s work or the movement involved in an eurythmy class.

## Being Outside

Waldorf education has long promoted our connectedness to nature and emphasized the importance of being outside and we will continue to be guided by this commitment. As mentioned in our prior communication, each class will have a designated outdoor classroom on campus. **Every student must come to school dressed appropriately for being outside.** In the case of severe weather, classes will be held indoors while observing two of the three key protective measures.

**Drop-off and Pick-up**

Students will enter and exit the school at their designated locations, which will be communicated by their class teacher. Parents may not enter the school (unless approved in advance) and asked not to remain on campus after drop-off or pick-up. We recognize that socializing with other parents is an important part of the fabric of a Waldorf community, but we ask that these meetings occur off campus to minimize student contact with people outside their family, teacher, or class pod. If parents need to drop off paperwork or payments, we have installed a new drop box at the top of the main entrance steps.

**Class Pods**

Our small classes will be moving throughout the day as a unit, such as entering and exiting the building and using the bathrooms and indoor/outdoor classrooms together. Interaction with other classes will be limited for now.

Current guidelines regarding maximum class sizes depend on the ability to provide a distance of six feet between students. Our large (grades 1-8) classrooms can accommodate 15-18 students while meeting this recommendation. Kindergarten classes will remain smaller, at a maximum of 10 students per room due to the children's age and the difficulty for them to maintain their distance.

Because of our diligence to avoid intermingling of classes, we will pause our Aftercare Program for the 2020-2021 school year. This also allows the school to be fully closed in the afternoons and evenings to air out the building and deep clean. If your family relies heavily upon this program, please contact the school office and we would be happy to assist you in finding a creative solution for your childcare needs after school.

**Hand Hygiene**

Students, faculty, and staff will be asked to wash their hands upon arrival at school and every two to three hours throughout the day. When it is not possible or convenient to wash hands with soap and water, hand sanitizer may be used.

If you prefer that your child use a specific brand of hand sanitizer, you may send it to school labeled with your child's name. Please ensure that the hand sanitizer is at least 60% alcohol, as recommended by the CDC.

We will ensure that each classroom is fully stocked with tissues, paper towels, soap, and hand sanitizer. Teachers will model and teach students proper hand hygiene, how to wipe their nose, and cough/sneeze inside their elbow.

**Other Additional Measures**

All classes will be encouraged to conduct as many activities outside as possible, even in weather that may be less optimal due to temperature or mild precipitation.

Classes will continue to eat snacks and lunch together in their classrooms (inside or outside). The PRWS Hot Lunch Program has been paused for the first half of the 2020-21 school year and will be re-evaluated as to whether to resume later in the year. All grades students should bring a filled water bottle from home each day, along with their snack and lunch.

Faculty will limit the use of shared items and require hand washing before and after touching the same object (including classroom supplies and equipment). Students may not share personal items such as pencils or instruments. Teachers will limit or avoid the use of items that are not easily cleaned.

Items such as recycling, garbage, and tissue boxes will be placed in the classroom in a way that does not inhibit physical distancing.

Foot-operated sinks are being installed in bathrooms.

In most cases, teachers will change classrooms rather than the students.

Group activities such as singing and playing flutes/recorders, and even speech work to a certain extent, are in a unique category as they have the potential to generate increased respiratory droplets and aerosols. For the time being, all singing and theatrical speech work will take place outside, with face coverings and maintaining six-foot distancing. These activities will be engaged in for up to 30 minutes at a time, then allowing a five-minute break for dispersion of aerosols. We will be following recommendations based on ongoing scientific studies on these activities and making decisions about the best ways to engage in wind instrument playing as more information becomes available. The music teachers have been attending many webinars and calls regarding the latest research and best practices and are ready to be flexible and creative in bringing music to the students.

### **Cleaning & Disinfecting**

The current CDC recommendation is to use soap and water as a cleaner, and then a second step of disinfecting. We can continue to use our favorite soap-based cleaners for regular dusting and cleaning. We are looking into a simple, less toxic EPA-approved disinfectant, [such as this one](#). All faculty and staff will be trained in proper cleaning protocols.

The school buildings, outdoor classrooms, and porta-toilets will be cleaned and disinfected nightly using CDC recommended protocols, focusing on deep cleans of the bathrooms and other high-traffic areas.

Common areas and high-touch surfaces within the classrooms (sinks, doorknobs, countertops, shared items, etc.) and school (bathrooms, phones, computers, etc.) will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently and at least twice daily. Any shared spaces would be cleaned between classes.

A thorough assessment will be done prior to the start of school of available toys and learning tools to determine ease of cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day. In each classroom, there will be a designated area for toys or handled objects that need to be disinfected after use.

In cases of a positive COVID-19 individual within our school community, it will be necessary for the school to close for at least two days to deep clean, air out, and disinfect spaces.

### **Building Safety**

The air handling systems in our buildings were recently inspected, and our classrooms have ample ventilation. Science has shown that the more outdoor ventilation, the better, so teachers will frequently use open windows to increase airflow when classes are indoors. The univents in the classrooms and fans in the hallways and kitchen will also be running.

### **Social-Emotional Support**

Waldorf education has deep healing potential, and we are committed to this work more than ever. Our goal is to ensure that the school environment is as warm and welcoming as always for students, faculty, and staff.

Students will be monitored for social and emotional concerns by their parents and teachers, and any issues that arise will be directed to the student's teacher.

Faculty and staff will also practice self-awareness around stress and emotional needs and check-in regularly with one another. All faculty and staff will be encouraged to contact a member of the Returning to School Task Force should they need support. Time will be allocated at weekly section meetings for sharing and exploration of any wellness concerns.

In instances where parents need support or guidance, they too should contact the Returning to School Task Force, their class teacher, or the Parent Association.

### **Field Trips**

Outdoor field trips will be considered on an individual basis, provided that the proper care is taken to adhere to the restrictions defined in this document, including during transportation. The Returning to School Task Force will be working in collaboration with the faculty, and following guidance from the Vernon County Health Department, to make decisions around field trips.

### **Festivals & Events**

Plans for celebrating each festival and event will be considered on a case-by-case basis, based on the guidance from the health department. Decisions on whether to move forward with the event or cancel it will be made at least 30 days prior to the scheduled festival or event date. We remain committed to finding creative ways to ensure much-anticipated festivals and seasonal traditions receive their proper due.

### **School Visitors and Guests**

In general, programs that include parent volunteers, guest speakers, or campus visitors will be paused for the first half of the 2020-2021 school year and re-evaluated in January 2021. In some cases, such as when these individuals are essential to the delivery of the core educational experience, exceptions will be made. Such exceptions require advance consultation with the Returning to School Task Force.

Faculty sponsoring visitors will be required to keep accurate records of such persons, their reason for being on campus, and names of all people with whom they came within six feet during their visit. This information should be given to the front office to log appropriately.

## **D. Kindergarten Curriculum & Instructional Plan**

The Early Childhood Program is committed to maintaining the integrity of the curriculum, to uphold how we work with child development, and to follow the health and safety guidelines we have implemented. We also acknowledge the importance of connection between teachers and their students, students and their peers, and teachers and parents, whether we are in-person or in a period of distance learning. Below are some ways in which we plan to uphold our commitment to the development of the young child and our commitment to maintaining connection both during in-person learning, within the bounds of our health and safety guidelines, as well as within periods of distance learning.

### **In-person Learning with Safety Considerations**

This scenario is most like our normal school day, with additional COVID-19 safety considerations in place. The school day for kindergarten would be from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with the option of an early pick-up time at 12:45 p.m. Classes would be utilizing both indoor and outdoor spaces in this scenario.

Drop-off and pick-up procedures for kindergarten students:

- Adults are asked not to enter the school building or outdoor play areas during drop-off or pick-up times. Important school communications and notes will be sent electronically or placed in your child's bag.
- Drop off your child at the garden gate between 8:00 – 8:15 a.m. Families will drop off their child one at the time in front of the morning garden. Families will park on the north side of Jefferson street, heading west, and wait in the car for the family in front to leave before driving up in front of the fence of the Morning Garden to drop off their child. Walking families will follow signs on the sidewalk. Backpacks and lunch boxes will be left in a designated area by the Morning Garden. We ask that families do not enter the building.
- Pick-up time is at 3:00 p.m. in the outside play area. The teachers will call the children one at a time to the gate for dismissal. Families will follow the same instruction as for drop-off.

Young children will not be expected to follow physical distancing guidelines and will interact per usual with their peers during play. Therefore, the adults will provide an environment where this can happen as safely as possible. What you can expect within the kindergarten setting:

- As much time as possible will be spent outside in the designated kindergarten play areas; a campfire will be started on cooler days, and a covered shelter will be constructed to provide cover on rainy days.
- Group sizes will be limited to a maximum of 10 children in each room.
- Each class will stay in their own room with their own teachers, thereby creating a "family unit" to limit exposure.
- Each child's belongings will stay in their designated cubby and bag. Please select bags that can be easily cleaned.
- Lunch will be brought from home each day in a provided wooden bento box.
- Additional space between children and adults provided during meal and rest times. As usual, utensils and food will not be shared among the children.
- Children will continue to assist in the preparation of snacks, as per our daily rhythm. All foods are well washed or cooked at high temperatures for safety.
- Teachers will serve food and water to the children after washing their hands. Children will not pass plates or pitchers during meals to limit exposure.

- Utensils and food prep items will be sanitized daily with boiling water.
- Linens are assigned to each child and will be changed daily and laundered weekly. Teachers will distribute and collect all linens.

Children learn by imitation. Therefore, the teachers will continue to model healthy hygiene practices. Here are some healthy hygiene and cleaning practices that will be put into place in the kindergarten:

- Intensified cleaning of high traffic areas will happen throughout the day.
- The teachers will be modeling and observing regular handwashing, with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- The teachers will model and encourage children to cover all coughs and sneezes with the corner of the elbow. Soiled tissues will be discarded immediately.
- When any of the children need hugs during the day, the teacher will change into a clean apron and wash hands afterward.
- Toys and rooms will be cleaned thoroughly at the end of each day.
- Sleeping bags will be stored in such a way as to not come into contact with those of other children.

### **Blended Learning**

When cases are such that we cannot meet in person for full days, we will transition to a shortened day, outdoor only scenario. During this scenario, the in-person school day would be from 8:00 a.m. until 11:45 am.

### **Distance Learning**

We understand and acknowledge that distance learning is far from an ideal way to deliver the curriculum to our kindergarten classes. However, the teachers will strive to create and foster a strong, consistent connection and support with all families during these periods. A weekly rhythm that families can implement at home will be created, with daily communication between teachers and parents for support and advice.

The **Kindergarten** teachers will commit to:

- Daily office hours
- Weekly email newsletters to parents
- Weekly educational packets that include: activities, songs, stories, crafts materials, etc.
- Twice a week puppet plays and movement games at student's home (outside)
- Biweekly virtual meetings with parents
- Monthly virtual meetings on specific Early Childhood topics
- Parent-teacher conferences will be held virtually or over the telephone
- Teachers will check emails every weekday and respond within 24 hours

### **Expectations of Students**

Each lesson plan is optional, understanding that every family's needs are different. Children should participate in the daily life of the family, supported by the rhythm and activities provided by the class teacher.

### **Expectations of Parents**

Parents should care for their family in whatever ways feels best, and remember that you're doing great! Parents will review the weekly overview and lessons plans and carefully choose which resources to share with their child directly.

## **E. Grades 1-8 Curriculum & Instructional Plan**

We acknowledge that educating children in a pandemic offers particular challenges to our Waldorf pedagogy, which is based in helping children experience learning through their bodies and senses, and on fostering warm, authentic, in-person relationships. We remain committed to these principles and have been working to find new ways to continue to develop the capacities for thinking, feeling and willing. Our goals during this time are:

1. To help children experience wholeness in themselves and in their learning
2. To maintain and strengthen relationships to teachers, classmates, family members, other community members, and to nature, with the understanding that these relationships are the foundation of learning in childhood
3. To foster the continued development of foundational academic skills
4. To support families in a potentially stressful and challenging time

### **In-person Learning with Safety Considerations**

This scenario is most like our normal school day, with additional COVID-19 safety considerations in place. The school day would be from 8:10 a.m. until 2:45 p.m. Classes would be utilizing both indoor and outdoor spaces in this scenario.

Subjects will be taught in intensive, three-week blocks, to maximize the time with each teacher and minimize multiple-class exposure. In this scenario, a class would see the same subject teachers every day, with a maximum of three subject teachers for each block. The schedule will be designed in a rotation, ensuring that each class has a good balance of subjects at one time (some movement-based, some hands-on), and that the connection between teacher and students is maintained without long breaks in between.

### **Blended Learning**

This scenario includes our normal school morning, in-person, and exclusively outdoors. The in-person school day would be from 8:10 a.m. until 11:45 a.m., with material for the afternoons provided by class and subject teachers to be taken up at home. The afternoons at home would include a mix of take-home assignments and distance learning.

Special subjects will be taught in three-week blocks. Every week each class receives two different subjects in-person and two different at-home subjects through methods appropriate for the grade and subject.

Here is an example schedule for the grades during a Blended Learning scenario:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>8:00-8:10</b>	Arrival at Outdoor Classroom				
<b>8:10 -10:10</b>	Main Lesson in Outdoor Classroom				
<b>10:15</b>	Snack in Outdoor Classroom Recess in surrounding grounds with class “pod”				
<b>10:50 -11:45 *</b>	Subject A	Subject B	Subject A	Subject B	Skills
<b>11:45</b>	Pick-up from Outdoor Classroom				
<b>Afternoons *</b>	Subjects C and D provide activities and assignments for the class for the week. Class teachers will send home work such as Main Lesson book pages, math and spelling practice, and projects.				

\*For example: 5th grade could see Mrs. Madura for Strings on Monday and Wednesday, and Ms. Geri for Handwork on Tuesday and Thursday at 10:50 a.m. In the afternoons, Ms. Pedretti and Profé Cati will have provided activities and assignments to do over the course of the week at home. This rotation of subjects will last for a three-week block. In the next rotation, the class will see subjects C and D in-person, and Subjects E and F will provide at home offerings for the week.

### Distance Learning

We are finishing our preparations to provide each class of students in grades 1-8 with an appropriate distance learning plan. This will naturally develop in scope and content as the students progress over the grades. Starting at the beginning of the school year, class teachers will begin to prepare students (as appropriate based on age) for distance learning success. During distance learning periods, teachers will be mindful of the pace of instruction and adjust lesson presentations for children’s attention span by age.

We will be switching to a consistent platform, Google Classroom, which will allow us to provide materials in a single, easy-to-find, place including homework summaries and reminders to help students and parents keep track of assigned work. More information and training materials will be provided to all families prior to the start of school.

Teachers are preparing supplies to send home in the event that we have to pivot to distance learning - crayons, pencils, main lesson pages, etc.

We are developing our ideas for distance learning periods and will share these with parents of each grade before school begins. We have identified a list of blocks and projects that lend themselves well to distance learning, and teachers are preparing some of their resources for these blocks ahead of time with distance learning in mind. These include:

- **Grade 1:** Quality of Numbers; fairy tales and language arts
- **Grade 2/3:** Math, including measurement; Language Arts, including phonics rules and composition; Living on The Earth, including shelter project, individual building projects, baking
- **Grade 4:** Long-term project such as animal reports; local history and geography; Norse Myths
- **Grade 5:** Botany; free-hand geometry; fractions and decimal fractions; Ancient Civilizations; individual and group book reports
- **Grade 6:** Astronomy; Geography, Roman history, Medieval History, Geometry
- **Grade 7:** Creative writing and poetry; black and white drawing; World History year 1000-1700; Pre-Algebra and Geometry
- **Grade 8:** Language arts; History, including French Revolution, American History, and World Geography; anatomy; Meteorology and Cosmology; Geometry and Algebra; 8th Grade projects (especially after in-person preparation)

An overview of what we are planning is below:

The **lower grades 1-4** teachers commit to:

- Consistency and rhythm
- Pre-recorded lessons, stories, artistic activities, songs, and verses
- Opportunities to connect with classmates through letter-writing, drawings, or other communication facilitated by class teacher
- Daily lesson work, incorporating up to one subject class per day
- Regular faculty office hours and check-ins with students and parents

The **upper grades 5-8** teachers commit to:

- Consistency and rhythm
- Mixture of pre-recorded video/audio, printed materials, and online interaction
- Live, online instruction (amount of time TBD, appropriate to grade)
- Opportunities to connect with classmates
- Regular faculty office hours and check-ins with students and parents
- Opportunities for independent research or group projects

Subject classes will be taught in three-week blocks, which is consistent with our other scenarios and allows us to pivot between them. Subject classes being taught in rotation will also keep the work at home sustainable and manageable.

The **subject teachers** will commit to:

- Providing lessons for **grades 1-4** through pre-recorded video, pre-recorded audio, or printed materials as deemed appropriate by the subject teacher
- Providing lessons for **grades 5-8** through live online instruction that will be supported with pre-recorded video, pre-recorded audio, or printed materials as deemed appropriate by the subject teacher
- Working with class teachers to integrate subjects into their daily schedule, while being mindful of the total amount of schoolwork being given to students at home
- Following up on work that has been assigned in order to continue to engage and nourish the students
- Holding office hours in which students and parents can make appointments
- There will be no Eurythmy during times of distance learning

**Expectations of Students**

- Students should understand that distance learning may be an essential part of this year's school experience.
- Students will engage in lessons with concentration and goodwill, bringing their best efforts to this new experience.
- Students will ask their parents for assistance, but strive to work independently, and know that their parents can contact teachers with questions. Older students may be able to contact their class teacher directly.
- Assignments should be submitted on time in the assigned format.

**Expectations of Parents**

- Parents should provide a dedicated place and time for the students to work at home. Following the regular school day may be helpful, but we are well aware that this will not be ideal for some families. Please approach the work in the way that best suits your situation.
- Parents are encouraged to provide as much as they can, given their personal contexts, and should assist their children in developing into independent learners. Parents will also need to assist their children in submitting assigned work.
- Parents are encouraged to reach out to any teacher via email. Teachers will make every effort to respond within 24 hours on weekdays. It is also possible to schedule a video chat or phone call during designated office hours.
- Parents may be asked to stop by the school to pick-up needed supplies or return assigned work.
- If your child is unable to participate in the daily learning, please advise your class teacher.