



PLEASANT RIDGE
WALDORF SCHOOL

Parent Handbook 2023-2024 School Year

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School
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Parent Handbook

History/Philosophy

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School was founded in 1979 as an independent elementary school that began in the hearts and minds of a group of people in southwest Wisconsin interested in rural vitality and quality education.

The first Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School class—three children and one teacher—began in September 1980. Through the years, the school has grown, influenced in its growth by the values of the supporting families who found in this rural region of the Midwest a safe and healthy place for children. The other major influence in the development of the school has been the Waldorf curriculum, a curriculum that is inspiring to teachers, parents, and students alike and brings to the school the contributions of educators around the world.

Anthroposophy (wisdom of humanity) is the foundation of Waldorf education and firmly unites the main core of faculty at each Waldorf school with ideas that are held by Waldorf schools worldwide.

Anthroposophy speaks to the search for truth in education. Formalized by Rudolf Steiner, anthroposophy is the study of the human being and human development. Anthroposophy as a subject is not taught to children in the school. The faculty takes on this study in an active process which informs and enlivens their classroom activity.

Anthroposophy, as an individual course of study, is challenging and rewarding work available to anyone interested.

Rudolf Steiner, speaking in 1923, told an English audience: *“The aim of Waldorf education is to investigate the inner forces now ruling in the nature of man in order to be able to take them into account in education, thereby to find a true place in social life for the human being in body, soul, and spirit.”*

This aim is manifest in the practical life at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School through the curriculum that is brought to the children in the classrooms and on the playgrounds, in the celebration of the seasonal festivals, and in all the supporting activities that are offered through the school. For this reason, the work at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is viewed as a hopeful and profound attempt to meet the challenges of our age in the need for social renewal.

Mission Statement and Vision

The mission of Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School 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.

This is our vision:

- 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, vital, 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.

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School has been a full member of AWSNA (Association of Waldorf Schools of North America) since 2005, a full member of WECAN (Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America) since 2009 and received accreditation in 2014. AWSNA is a nonprofit school membership association organized in 1979 to strengthen and nurture the impulse of Waldorf schools in North America so that it manifests widely in the world. It is the accrediting body for all independent Waldorf schools in North America and as of 2022 there are more than 160 schools, 14 teacher education institutes, and over 250 early childhood programs working out of pedagogical insights of Rudolf Steiner.

As a full member of AWSNA, Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School has a voice in association matters through its identification of two delegates who attend national and regional meetings. Additionally, we have access to support and advice from the organization, including consultation on legal, economic, and pedagogical questions, speakers, conferences, and publications linking us with the international Waldorf school movement. You may visit the AWSNA website at www.waldorfeeducation.org. It is an excellent source for articles.

Land Acknowledgement

Pleasant Ridge is a Waldorf School in the heart of southwestern Wisconsin, part of the Driftless region. This area is rich in beautiful ancient limestone formations, vast coulees, and clear water creeks and waterfalls. The Pleasant Ridge community thrives and grows in this immense beauty. The school is preceded in a history that is formatively significant. We wish to honor this history by acknowledging the following.

Centuries before we arrived, this area was inhabited by the Ho-Chunk Nation. Other tribes such as the Meskwaki and Sauk passed through the region, but the Ho-Chunk called this land home. Many generations of their people thrived among this rugged landscape. Its caves, natural cold-water springs, and trout streams were their home, and the lives of these tribes were not separate from the land on which they lived.

The lives of these people were changed when colonizers arrived. They were forcibly displaced and sent to reservation land which did not observe or respect their culture or needs. Schools were formed to indoctrinate Native peoples into White culture. Many years later, however, today's Ho-Chunk Nation is a thriving community with rich traditions and stories that should be respected and fostered by all people living in the Driftless area.

As Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School looks into the future together, the actions of students, faculty and families are vital to ensure respect and honor of the indigenous nations still thriving here today. We accept and recognize accurate history, based on the accounts of Native people, and we acknowledge that the harmful consequences of cultural appropriation and actions that tokenize Native individuals still persist in education.

To ensure this acknowledgement is truly living, we commit to continued consultation with Ho-Chunk leaders to understand, teach, and celebrate the stories of First Peoples along with the land's rich and complicated history. Together we can envision and create a more cooperative future.

School Organization

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is incorporated with the state of Wisconsin as a nonprofit corporation for the purpose of education. The school is collaboratively administered by the faculty and staff and supported in its educational mission by an elected board of directors.

The school's by-laws contain the details of the school's organization, a copy of which is in the possession of each board member and in the school office.

Faculty

The faculty as a whole is responsible for bringing Waldorf education to the children, dealing with many practical details of administering the school, and working out of the spiritual vision of the education. This includes developing the annual and daily schedules of school life, defining the curriculum, holding festivals, supporting enrollment and outreach activities, and developing disciplinary as well as other policies and procedures. The full faculty meets weekly.

Faculty Council

The faculty council is formed by teachers and staff who have made a long-term commitment to the school and are actively studying anthroposophy. The faculty council seeks to ensure that the work of the individual teachers with the children can be fruitful, and to guide the healthy, overall development of the school. The council also reviews policies and long-range goals. The faculty council meets weekly.

Faculty Chair

The faculty chair is selected annually by the faculty. The chair provides leadership for the faculty, develops the weekly meeting agenda, and handles communications from the faculty, serving as the public contact person interfacing with the community and the board. The chair works with the faculty to encourage self-development, may work in a teaching capacity with students in the school, and sits on the faculty council and the board of directors.

Faculty Sections & Section Chairs

The faculty is divided into four sections – early childhood, lower grades, upper grades, and subjects. Each section meets on a weekly basis to take up the work pertinent to the section. The section chairs are selected annually by each faculty section to convene regular meetings and report to the faculty council.

Faculty Committees

The mission of the **curriculum committee** is to serve as a reservoir for the collective ideas and practices that have arisen out of the faculty, to facilitate the sharing of pedagogical ideas and concerns among the faculty and the parents, to develop curriculum standards and ways to assess student progress, and to make recommendations to the faculty regarding pedagogical issues. The faculty chair and the faculty council delegate the work of the committee.

The mission of the **student care group** is to work with parents and faculty to

support the educational experience of the children. The subject teachers hold the work of the student care group.

The **personnel committee** serves the faculty and staff by aiding their development as individuals and as a cooperative body; to serve the mission of the school by overseeing and evaluating faculty and staff work and leading the hiring process.

Administration

Collaborative agreements, open communication, and clear policies and procedures are important elements in sustaining organizational health.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM:

The administrative team is composed of the administrator, enrollment & outreach coordinator, development director, business coordinator, office manager, and a faculty member. The team meets weekly and coordinates and integrates with the various groups who share responsibility for the school: the faculty, board and its committees, parent association, and parent community - working toward the identified short and long-term goals of the organization. Members of the administrative team may act as a liaison between the school and other organizations in the wider community and the public.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES:

The **marketing and communications committee** works to coordinate and manage the marketing plans for our school events and to the wider public.

The **health and safety committee** supports the overall health and safety of Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School students, employees, and parents through the development of policies and practices, educational opportunities, and regular communications. It ensures compliance by Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School with local and state codes, regulations, and laws.

The **conflict resolution process** (see page 39 for description) is jointly held by administration, faculty, and the board of directors.

SUPPORT STAFF:

The support staff includes the kindergarten and classroom assistants, custodian, maintenance, and the hot lunch cook and assistant.

Board of Directors

The board of directors is elected by the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School community (defined as faculty, staff, active members of board committees, and

parents of enrolled children). The board is responsible for the legal and financial health of the school and supporting the school in its educational, spiritual, and cultural missions.

There are thirteen members of the board, including two faculty members, one of whom is the faculty chair. The administrator and development director are non-voting members of the board.

The board meets generally on the fourth Thursday of each month, and meetings are open to the public. Elections are held in May for open positions. Board and committee minutes are kept in a notebook in the office. Agendas are posted on the bulletin board across from the office. Parents and others in our community are encouraged to participate in the committee work of the board. Standing committees of the board along with their mission statements are as follows:

BOARD COMMITTEES:

The **executive committee** is responsible for reviewing the work and proposals of the board's committees prior to their report to the board. Members of this committee include the officers of the board, faculty chair, administrator, and development director.

The **finance committee** is responsible for maintaining the financial integrity of the school. The budget committee and investment committee are sub-groups of the finance committee.

The mission of the **development committee** is to plan, organize, encourage, and shepherd a program for fundraising and building relationships with the broader community as part of the effort to describe the vision and fulfill the mission of the school. Please feel free to bring new ideas for fundraising or concerns to the development director in the development office (Rm 206) of the Landmark Center. The **alumni committee**, a subgroup of development, assures continued connection with former students and parents. Other sub-groups overseen by development are Calyx, school store, Scrip, raffle, and Holiday Faire.

The **facilities committee** is empowered to organize the cleaning, maintenance, and improvement of the school buildings and grounds.

The mission of the **strategic planning committee** is to provide the school community and the larger community of friends and donors with a vision of the school. This encompasses its mission and responds to future needs implied by the mission statement or requested by the board.

Parent Association

The parent association serves to foster the continuous evolution of a strong and supportive parent community within Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. The Parent Association is an initiative group to develop and present educational and community events in support of parents. Events can include hosting community conversations, clothing swaps, parent education opportunities and more. All parents are invited to participate in meetings and planning sessions. A representative from the board of directors will be a liaison to provide continuity.

Parent Association goals are as follows:

- **Communication:** Embrace and be responsive to the individual parent. Welcome and support new families.
- **Education:** Support parent understanding of Waldorf education.
- **Special Events:** Support the building and sustaining of the social fabric of the school and the greater community for children and adults.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: One of the keys to a family's positive experience at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is parent involvement in the life of the school. Parents' gifts of time, talent, and money are vital to the financial and communal health of the school. Parent involvement adds to the dynamic spirit of the school community and provides opportunities for parents to participate in their child's education. Active parents provide an important image for their children of service to benefit others. More ways for parents to be involved and support the school are on page 9. Contact the development director to discuss parent involvement opportunities.

Example opportunities:

- Attend All-School meetings
- Class support, chaperone field trips, plays, fundraising
- All-School workdays
- Scrip participation
- Holiday Faire participation
- Festival support
- Committee work

Committee Members

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TJ Semanchin, President
Aaron Schmidt, Vice President
Mia Haessly, Secretary
Chris Thomas, Treasurer
Jordan Brudos, Administrator
Christina Hotchkiss, Faculty Chair
Mary Christenson
Sarah Dvorsak
Maureen Karlstad
Mike Moon
Vicki Ramsay
Mike Severson

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Faculty Council

CURRICULUM

Faculty Council

DEVELOPMENT

Robin Kottke

Subgroups of Development:

ALUMNI

Robin Kottke

CALYX

Mary Christenson

DIRECTORY

Kelly Slentz

HOLIDAY FAIRE

Martha Buche

RAFFLE

Simon Stumpf

Erica Gerrity

SCHOOL STORE

Jordan Brudos

SCRIP PROGRAM

Sofya Hundt

FACILITIES

Mike Crotser

Kate Bergan

FACULTY COUNCIL

Christina Hotchkiss

FINANCE

Sofya Hundt

Chris Thomas

Subgroups of Finance:

RE-ENROLLMENT (PFC)

Sofya Hundt

INVESTMENT

Sofya Hundt

HEALTH & SAFETY

Jordan Brudos

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Stephanie Pedretti

Ronald Schirmer

LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS

Diane Banner

STRATEGIC PLANNING

PRWS BOD Exec

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Hannah Hastings

Jordan Brudos

PARENT ASSOCIATION

Hannah Hastings

Whitney Hansel

PERSONNEL

Jordan Brudos

GROWING FOR GOOD

Vicki Ramsay

The Role of Parents

Parent engagement is **vital** to the success of the school and to a child's ability to gain full benefit from the educational experience. We ask parents to:

1. Read and follow the PRWS Parent Handbook.
2. Attend parent evenings and take an active role in class parent body.
3. Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences (at least two held per year).
4. Read materials suggested by teachers to better understand your child's Waldorf school experience.
5. Read the Lunchbox Express, which is emailed weekly. If you have any questions, contact the office manager at info@pleasantridgewaldorf.org.
6. Listen to the *Pleasant Ridge Today* podcast, recorded weekly during the school year.
7. Read the *Calyx*, the school's print publication, published three times per year.
8. Support at home the educational ideals of the school.
9. Participate in the all-school festivals and/or attend Friday assemblies to see children in the context of the class and the whole school and to appreciate the scope of the Waldorf program.
10. Cooperate with the Development Office to expand funding opportunities.
11. Participate in our SCRIP PROGRAM! Information found on page 10.
12. Participate as volunteers in the school. As members of the PRWS community, you may become involved through volunteer leadership and service in various areas.

The school counts on parents serving in these ways:

Building and Grounds: Special cleaning and maintenance days are organized four times throughout the year. Please attend these when possible or arrange with the facilities chair to help with special maintenance projects.

Administrative Leadership: The board and its committees provide leadership and oversight for the finances, building, grounds, and operations of the school. Please read the section on committees in this handbook.

Fundraising: The school's fundraising plan for the year includes a raffle, Holiday Faire, special events, and solicitation mailings. In addition, the Scrip program, the Parent Handbook and Directory, and other year-round fundraising activities also utilize volunteers. **All fundraising activities must be reviewed and approved by the development director before initiation.** If you are

aware of grants or foundations that may support our programs, please contact the development director. We ask every family to join in one or more of these efforts.

Classroom: Teachers will ask for assistance in organizing field trips, camping trips, play productions, special projects, and other efforts that support the curriculum of the class.

Resources for Parents

PARENT LIBRARY: In the hall outside the office there is a small library of books on Waldorf education and parenting which parents may check out. Contact the office manager for assistance.

STUDENT LIBRARY: The student library, across from the grade five classroom, has a rich and varied collection of children's books. Please contact our librarian, Diane Banner, for more information.

SCHOOL STORE: The school store is in the school lobby and at Ewetopia on Main Street. Both locations carry an array of gift items and toys made from natural materials.

SCRIP PROGRAM: The Scrip Program is a partnership between Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School and area businesses to raise funds for the school. Participation is easy, and at no extra cost to you! Rather than using cash or credit for your purchases, opt instead to pay with Scrip gift certificates for larger purchases, or with Kwik Trip cards. A percentage of each purchase is then donated to the school from participating businesses. It's a win-win-win for all: it's no extra cost to you, it supports local businesses, and contributes significant funds to our school. Simply exchange cash or check for Scrip in the school office or at Parrish Music and receive face value for your exchange. You may also opt to pre-order Kwik Trip cards via ACH transaction on a regular basis (see business coordinator to sign up for automatic withdrawals).

BUILDING RENTAL: The rooms and buildings of the school are available for rental during off hours. Call or stop by the front office for a rental form and fee schedule.

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM: The hot lunch program, for grades 1-8, provides organic hot lunches with as many local ingredients as possible. It is available Monday through Thursday. Meals are paid for in advance, through the monthly menu and signup sheet. Menus are available in the Lunchbox Express, school website, or front office. Completed menus and payment need to be turned into the front office by the deadline indicated on the monthly menu.

PARENT EDUCATION EVENTS: There are many ways for parents to learn more about Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School and Waldorf education.

- Class meetings with your class teachers focus on issues specific to curriculum and class events
- Festival celebrations and Friday assemblies
- New parent orientation meetings
- Open House events
- Book studies hosted by the DEI Committee
- All-school meetings hosted by the Board of Directors
- Community conversations, adult art classes, and special events hosted by the Parent Association
- Conferences and lectures hosted by local anthroposophical groups and the Viroqua biodynamic group

FRIDAY ASSEMBLIES: Friday morning assemblies begin at 8:15 a.m. and are regularly scheduled throughout the year. They provide an opportunity for parents to see what the children are working on in their classrooms. The assembly schedule notes which assemblies will feature odd or even grade students or are in celebration of one of our annual festivals. Assemblies are public events in our gym and generally last about 30 minutes. Festival assemblies may last longer.

School Communication

THE LUNCHBOX EXPRESS is a weekly email communication carrying event information, pictures, school-related news, and community news. The deadline for submissions to the Lunchbox Express is Thursday at noon to info@pleasanridgewaldorf.org.

BULLETIN BOARDS: Notices to be posted on the bulletin boards in the hall to the left of the office door or the kindergarten stairwell should be left with the office manager.

THE CALYX is the school's triannual print publication that features articles about Waldorf education, photos, announcements, and school news to parents and to other subscribers. Participating parents of enrolled children are automatically on the mailing list. A public relations publication, the *Calyx* is a good way to keep extended family informed of the school and its activities. Parents are encouraged to provide names of non-school relatives and friends who might like to receive the *Calyx* to the development office.

PARENT MAILBOXES are meant to help facilitate communication among

parents and the school. Parent mailboxes are located in the hallway near the office.

Parent mailbox guidelines:

- Only parents, faculty, and staff may place flyers advertising their businesses in parent mailboxes. Please do not stuff the mailboxes with flyers from outside the PRWS community. Stop by the office before you do a mass letterbox “mailing” to let the office manager know.
- Mailboxes need to be checked frequently as this is the only way the communication will be successful.

PODCAST: *Pleasant Ridge Today* is the official podcast of PRWS. Recorded twice monthly during the school year, it contains school and community news, along with occasional conversations and interviews with faculty, alumni, and members of our community. Find it on iTunes or your favorite podcast player.

PRWS WEBSITE, www.pleasantridgewaldorf.org, is maintained by the Marketing & Communications Committee.

PARENT PORTAL: Access requires a family password to enter from the PRWS website. This portal has photo galleries, FAQs, and more.

E-NEWS: eNews emails are sent to the wider community (alumni, alumni parents, school partners, grandparents, etc.) periodically throughout the year. This is a great medium to share school highlights with loved ones. Please contact the development director to be added or have your loved ones added to the list.

SOCIAL MEDIA: The school has a presence on Facebook and Instagram. Posts include school news and photos as well as event announcements and cancellations. There is also a private Facebook page specifically for PRWS parents. Please search Pleasant Ridge Parents and ask to join for access.

PRWS TEXT ALERTS: Parents may opt in to receive timely updates from the school. Click on the link in the Lunchbox Express to sign up.

Building Locations & Facilities

THE MAIN SCHOOL BUILDING is located at 431 E. Court Street. It houses grades 1 through 8, the Parent-Child room, the gym/assembly hall, library, handwork and music classrooms, kitchen, school office, and school store.

THE LANDMARK CENTER, located at 500 E. Jefferson Street, is next door to our main building. The kindergarten is located on the first floor at the south end of the building, and the development office is on the second floor, room 206, directly above the kindergarten.

THE OLD MAIN BUILDING, at 321 E. Decker Street, is our small performing arts hall. Eurythmy and social dance classes are taught there, and the hall may be used for class plays. The wider community may rent the Old Main Building for adult education, lectures, recitals, conferences, and other cultural events. See the office manager for rental information.

GROWING FOR GOOD, at 520 E. Terhune Street, is home to our school garden, greenhouses, and outdoor amphitheater. It was purchased in August 2015.

THE WOODED ACRE is at the corner of J and Terrace Streets. It was generously donated by a former PRWS parent in 1989.

General Procedures & Guidelines

ARRIVALS: Arrival times and procedures are slightly different for grades children and kindergarten children. At **7:50 a.m.** each school morning, a faculty member is on the playground to greet children who arrive.

All children begin their school day outside. Kindergarten children are walked to the kindergarten playground by their parents. Grades children should be dropped off at the Jefferson Street entrance to the grades' playground. **Please do not drop children off in the morning at the Court Street entrance to the school. They need to be dropped off on the playground.**

DEPARTURES: **The school day ends at 3:15 p.m. for all children.** Children who ride the bus will be assisted to board their bus at the Jefferson or Court Street entrances to the school. Children walking will be sent home. All children will be sent outside and need to be picked up by 3:15 p.m. Students may stay on the school grounds to play after school, but only with supervision. **Students are not allowed in the building after 3:30 p.m., unless they are with an adult who is actively supervising them.** Students may wait in the lobby if their ride is late.

CARPOOLS AND PARENTS: The yellow curb area outside the Court Street entrance is for short-term drop-off or pick-up, not for extended parking. **Unattended vehicles may be ticketed.** When picking up children at the end of the day, parents are strongly encouraged to park on the school side of Court

Street. If you must park across the street, cross with your children at the crosswalk directly outside the lobby entrance.

BUS TRANSPORTATION: Buses unload and load at the Jefferson or Court Street entrances to the school. Children who live in the Westby or Viroqua public school districts may ride the school bus to school. Parents need to contact their district's bus garage to make sure their children are eligible to ride the bus and to arrange for transportation (Viroqua Bus Garage 608-637-7337, Westby Bus Garage 608-643-4618). Your child's transportation schedule must be on file in the school office.

Students who ride the Viroqua or Westby buses as guests need to have a bus pass. Parents may call the office, or send a note, and the office manager will issue a pass.

BICYCLES: Students need to use the bike racks on the playground. Do not leave bikes in front of the school building. Use of a bicycle lock is encouraged. Registering a bicycle with the Viroqua Police Department for \$2 makes it easier to identify the bicycle if it is lost or stolen.

ABSENCES: Please call or email the school office in the morning before 8:00 a.m. if your child is going to be absent. You may leave a message on the voicemail and the office manager will relay that to the teachers. If you know your child will be absent due to a vacation or an appointment, please let the school know ahead of time. See ATTENDANCE, page 24, for more information.

ACCIDENTS: In the event of a minor accident, the parents will be notified by the end of the day. Faculty and staff receive regular first aid training and will treat minor injuries. In the event of a serious accident or medical emergency, the school will first try to reach a parent. If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact given on the child's health form will be called. Every effort will be made to contact parents and the emergency contact. If contact cannot be made, the school will act in the best interest of the child's safety and care.

The school does not carry medical insurance for students or staff that goes beyond general liability. Be aware that the school's insurance is only for situations in which the school is at fault for an injury. Even in such a situation, parents' insurance would be called upon first.

ILLNESS: If your child seems overly tired or not feeling well, keep him or her home for a day. A child who is not feeling well cannot really enjoy the school day and exposes others to illnesses. Please keep children home if they:

- complain of a stomachache, headache, or earache
- have vomited or had diarrhea within the previous 24 hours
- unexplained rash
- have had a fever (100.4 or greater) within the previous 24 hours
- have a persistent cough/persistent or sore throat
- are not well enough to be outside
- are in the communicable stage of an illness

You will be advised of any communicable illnesses in the school, and we ask you to please keep the school advised of any that develop in your home.

OFFICE PHONE USE: The office phones are needed to handle school business. Please arrange after-school activities before your children come to school each day. Children may use the office phones during the school day if they bring a note from their teacher.

SNOW DAYS: There are many ways to be notified of school closings: delays, cancellations, or early release. Here are the many ways to receive these timely notifications:

- Call the school at 608-637-7828. In the mornings there will be a voicemail by 6am
- PRWS text/email alerts
- School's Facebook page
- Online at WKBT.com or WXOW.com
- Announced on WVRQ-FM (102.3), WDRT (91.9), and WRCO-FM (100.9)

When school closes early, children will be sent home in the manner parents have indicated on the Emergency Closing form.

Note: We follow the Viroqua School District in school closings due to weather. We trust the bus garages to make the safest call, especially when considering the families and teachers who drive in from the country. We would only deviate if the closing or delay is related to a different school schedule (such as a half-day) or non-weather related closings.

CANCELLATIONS AND THE SCHOOL CALENDAR: The school year is planned to meet state requirements of instructional hours and to create a healthy schedule to support the work of the students and teachers. The year's calendar is included on the last page of the handbook and posted on the school website. Printed copies are available in the school office.

School cancellation due to inclement weather is a decision made by the administrator, in consultation with the faculty chair. We consider traveling implications for families driving from the outer regions of the school population area, but since children come to Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School from all directions, and from many different school districts, road conditions and weather may vary from region to region. For this reason, parents must assess the conditions and make carpool judgments accordingly. Parents should be aware that closings may not coincide exactly with all area schools.

IN-SERVICE DAYS: In-service days are scheduled for faculty professional development. There is no school for children these days.

DRESS STANDARDS: The faculty and staff at PRWS recognize the various purposes our attire serves comfort and protection, as well as aesthetic and personal expression. Additionally, we acknowledge that how we dress is often determined by our surroundings and activities. “Situational attire” refers to clothing that is worn to reflect the occasion or place, such as uniforms for a sports team, specific clothing for the workplace, or formal outfits worn at weddings. The dress standards at PRWS are primarily intended to allow students to participate fully and unencumbered in their school day, as well as to encourage attire that reflects a mood of readiness and that is situationally appropriate for life at the school. Clothing that falls outside of these guidelines is best saved for non-school-related occasions.

Comfort and practicality — Movement is an integral part of every school day. Clothing should be non-restrictive and allow for a full range of motion and mobility. Clothing that causes heightened self-consciousness on the part of the student or that requires frequent readjustment is considered a hindrance to the student’s learning experience.

Shoes are required at all times throughout the school day. All footwear should be practical and allow for dynamic movement. Indoor shoes are required for classrooms (class teachers will provide guidelines for indoor shoes). Flip-flops, high heels, and light-up shoes are not permitted at school. Hats are not allowed in the classroom.

Warmth — Children of all ages need sufficient warmth to stay healthy and do their best in school. Students need to arrive at school with layers of clothing to allow for optimum comfort indoors and outdoors throughout the day, in all seasons of the year.

Aesthetics, Fashion, Media — Fashions come and go, and teachers will periodically need to make decisions for their students or class regarding what

is situationally appropriate.

Varieties of hairstyles are welcomed and encouraged, as long as one's hair is well-cared for and can be kept out of one's face during class. Hair dyeing needs to stay within a natural-looking range and is not encouraged in the younger grades.

Moderate use of cosmetics in grades 7-8 is permitted.

Clothing, outerwear, hats, backpacks, and lunchboxes should be free from pictures, words, symbols, and conspicuously large logos. Clothing with small, repeating patterns is permitted, as is clothing with inconspicuous brand lettering and logos.

Students in grades 6-8 may wear apparel that represents sports or other formal activities that they participate in outside of school.

Festivals and Programs — The PRWS dress standards apply to all school occasions, including field trips and evening events.

Students will be asked to dress more formally for special occasions at school such as festivals and assemblies. Teachers will guide their students on specific points for the given occasion. Music teachers will share with their students and families specific dress requirements for concerts.

Addressing the Students — Meeting and upholding the dress standards can be a delicate issue for both teachers and students alike. PRWS faculty and staff strive to be mindful of the students' experience and to be respectful when upholding these norms with their students. We encourage parents and students to be similarly mindful of the intentions behind the dress code.

Class teachers are responsible for addressing dress standard issues with their students and strive to maintain consistency across the grades. Depending on the child's age, the teachers will use their discretion to give dress standard reminders to the student and/or the parents. Subject teachers and staff will support upholding the dress standards by informing class teachers when there is a question about a student's attire.

LOST AND FOUND: The school acquires an enormous amount of clothing in the Lost and Found over the course of the school year. It is culled a few times a year (after sufficient warning to parents) so please check the Lost and Found bin outside the office regularly.

MEDIA POLICY: Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School does not support the use of

television, video, movies, or computers in the classroom (other than occasional use in the upper grades) and discourages children's exposure to these forms of media. The noticeable effects of electronic media—shortened attention span, reduced perseverance, inability to concentrate—are seen to weaken the child's learning capacity and are disruptive for the entire class.

We ask you to support the school's media policy and abstain from screens (movies, videos, television, video games, etc.) on school nights, Sunday through Thursday, and Friday mornings.

Unlike adults, children cannot easily tell the difference between what is real and what is not. Impressions made by television can be deeply troubling and confusing. In addition, television is non-interactive. Active exchanges are vital to the healthy development of the child.

We encourage the child's natural creativity and imagination by providing time and materials for drawing, painting, music, and storytelling. These activities can be emphasized at home. Parents who wish to find alternatives to the media are encouraged to talk with teachers and to make use of the resources available in the school library.

Harmony between home and school, each supporting the work of the other for the benefit of the child, is an important goal we set for ourselves as adults working with elementary education. By informing yourself about Waldorf education, you can help provide active support for what goes on in the classroom.

USE OF VIDEO EQUIPMENT AND CAMERAS AT EVENTS: To help all audience members at festivals, assemblies, and plays to enjoy performances by the students, we discourage use of any recording equipment. The use of video equipment should be discussed with the teacher ahead of time, a minimum of one week in advance. If allowed, it should be done discreetly. PLEASE, NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY, LAPTOPS, OR TABLETS. A school photographer will be assigned to specific events. Photos will be included in photo galleries on the parent portal on our website.

Program Information

Each part of your child's day at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is given careful thought and planning – from the physical environment with natural play materials to the presentation of the curriculum. The experience is meant to be an artistically developed whole. You can enhance your child's experience in the following ways:

- Substitute meaningful family work and play activities for idle hours of television viewing.
- Encourage your child to leave toys at home. If there is a need to bring something from home to school, suggest toys that are handmade or found in nature. Play and class materials are carefully chosen to enhance your child's school experience. If there is a question, parents should check with the teacher before sending items to school.
- Allow your children to share their school experiences with you in their own way. Avoid pressuring them about learning. Understand and support at home the Waldorf approach to reading and writing in the lower grades. There are activities you can do at home in these areas. Your child's teacher will be glad to discuss this with you.
- Be an example to your children. If you read, they will read. If you make things by hand, so will they. If you are respectful of nature, they will be, too.
- Establish a consistent and healthy routine and rhythm for your child at home, with regular mealtimes, naps, and bedtimes. A healthy family rhythm will benefit all family members and will enhance the experience at school for the children.

Parent-Child Program

The parent-child program provides parents of young children, ages one to four, a supportive environment in which parent and child can interact and socialize. The parent-child room is in the main school building.

Two-hour morning sessions are scheduled on multiple days during most weeks that school is in session. Program sessions coincide with the general school calendar. More information can be found on the school website or by contacting the enrollment and outreach coordinator.

ARRIVALS: The program begins outside in the play area, adjacent to the parent-child classroom. Parents and children gather together for a short outdoor play session, then move into the parent-child room for play, snack, story, and adult craft activities.

DEPARTURES: At the end of each session, the parent-child teacher will bid farewell to each child and parent as they leave.

COMMUNICATION: The parent-child program teacher will be in regular communication with all families involved in the program, to provide details about the sessions, as well as reading materials and other support. A family that is not able to make a class can email the teacher or call the school office.

CANCELLATION POLICY: If a class is cancelled, the parent-child teacher will attempt to make up the class at the end of the session. If there are two or more classes cancelled, PRWS will offer reimbursement or credit towards the next session. There can be no reimbursement for classes missed due to personal needs unless they are discussed in advance. We regret that we cannot accommodate make-up classes for individual families.

Kindergarten Program

The kindergarten program is a three-, four- or five-day, mixed-age program for children ages 3.5 to 6 years. The kindergarten is located in the Landmark Center, across the way from the main school building on the lower level near the Jefferson Street entrance.

ARRIVALS: The kindergarten day begins at 8:00 a.m. We begin each day outside and then leave for our morning walk. We ask for cooperation in getting your child to kindergarten promptly. The morning transition into kindergarten occurs more smoothly when children are able to join activities from the beginning. Stepping into the middle of something is often confusing and difficult. Please help your child's transition by arriving on time. It is an important habit to establish, and you are the model for your child. If for any reason you will be late, please call the school office. The office manager will let the teachers know. We expect parents to walk their child to the teacher, or assistant teacher, who will be outside. The teachers greet the parents and children with a warm handshake. Parents are responsible for bringing their child's backpack to the cubby. When the kindergarten leaves for their morning walk no one is in the room to take care of children who are late. Please bring your child to the school office if the kindergarten has already left for their morning walk.

DEPARTURES: Pick-up time is 12:45 p.m. for children enrolled for early dismissal, and 3:15 p.m. for children who stay the entire day. We appreciate your cooperation in being on time. If you wish to discuss a matter with the teacher, please do so by phone or email when the children are not present. When with the children the teacher's whole focus needs to be with them. When the children are handed over to you at pick-up time, you are then responsible for them. At 3:15 p.m. the teachers clean up their rooms and have meetings and conferences. We will send your child home the way agreed upon at the beginning of the school year unless we receive a written note from you or a phone call that day (not last minute please). When you pick up your children it is best for them if you take them directly home. They are usually tired, and a nice quiet walk or ride home followed by a snack and conversation helps to make that transition time from kindergarten to home pleasant and easy for the

child. You may also be surprised by last-minute requests from your child to have a friend over. This can be disruptive for everyone, and it would be easier to establish a policy of calling or talking the day before if a child is coming over. We have certainly observed it makes it easier on everyone to plan those get-togethers beforehand.

LUNCH and SNACK: A portion of the meals and snacks are prepared each day by the kindergarten staff. Parents are expected to send a lunchbox to supplement the meals. Parents are made aware of what is needed, and arrangements are made at the beginning of the school year.

A NOTE ABOUT SLEEP: It is sometimes difficult to make that transition from summer to the school year and getting adequate sleep can help. For some children this may be the first time that they have a rhythm and a routine to their lives. This rhythm certainly brings an order to children and families because of the need to be on time.

Most young children need 11-12 hours of sleep in order to function their best, and a peaceful and harmonious bedtime is important to produce this healthy sleep. This will be discussed more fully at the first parent meeting.

CLOTHING: Be sure to dress your child for the weather as we spend several hours outside every day. Children are not at all conscious of losing body warmth and need to be protected. Warmth is very important in the early years. Heads need to be covered both for protection from the cold and sun. Your child will need:

For every day: A backpack to carry their belongings.

For fall: A hat, whether an old beach hat or a baseball cap; a light jacket or sweater, sturdy shoes or boots, raincoats, rain pants, rain boots, and gloves or light mittens as it gets cooler.

For winter: Snow pants and jacket, or a snowsuit; warm boots, a warm hat, waterproof mittens/gloves, and sometimes a scarf.

For indoor use: A pair of indoor shoes. These indoor shoes stay at school.

Change of clothes: Please keep a change of clothes at school for your child. It is very helpful if your child's clothes are labeled with their name. You would be amazed at how much goes in the Lost and Found every week. Please, no media-inspired images (i.e. television or movie characters) on clothing, as we have observed the negative effects these have on the children's attitude and creative playtime.

TOYS AND BOOKS: We have found it best that children do not bring toys, books, or games from home to kindergarten. They are often favorite toys, and it is easy for them to get broken, misplaced, or mishandled in a large group of children. However, if your child would like to bring in treasures that they have found in nature and would like to give to the season's table, they would be welcome to do so. This is also a nice way to make a connection from home to kindergarten.

BIRTHDAYS: Each child's birthday is celebrated in the kindergarten with a ceremony of candles, story, song, and wishes. Children with summer birthdays will also have a special day of celebration during the year. Parents are invited to be a part of the celebration, and the teachers will be in touch before the birthday to plan the day with them.

FESTIVALS AND FRIDAY ASSEMBLIES: The whole school celebrates certain seasonal festivals throughout the year. Parents are invited and encouraged to come, and these will be discussed at parent meetings throughout the year.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND KINDERGARTEN: Written communications such as notes from your child's teacher will be placed in your mailbox outside of the kindergarten. Please observe the announcements on the bulletin board outside your child's kindergarten room regularly. Please check your kindergarten mailbox regularly.

VISITS: Parents are welcome to visit the kindergarten after we have settled in as a group. Please contact the teacher if you are interested and we will set up a time. There will be parent meetings during the year when the parents come to the kindergarten, without their children, to learn more about the philosophy and activities of the kindergarten, and to meet and develop relationships with each other.

TELEVISION, VIDEOS, MOVIES, COMPUTER GAMES, ETC: Young children are like sponges, soaking in everything around them. They live in the world of their senses. Television, radio, videos, movies, cell phones, battery-operated toys, and computers can affect them deeply. In the kindergarten we certainly see how this influences their play and may create difficulties in their play. These media products give them images to imitate that are often unhealthy ones. This also inhibits a child's own imagination. We strongly recommend that your children watch very little, if any, television, videos, or movies and that they not play video games. This is also a recommendation for the grades, for the same reasons.

As indicated in the general guidelines, please do not allow your child to

view movies, videos, television or play video games on school nights, Sunday - Thursday, or in the mornings before coming to kindergarten.

All media influence does affect your child's capacity to play creatively, learn social skills, and form good listening and speaking habits – the foundation for other language arts, writing, and reading. For information on the effects of the media as well as suggestions on how to go about withdrawing from them, these books may be helpful:

- *Endangered Minds*, by Jane Healy
- *Failure to Connect*, by Jane Healy
- *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, by Jerry Mander
- *The Plug-In Drug*, by Marie Winn
- *Unplugging the Plug-In Drug*, by Marie Winn
- *What to Do After You Turn Off the TV*, by Frances Moore Lappe & Family
- *Simplicity Parenting*, by Kim John Payne
- *The Soul of Discipline*, by Kim John Payne
- *Fool's Gold*, Alliance for Childhood
- *The Future Does Not Compute*, by Stephen Talbot
- *The Children of Cyclops: Influences of TV Viewing on the Developing Human Brain*, by Keith Buzzell

Elementary Grades Program

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR THE GRADES: The day begins at 8:00 a.m. The morning hours are devoted to Main Lesson work. Lesson blocks in language arts, arithmetic, history, geography, and science are taught through circle activities, stories, drama, drawing, writing, and modeling.

There is a break for a mid-morning snack and outdoor recess. For the rest of the morning, special subjects (handwork, foreign language, music, eurythmy, painting, gardening, physical education, form drawing) are taught, and practice periods for skills introduced in Main Lesson are scheduled.

Lunch is followed by another outdoor recess. Other special subject classes and/or skills periods are scheduled in the afternoon. School is dismissed at 3:15 p.m.

FRIDAY ASSEMBLIES AND FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS: Most Fridays at 8:15 a.m. Grades 1 through 8 gather in the gym to share something they have been working on in their individual classes. Parents and friends are always welcome to attend. **Please note, neither photography nor recordings are allowed by those in attendance. A designated school photographer is**

often assigned for events and festivals, after which images and/or recordings are made available via our parent portal accessible from the PRWS website. Alternate times for festivals will be noted in advance.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE IN THE GRADES: Regular attendance and punctuality are important for your child's learning. Parents are expected to contact the school if a child will be absent. If it is necessary for your child to leave school early, please make arrangements in advance.

If your child is to be late or absent, call or email the school office before 8:00 a.m. A message may be left on our voicemail prior to 8:00 a.m. If a child arrives after 8:00 a.m. parents are asked to accompany their child to the school office or have the child check in the office before joining their class.

The school office should be notified if your child needs to leave school during the day, if your child is going somewhere other than home when leaving school, or if the transportation plans change from those indicated on the transportation form that was turned in to the office. Please inform teachers and the front office of these changes and discuss the plans with your child before school so that things are clearly understood. If you are taking your child out of school during the day, please stop by the school office and sign your child out. Calling the school office during the day to make changes is discouraged, both for your child's comfort and for the sake of the office staff. This also applies to communications about your child's after-school participation in activities that are not part of the school day, such as lessons or athletic events.

If it is necessary for your child to be absent from school for any length of time, please notify the office and class teacher as far in advance as possible.

SUPPLIES: Your child will be provided with the necessary supplies to use in school. It is requested that children do not bring school supplies from home unless a specific request is made by the teachers.

It is best to consult with the teacher before items such as toys, sports equipment, and money come to school with your child.

Wooden Choroí flutes are used by the children starting in grade 1. In grade 3 children move from the pentatonic flute to a diatonic flute. When stringed instruction begins in grade 4, arrangements may need to be made to rent an instrument.

SNACK and LUNCH: In the grades, parents are asked to send both a

midmorning snack and a lunch with each child or order the hot lunch that is provided Monday through Thursday. The following suggestions are made by the faculty: nutritious, well-balanced snacks and lunches that contain a minimum of refined foods.

Candy, granola with chocolate pieces or coating, and pop are not allowed.

Please send food in recyclable or reusable packaging. Single-use food and beverage containers are discouraged for several reasons: they usually contain more beverage than a child wants, they call for responsibility in disposal of which a child may not be capable, and the school strives to be environmentally responsible.

Be aware of what and how much your child eats of the food you send and consult with the class teacher if you have concerns, if your child has dietary restrictions, or if you would like suggestions.

Please do not send food that needs kitchen preparation.

TOYS, IPODS, CELL PHONES: Unless a teacher says differently for a special occasion, please do not allow your child to bring toys, video games, iPods, or cell phones to school. It is easy for them to get broken, misplaced, or mishandled in a large group of children. **Video devices, iPods, and cell phones are not allowed to be used at school.**

VISITS TO THE CLASSROOMS: To visit a class it is necessary to make arrangements with the teachers in advance.

GRADES AND REPORTS: Grades are not issued at PRWS. Instead, teachers provide both written and verbal information on the child's growth and development. After the end of the school year each child's parents receive a written report from the class teacher describing the accomplishments of the class during the year and giving a picture of the child's academic, artistic, and personal growth. The yearly report also includes reports from the subject teachers. Kindergarten teachers write individual reports for children going on to first grade in addition to the general kindergarten report. Parents are encouraged to bring questions about a child's progress to the class teacher. Please be considerate of the teacher's time when bringing questions. Your teacher will provide you with the best times to discuss your child or questions.

Two parent-teacher conferences will be held for each child during the school year, in October and February. Year-end or other additional conferences may be arranged at the request of the parents or teacher. It is also desirable for the

teacher to make at least one visit to the child's home when the child first enters kindergarten or the grades.

Policies & Discipline

In a Waldorf school, alongside the original “three R’s” of curriculum planning (rhythm, ritual, and repetition) exists another set—**reverence, respect, and responsibility**—and all are intimately connected. “Crisis intervention” is reduced when the children and the teacher have developed a sense of reverence for the world around them, a mutual respect for others, and a sense of responsibility regarding their own actions. This is the ideal that underlies our daily life and our work together as parents, teachers, and students. In our school we work with the social inclusion approach by Kim John Payne, which views conflict as an opportunity to learn.

In Waldorf schools, discipline finds its place first with the teacher, and has as its center the meditative practice the teacher uses when focusing on the children under his or her care. Through this, a respect for the essential dignity and individuality of each child is fostered which transforms and elevates the relationship between teacher and child. Out of this trust can grow the true authority of the teacher. Such authority is exercised not simply because it is convenient for the adult, but because it helps provide the child with the inner calm and security necessary for a free and independent adulthood.

Each teacher takes practical steps to assure the smooth flow of learning within the lesson, the school day, and the year, allowing for a balance between concentrated quiet work and expansive movement activities, for a blending of the artistic and the intellectual. Transitions between one class or activity and another are planned, and directions are given in a clear and step-by-step manner. Each teacher must also communicate to the students what the expected behavior for a class or a particular lesson is. For example, one might expect a painting class to be conducted in silence, while quiet talking would be acceptable or even desirable during a less structured activity.

General Guidelines for Teachers & Parents

The teachers at PRWS aim to educate the students to become independent thinkers who are able to impart purpose and direction to their lives and who will offer new solutions for the problems of our age. Teachers strive for intellectual freedom, artistic creativity, and a sense of social responsibility. Meeting these goals is the responsibility of everyone connected with the school. Therefore, we have some general guidelines for everyone.

We expect the following from the teachers at our school:

- To be on time for every lesson.
- To treat students with courtesy and respect, especially when discipline is needed.
- To treat colleagues and parents with courtesy and respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement.
- To be supportive and encouraging to all students in a class, in words and actions, equally and without favoritism.
- To strive to be consistent in approaches to discipline issues, individually and as a faculty.
- To provide all the students and parents with opportunities to express concerns and questions outside lesson time.
- To provide parents with opportunities to learn more about the Waldorf philosophy.
- To notify parents in a timely manner when expectations for schoolwork and behavior have not been met.
- To be familiar with state laws regarding neglect and abuse, to be alert to signs and symptoms of such neglect or abuse and implement legal requirements accordingly.
- To provide the students with an education that will offer them choices in the future.
- To dress neatly and in good taste, taking into consideration that they are role models for the children.

We expect the following from the parents at our school:

- To provide a home atmosphere that is conducive to the child's social, emotional, and educational well-being.
- To collaborate with faculty when implementing discipline policies.
- To review the discipline policy and school rules with their children.
- To ensure children are at school on time and that they are picked up from school in a timely manner. To accompany a younger child to the office if arriving after 8:00 a.m.
- To treat teachers and staff with courtesy and respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement.
- To make use, when possible, of the opportunities given by the school to learn more about the philosophy of Waldorf education.
- To see that children get adequate rest, nutritious meals, and appropriate time and environment for homework.
- To read the Parent Handbook.

- To dress neatly and in good taste, taking into consideration that they are role models for the children.

For our conflict resolution process, see page 35. For specific commitments asked of parents at the time of enrollment, see page 47.

Expected Attitudes and Behaviors for Students

While allowing for differences between grades, there remain basic, school-wide agreements on acceptable behavior for students.

Inherent in this agreement is the recognition of how powerful the forces of rhythm, form, and habit are in the lives of the students. The familiarity of understood rules can create a sense of security and clarity within which the freedom of the individual student is fostered. If boundaries and form are clearly understood by all, a breathing space is created in which mutual respect and understanding can grow.

In light of this, students are expected to cultivate an attitude of respect toward their teachers, their fellow students, their school, and themselves.

We expect the following from the students at our school:

- To act toward each other and toward adults in kind ways, to “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Physical violence (hitting, kicking, biting, pushing) is unacceptable. Foul language is unacceptable. Terms such as “shut up,” “stupid,” or other demeaning expressions are not permitted. Bullying and inappropriate teasing are unacceptable.
- To respect the trees and plants on the school grounds.
- To respect the property of others and the school. Graffiti, vandalism, and other abuse of property are unacceptable.
- To have respect for food. Students are encouraged to be grateful for food. Uneaten food and empty containers are to be taken home. Students are encouraged to bring food in reusable containers.
- Gum chewing, candy, and soda pop are not permitted at school. There is to be no food or drink except during designated snack and lunch times.
- To respect the personal privacy of others. In the bathroom, only one person in a stall at a time. There is no climbing on the toilets.
- To show respect for classroom rules and limits, whether reinforced by the class teacher, subject teacher, substitute teacher, classroom volunteer, administrative staff, or any parent/adult.

- To act in a safe manner. For example, it is not acceptable to climb on the ledge in the gym or to stand on the cubbies in the hall.
- To be neat, clean, and appropriately dressed in clothes that will not distract from the educational process. To wear indoor shoes while in the classroom. Please see the “Dress Standards” section for more specifics.
- To walk quietly in the halls. Running in the hallways or classroom is not permitted. Students are expected to be quiet in the halls so as not to disturb the other classes.
- To leave toys at home, with exceptions left to the discretion of the teacher.
- When walking with a teacher off school property (i.e. in town) students should wait at each corner for the teacher’s directive before crossing a street. Students are required to stay with the group, remain on the sidewalk, and follow all traffic regulations when walking to and from various activities.
- To follow the playground rules.
- To stay outside, on the playground, before school starts, unless accompanied by an adult or to bring in a musical instrument in the colder months.
- To have permission from their teacher to use the office phone or present a phone pass.
- To be on time for school. The school day starts at 8:00 a.m. Habitual tardiness shows a lack of respect for the teacher and the class. The student also misses part of, and disrupts, the main lesson.
- To leave at home any “tools” that could be dangerous, such as matches, knives, lighters, and so forth.
- To leave the grounds or be picked up by 3:15 p.m. when school is dismissed. Children waiting for rides may wait in the lobby. After school, children may be in the school building only with their teacher or other adult supervision.

Integrative Student Support

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School began implementing a program embraced by many Waldorf schools worldwide in the 2022-23 school year. Integrative Student Support provides our community of faculty, staff, parents, and students with a shared framework to further develop our support and care capacities.

Social and emotional health provide a solid foundation for academic learning. Integrative Student Support is based on the premise that behavior is communication. As such, there is no such thing as a *misbehaving* child, only a

disoriented child. When a child is disoriented, learning is compromised. Disorientation can take many forms, and often children need help to reorient so that optimal learning, connection, and engagement with others (and the work in front of them) is possible.

Rooted in principles of restorative justice and compassionate communication, the Integrative Student Support program's three streams of student support provides a shared framework and a consistent, transparent process to support students experiencing academic, social, and/or behavioral difficulties. This helps students move through challenges and fosters effective social-emotional skills and learning along the way.

Informed by decades of Dr. Kim John Payne's focused work with children, families, and Waldorf school communities, this work is not new to Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. Many of its elements are already living here, woven into our school's culture and practices. We are taking it up in a more intentional and formalized way. A committee of faculty and staff members meets weekly to guide its implementation and bring regular study to full faculty meetings.

When a student is experiencing challenges in the classroom or in school settings, they may be referred to the ISSC by teachers and/or parents. Members of this group help determine which type of support (social/emotional, academic, behavioral) will best support the student.

The role of the Integrative Student Support Committee follows:

- Coordinate support for students identified via the expressed concerns of teachers and/or parents.
- Regularly provide and review tools and strategies to support students.
- Maintain communication and progress records for individual students by documenting goals and outcomes and sharing this information with faculty and parents.
- Facilitate Support Circle meetings: initiate, prepare, and follow-up as needed.
- Collaborate with faculty and enrollment coordinator regarding potential support needed for incoming students, 1st-grade readiness and other assessments.
- Coordinate a Student Action Committee made up of upper-grade students.
- Seek opportunities to foster community-wide familiarity, engagement with, and support for this model.
- Develop/recommend policies regarding social, academic, and behavioral health of the students.

For more information contact: studentsupport@pleasantridgewaldorf.org.

Disciplinary Procedures for Students

In a Waldorf school maintaining discipline is primarily the responsibility of the class teacher. In most cases, discipline is handled when and where a problem occurs. The child or children involved will be helped to make right what has been done wrong. This could involve such things as cleaning up a mess or apologizing for hurtful behavior.

Students may need to be given “time-outs,” lose privileges or recess time, or be removed from the rest of the class for a period of time if these procedures seem to be useful in helping the student to regain self- control. The main point of any consequence imposed on a child is to help awaken the child to the error of his or her actions. Teachers are never to use physical punishment or humiliation as a means of control.

Verbal or physical violence will be dealt with severely. The consequences will vary from grade to grade. Expectations of the children’s social behavior and ability for self-control change and increase as children mature. For instance, a kindergarten child who hits someone may be directed to another activity with an adult; a first grade child may be asked to sit out from any activity for a short while; a second grader with a history of hitting other children who is showing no significant progress in controlling the behavior could be sent home; and a seventh or eighth grader who is verbally threatening or verbally abusive to others could be sent home. Extreme physical aggression at any age may be grounds for sending a child home.

In the case of persistent problems:

1. Teachers will seek the cooperation of the child’s parents and work with them to reach a satisfactory solution to these problems.
2. Teachers will also enlist help from the faculty council or their fellow faculty members. The weekly faculty meeting is the main forum for the discussion of such problems.
3. Teachers may recommend the child to the student care group. This may result in a recommendation for remedial and/or curative work.
4. A subject teacher will notify the class teacher when a child is having significant difficulties, especially if he/she is planning to contact the child’s parents regarding the situation.
5. It is suggested that when persistent problems of any type arise and meetings are scheduled to work on the situation, all parties involved should make an effort to make the agenda or purpose of the meeting

clear before the meeting occurs.

6. Parents are encouraged to bring a supportive friend along with them to any meeting with faculty and/or administrative staff.

In the case of serious or repeated misbehavior that disrupts, inconveniences, or affects the well-being of the class:

1. The class teacher will call the parents to set up a parent-teacher conference.
2. A contract may be created between the family and the school to set behavioral goals for the child, clearly explaining the area of concern, the procedure being used to monitor and modify the behavior, and the expected results. It will also clarify the steps to be taken following the contract period, such as renegotiating the contract, obtaining outside services, or considering dismissal of the child. The parent(s) will be asked to sign the contract.
3. In extreme cases, a child might be suspended from school for a day or longer or asked to leave the school.

All the adults in the community need to work together to support the disciplinary procedures. If parents are contacted about their child for any reason, they need to be aware that the contact is being made to help everyone involved work together for the benefit of the child.

Parents are encouraged to request a parent-teacher conference for any questions or concerns involving the discipline of their child.

Suspension and Expulsion Procedures

A student may be suspended or expelled for dangerous or destructive behavior. Such behavior may be physical but is not limited thereto. Actions that inflict emotional or psychological damage are also grounds for suspension or expulsion. Only under extreme circumstances is suspension a first resort. In non-emergency situations it will only be used when efforts to address the situation in less severe ways have proven unsuccessful.

When faced with a severe and immediate disciplinary problem, the class teacher may suspend a student for up to one day. In these cases, the notice of suspension will be issued by the class teacher. The child will be taken to the office. The parents will be notified immediately and asked to come to the school office to get their child. Prior to returning to class a conference will be held between the child's teacher and parent(s).

For all other one-day suspensions: A meeting between the parents, the teacher, and the faculty chair or administrator will be arranged, if possible, before the suspension is enacted.

Suspension of up to three days may be imposed only after consultation with a disciplinary committee consisting of the administrator, the faculty chair, the student's teacher, the student's parent(s), and at least one member of the faculty council. The purpose of this committee is to ensure that all perspectives have been considered. In instances where the parents feel it may be helpful, they may ask another parent from the class to participate with them in the meeting. As soon as possible after any suspension, the faculty council and the faculty as a whole are to be made aware of the situation and informed of the reasons for the suspension, of any and all attempts to deal with the situation short of suspension, and of the results of those attempts.

Expulsion is an extreme step which will be considered only after all other measures have been exhausted. The final responsibility for this action rests with the faculty. A notice of expulsion will be issued by all available members of the faculty council. The president, or, if the president is unavailable, another officer of the board, must be notified before the expulsion is enacted. The president (or officer) is to be informed of the reasons for expulsion, any and all attempts to deal with the situation short of expulsion, and the results of those attempts.

Playground and Recess Guidelines

Recess is a time for students to experience an out breath to their day, to have some fresh air and sunlight, and to move and play. We want to create a playground culture of safety, respect, and inclusiveness. Although there are many healthy activities for children, they can't all be allowed at recess time or on school grounds because of the number of children present. The following guidelines are in place for safety and to enable the playground to be shared by all of the grades:

- Anyone can join in a game or activity as long as they follow the rules of the game and play cooperatively.
- Play should be safe for oneself and others and not damage property or the plantings and trees.
- Climbing is only allowed on marked trees and on the playground equipment. Climbing on the mud oven, fence, roofs, tops of swings, or rails of playground structures isn't allowed.
- Pushing, shoving, wrestling, and tackling games aren't allowed.
- Play fighting with sticks isn't allowed, but imaginary "air" weapons used

against imaginary foes are allowed (i.e. fighting against a dragon).

- Games that use hockey sticks aren't allowed.
- Bikes, skateboards, scooters, and other wheeled transports aren't allowed, except to travel to and from school.
- The grassy area is reserved for free play; ball games like football and soccer need to be played on the blacktop.
- Students need to be on the playground. They are not allowed to play in the green space between the Landmark Center and the school.
- The south doorway and entryway need to remain clear. Students should be west of the western corner of the school building.
- Students are not allowed to play in the greenhouse or around the dumpsters and shed.
- Supervising teachers will observe the play and intervene to promote safety, respect, and inclusiveness. Students are encouraged to seek adult help if they are unable to resolve a conflict on their own.

Consequences: If a problem arises with an individual or small group, the person or persons are called aside. The first step is a warning. If the problem persists, the child must sit out for a time. If there is a serious infraction, then the child is sent inside to the office, or taken inside by the teacher or adult on duty. Any problem must be resolved before the child is permitted to return to play.

The children must be supervised on the playground. An adult must be on the playground whenever children are on the playground. Children must talk to the adult in charge and get permission to leave the playground.

The children must share the playground safely and equitably. Class teachers will inform their students of the boundaries. The playground supervisors will support those boundaries.

After school: When school is dismissed, children are expected to go home. No children may be in the gym, classrooms, or playground after school hours without adult supervision present.

Dog Policy

For health and safety reasons dogs (unless service/therapy dogs) are not allowed in the school buildings or on the school grounds on school days (8:00 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., Monday through Friday), festivals (Michaelmas, Martinmas, May Day, etc.) and during events (Holiday Faire, Grandparents Day, Open House, Friday Assemblies, workshops, etc.). We recognize that there may be

appropriate times when a dog should be allowed in the school for curriculum needs. For special exceptions, please call the school office.

Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy

No alcohol, tobacco products, or illegal drugs are allowed on school grounds. No alcohol or illegal drugs are allowed on school camping trips or any off-campus field trips. Discretionary tobacco use by adults is permissible when children are not present on overnight trips, and only in areas designated for smoking.

Student Accident Insurance Summary

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School has a student accident insurance policy that covers all students in case of injury due to an accident at school or during school-sponsored events. The following is a brief description of when the policy is activated:

Condition #1. Student accident insurance will be the primary coverage for families without insurance. It will cover all medical expenses outlined in the Description of Benefits.

Condition #2. Student accident insurance will cover the deductible of a family's primary insurance coverage.

Condition #3. Student accident insurance will cover co-payments. A list of benefits is available from the office upon request.

Conflict Resolution Process

Our school is filled with parents and staff who generally get along, but occasional tension is inevitable. A thoughtful and direct conversation can often resolve tension and we encourage all parents and staff to make this effort. When such a conversation doesn't help or proves impossible, the board of directors has a conflict resolution process. The process is meant to foster an opportunity for growth and change.

Conflict itself is not unhealthy, but when conflict is unresolved, it often undermines healthy working relationships. Please take time to work through conflict towards resolution. If you or someone you know is in conflict, we encourage you to take the following steps:

1. When you (person #1) feel you are in conflict with another person (person #2)—approach that person first and seek resolution. If this conversation does not resolve the conflict, then you should ask a

member of the conflict resolution group for help. You may do this either in writing or in person to the administrator.

2. Guidelines for writing a letter to the conflict resolution group.
 - a. State the problem or conflict clearly.
 - b. Provide specific examples that support what you are trying to say, including dates and names of those involved, if applicable.
 - c. Indicate possible actions that might help you resolve the conflict. Remember to keep the tone of your letter respectful of all parties involved.
3. The Conflict Resolution Group
 - a. This group will be composed of four members: a member of the administrative team, a faculty council representative, a personnel committee representative, and/or a board of directors representative; all agree to work with the practices of Social Inclusion and Compassionate Communication when appropriate and to participate in training sessions the school provides.
 - b. When any one member of the group receives a request for help, he/she becomes the facilitator. The facilitator will first speak with person #2, to see whether the conflict might be resolved with a meeting of this facilitator and persons #1 and #2.
 - c. If a simple resolution is not achieved, the facilitator will ask both persons #1 and #2 to each choose one member of the conflict resolution group to help further the process.
 - d. These 3 members of the group are considered sufficient for a meeting. The group will hear the facilitator's report and gather any further information needed from all parties involved.
 - e. This group may arrange a meeting between the individuals involved in the conflict as a way to further understand the issue. Both persons #1 and #2 may invite one other adult to such a meeting for support.
 - f. A timely, written response will be given to the person who brought the concern as well as to all other parties involved.
 - g. Recommendations from this group may include, but not be limited to, formal mediation, possible school policy changes, personnel recommendations, or written agreements between the parties involved.
 - h. The issue may be brought to other groups within the school. General, organizational themes will be presented, but not confidential information, such as personal information regarding employees of the school or other individuals involved in the conflict.

- i. The conflict resolution group chair will make a follow-up contact to assure resolution of the communication support process and will also report the resolution to the faculty council and the board.
4. The school reserves the right, through its representatives in the conflict resolution group, to decide that an issue has been explored sufficiently and that the process is concluded, even if an individual does not reach the conclusion he/she sought.

The Waldorf Curriculum

Curricula for Grades 1-8

GRADE ONE

Through the richness of FAIRY TALES and NATURE STORIES the children begin academic Main Lesson work which includes:

- Introduction to letters, writing, and reading
- Music, poetry, drama, and circle games
- Introduction to numbers and the four arithmetic processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division
- Imaginative pictures of the natural world

Subject Classes:

- Spanish
- Eurythmy
- Physical education
- Handwork, knitting
- Form drawing
- Watercolor painting
- Beeswax and clay modeling
- Practice in the language arts and mathematics
- Gardening

GRADE TWO

FABLES and LEGENDS provide the basis for Main Lesson work, which includes:

- Writing, reading, simple spelling
- Music, poetry, drama, and games
- Arithmetic – place value, further work with the four processes, regrouping, and the multiplication tables

- Imaginative pictures of the natural world

Subject Classes:

- Spanish
- Eurythmy
- Physical education
- Handwork, knitting
- Form drawing
- Watercolor painting
- Beeswax and clay modeling
- Practice in the language arts and mathematics
- Gardening

GRADE THREE

Hebrew legends provide the basis of the story curriculum. The children further their skill development in reading, writing, spelling, music, speech, and drama, and study the following Main Lesson Blocks:

- Elements of grammar – noun, verb, adjective, and adverb
- Creation stories
- Old Testament stories
- Living on the Earth – food, clothing and shelter
- Measurement- linear, weight, volume, time, and money
- Arithmetic – long multiplication, carrying, and borrowing

Subject Classes:

- Spanish
- Eurythmy
- Physical education
- Handwork, crocheting
- Form drawing leading to cursive handwriting, balanced forms
- Music, introducing musical notation
- Painting
- Beeswax and clay modeling
- Practice in the language arts and mathematics
- Gardening

GRADE FOUR

Main Lesson Blocks:

- Norse mythology
- Local geography and history

- Zoology – study of human and animal
- Arithmetic – introduction of fractions and long division
- Grammar – all parts of speech
- Writing – letters, reports

Subject Classes:

- Spanish
- Eurythmy
- Physical education
- Handwork, cross-stitch
- Form drawing – braided interwoven forms and Celtic knots
- Music
- Painting
- Clay modeling
- Practice in the language arts and mathematics
- Gardening

GRADE FIVE

Main Lesson Blocks:

- Geometry, freehand drawing
- Mythology and history of ancient civilizations – China, India, Persia, Egypt, and Greece
- Arithmetic – decimals
- Geography of North America
- Botany

Subject Classes:

- Spanish
- Eurythmy
- Physical education, with a focus on the pentathlon events
- Handwork, advanced knitting
- Chorus and instrumental music
- Painting
- Clay modeling
- Practice in language arts and mathematics
- Gardening

GRADE SIX

Main Lesson Blocks:

- Business math

- Geometric drawing with instruments
- Physics
- Geology
- World geography (by the end of eighth grade all continents will have been studied)
- Roman and medieval history

Subject Classes:

- Spanish
- Eurythmy
- Physical education
- Handwork, hand sewing, and soft sculpture
- Chorus and instrumental music
- Painting
- Clay modeling
- Practice in language arts and mathematics
- Gardening

GRADE SEVEN

Main Lesson Blocks:

- Human fertility
- Physics
- Creative writing
- Algebra and geometry
- World geography (by the end of eighth grade all continents will have been studied)
- Renaissance, Reformation, and the Age of Discovery
- Astronomy
- Anatomy and physiology
- Inorganic chemistry

Subject Classes:

- Continue as in grade 6
- Handwork, pattern making, and metal embossing
- Eurythmy
- Gardening

GRADE EIGHT

Main Lesson Blocks:

- Class play

- Composition, grammar, and literature (the short story)
- Algebra and geometry
- Physics
- Physiology and anatomy
- Organic chemistry
- World geography (by the end of eighth grade all continents will have been studied)
- American history
- Modern world history

Subject Classes:

- Continue as in grade 7
- Handwork, machine sewing, and block printing
- Eurythmy culminating in a performance
- Gardening

FOREIGN LANGUAGE: Spanish is the foreign language taught at PRWS. It is important that the children are immersed in an environment of language and culture that opens the heart and mind to different ways of being and thinking.

In grades 1 through 3 the focus is on verses, songs, stories, and games. Classes are conducted as much as possible in the foreign language. Using props, drawings, gestures, and movements the general meaning is expressed.

Beginning in grade 4, the children are ready to bring to consciousness what they already know and build upon it. Recitation, songs, speech exercises, grammar, translation, reading, and writing are all part of the language lessons in grades 4 through 8.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: The physical education program at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is a regular part of the curriculum designed to support and enhance the academic work in the classroom, working with the physical development of the child in exercise and sport.

Physical education through the grades has an inbreathing and outbreathing of movement as we work with the children to develop skill and coordination.

In the primary grades the activity is kept to simple skills practice, movement, and games. As the children grow, movement becomes more advanced, skills increase, and more challenging games are played.

The program at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School is based on Bothmer gymnastics, developed in Europe in the early 1900s by Count von Bothmer,

and on Spatial Dynamics, the work of Jaimen McMillan with Alheidis von Bothmer to bring this study of movement to contemporary education. As in other activities at school, Bothmer gymnastics begins simply in the early grades and develops in complexity and skill as students advance through the grades.

EURYTHMY: This class translates the content of the curriculum into movement. Speech and music exercises and forms (choreography) provide the framework of the curriculum. These forms awaken and enhance the social fabric of the class. In the early grades, forms and exercises come to life through storytelling. In the middle and upper grades, there is a conscious working with the eurythmy gestures to create visible speech and music in an artistic process. The emphasis is on contraction/expansion, concentration, geometric forms, and rhythm exercises, followed by work with copper rods.

The eurythmy curriculum culminates in the middle of eighth grade with a performance of a Fairy Tale.

PRACTICAL ARTS: The handwork curriculum is developed to teach children practical skills while making something useful and aesthetically pleasing. As the children become older, the complexity of fine motor control, design, and spatial visualization increases.

Other abilities that are cultivated are respect for materials, self-directed work, problem solving, socialization, and the development of the will.

Handwork through the grades follows an orderly progression of skill and complexity. Work begins in first grade with finger crochet, finger knitting, and knitting with needles. Second grade continues knitting and begins purling. Third grade is introduced to crochet and uses all of these skills in more complex ways. Simple weaving and sewing are introduced. Cross stitch and embroidery are added in the fourth grade. In fifth grade, four-needle knitting is taught by knitting mittens or socks. Sixth grade is the start of more complicated and difficult sewing projects such as sewing dolls and animals. Seventh and eighth grades work with garment construction and sewing machines.

MUSIC PROGRAM: The music program encompasses both vocal and instrumental music. In grades 1 and 2, students sing primarily pentatonic music, and singing is generally combined with movement. Students also learn to play the Choroï interval and pentatonic flutes. In third grade, the emphasis shifts to the major keys and students begin to learn to sing in harmony, starting with simple ostinato and rounds. They begin to learn music notation and continue in later grades to learn basic music theory and develop sight-reading

skills. Students also learn to play the recorder and continue to play the recorder in general music classes in grades 4 and 5. In grades 4 and 5, students learn to play a string instrument. Chorus is introduced as a subject class in grade 5 and continues through grade 8. This is a time when students begin to look at themselves and the world more critically, and they are capable of bringing a more conscious discipline to their singing. Students in grades 6-8 also participate in a large instrumental ensemble, either string orchestra or recorder ensemble.

Festivals

The Waldorf curriculum speaks to the sensitivity in the child to daily rhythm and the larger rhythms of the year. Wonder, reverence, respect, and gratitude are cultivated through opening and closing daily verses, verses of thankfulness at mealtime, song, and poetry throughout the day. Stories of multicultural heroes and heroines, gods, saints, and other figures paint for the child the images that can awaken moral behavior.

Seasonal festivals are celebrated at school to mark important changes as we move through the year. Through these festivals, the school seeks to cultivate a sense of community among children and teachers, parents, and friends. In planning festival celebrations, the faculty considers the qualities of the season to be celebrated; courage, strength, and perseverance at Michaelmas; developing our inner light through sharing and self-sacrifice at Martinmas; quiet hope and anticipation at Advent; love and inner light at Christmas and the winter solstice; the springtime transformation and rebirth; gaiety and celebration of nature at May Day.

MICHAELMAS takes place on or near September 29, near the autumnal equinox when days grow short and darkness increases. Saint Michael, the protector of mankind who overcomes a dragon, inspires qualities of courage, compassion, and steadfastness. Children and teachers share songs, poems, and a play about the brave knight who conquers a dragon with a sword of light.

MARTINMAS, the Festival of St. Martin, is observed on or near November 11. The Feast of Saint Martin commemorates a Roman soldier who shared his cloak with a shivering beggar. In kindergarten through grade 4, children make lanterns and are joined by community members for a lantern walk.

THE ADVENT SPIRAL begins a time of preparation for the Festival of Light. Advent calendars appear in the classrooms and the children walk through the Advent spiral, a pathway of pine boughs leading to a candle in the center. As each child walks through the spiral, they light their own candle from the center

candle and place it along the path, creating a spiral of light that shines out into the winter darkness.

SANTA LUCIA visits our school on her feast day, December 13. Eighth grade girls take turns dressed as Santa Lucia, while the entire eighth grade visits the other classrooms and YIHS, singing, and bearing a gift of saffron bread.

THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHT brings the school community together on the last day of school before the holiday break. The school children share the results of the first semester's study, with both students and teachers presenting solstice and Christmas plays and songs.

EPIPHANY/MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY is celebrated after the holiday break and close to the national holiday for Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK). It is a celebration of diversity and hope, of honoring the day when the Christ child was made manifest to the world at large. Dr. King's own personal epiphany led him to stand before others in truth and peace as he spoke of the need to transform the injustices of our society.

MAY DAY is celebrated on or near May 1 with music, flower crowns, and traditional Maypole dancing. A plant sale by the 7th grade class is held, as a fundraiser for their 8th grade class trip.

OTHER EVENTS: In addition to the festivals, the school year usually includes an Opening Day ceremony on the first day of school, Grandparents & Special Friends Day in October, the Holiday Faire on the first weekend in December, fall and spring music concerts, eighth grade presentations, the 5th grade pentathlon in May, and class plays throughout the year. See the school calendar for specifics.

FRIDAY ASSEMBLIES: Please see the schedule, available on the website and in the school office.

FIELD TRIPS: Classes may take short field trips within walking distance of the school. For longer day trips, notification will be sent home, informing parents about the nature of the trip, and also ensuring that they are aware of and supportive of extended trips away from the school campus by signing a permission slip. Sometimes parents are asked to help with driving for these trips. Parent drivers are to provide a copy of their driver's license and "proof of auto insurance" to the office manager as required by our insurance company. All volunteers will also need a background check completed within 24 hours of the field trip. This is paid for by the school.

As the children get older, more extended trips may be planned and some of these trips may involve overnight travel and additional fees; signed permission slips will be required for each trip beyond the Viroqua area.

Admissions

Admissions are limited by the maximum class size, as well as an assessment by the class teacher and the subject teachers to determine if the school or class has the resources to meet the child's needs. The school, at its choice, may decline to accept the enrollment of a student.

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School will begin accepting applications on the first weekday of February for the following school year. Applications will be time-stamped and considered in the order received. The application window will close on the third Thursday of April. After this window, applications will continue to be accepted on a space-available basis.

The enrollment and outreach coordinator will guide parents through the enrollment process. It is important that parents considering enrollment for their child/ren have an understanding of the foundations of Waldorf education. This can be discussed during school tours or at information events when available.

INFORMATION EVENTS are held every year in early spring. Members of the faculty and staff give a presentation on Waldorf education. Student work is on display, and a tour of the classrooms is usually offered.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS FOR NEW STUDENTS:

1. Contact the enrollment and outreach coordinator for an information packet, which provides an introduction to Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School and to Waldorf education.
2. Tour the school grounds with the enrollment and outreach coordinator.
3. Read the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School parent handbook, which outlines the school's guidelines, policies, and procedures.
4. Fill out an application form, provided in the information packet.
5. Upon our receipt of application, along with the \$50 fee, the enrollment and outreach coordinator will arrange to have the child/ren visit the classroom. A visit of at least two days is required for students entering in the grades. Children entering kindergarten will attend a Kindergarten Morning with their parents. With summer enrollments, the classroom visit may be waived at the discretion of the teachers.
6. A parent interview with the class and subject teachers will be arranged. This is a meeting for parents only.

7. Previous school records will be requested and reviewed by the class teacher.
8. A letter is sent to inform parents if the student may join the class. Accompanying the letter are registration papers, health/immunization forms, and the Participation and Financial Commitment (PFC) form.
9. The family is accepted into the class but is only fully enrolled after a meeting is completed with the development director to discuss tuition/fundraising commitment, and volunteer involvement in the school. Parents will be informed at that time about the school budget so they can make a well-informed commitment of support.
10. Parents submit registration paperwork along with PFC form, and tuition adjustment paperwork, if applicable.
11. Parents will attend a New Parent Orientation when available.

The enrollment process will be complete when a PFC agreement has been made, signed by the parents, and accepted by the school.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS FOR SIBLINGS OF CHILDREN ALREADY ENROLLED:

1. Request an application form from the enrollment and outreach coordinator, who guides families through the enrollment process.
2. An application fee is requested for each child. Steps 4 through 11 above will be followed.

PLACEMENT POLICY & WAITING LIST GUIDELINES:

If Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School receives more applicants than we have seats available, a waiting list will be created. An application must be submitted before a child is placed on the waiting list. Students from the waiting list may be selected when a place opens in the class and/or when the teacher is ready to integrate a new student. Applications will be considered in the order we receive them, with priority given to:

- Children of faculty/staff
- Siblings of current students

Additionally, in the kindergarten there will be special consideration given to maintaining a mixed-age group.

The kindergarten may welcome new students in November, January, or after spring break, providing time for the class to form at the beginning of the school year.

Grade classes have more open enrollment but may choose to integrate new students at the beginning of a new block, rather than in the middle. The start date will be determined through conversation with the class teacher and enrollment and outreach coordinator. Students may begin only when there is a signed contract and tuition agreement. PFC meetings will be scheduled once a placement is determined.

AGE REQUIREMENT AND GRADE PLACEMENT:

The curriculum used in Waldorf Schools strives to meet the development needs of the children at each age level; therefore, it is important that each child is placed in the developmentally appropriate grade. Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School has guidelines for grade placement.

A child should be toilet trained and at least three and a half years old by September 1 to be considered for enrollment in the kindergarten, which is composed of children ages three and half to six years old. A child should be six years old by June 1 to be considered for first grade. This age pattern continues through the grades.

Individual assessments and family interviews are scheduled for children who enter Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School from another school. The teacher of the grade that the child is applying for recommends grade placement, in consultation with another faculty member.

Kindergarten children who are being considered for first grade are reviewed by the kindergarten faculty in the spring and a recommendation is then made for placement. Parents may be involved in this process through ongoing conferences.

If there is a question between parents and teachers on a child's grade placement, the following procedure is used: further evaluation and observation is done by the teachers of the grade in which the parents feel their child should be placed. Teachers of the grades involved make a recommendation for placement which is implemented and evaluated after a three-month trial period.

Parent Commitments

In the enrollment meeting with each family, parents are asked to sign a form indicating that they agree to make the following commitments to the school:

- To pay tuition promptly and in full.
- To make a fundraising commitment of \$500 per parent. This can be

accomplished via the school sponsored raffle or by donation.

- To participate in the life of the school through volunteerism.
- To participate in class meetings and all-school meetings.
- To read the Parent Handbook and support school policies.
- To be open to learning about the Waldorf philosophy of education.

The first two of these commitments are discussed in the sections following.

Tuition & Fees

To complete the enrollment process at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School, it is necessary to complete and sign a Participation and Financial Commitment (PFC) form. The persons signing the commitment are legally responsible for the agreed tuition payment to the school.

Tuition for the entire school year is officially due on July 1. Alternatively, we offer multiple payment options as a courtesy to school families. With these extended-payment options, the school is virtually extending credit to families and prompt tuition payments are required. To that end, tuition payment plans will require either automatic withdrawal from a bank account (ACH) or post-dated checks for the entire school year.

All payment plans are due by June 15 for returning families and the first day of school for new families. Children may not attend without a payment plan in place. A late fee of \$250 will be assessed to all returning families who have not submitted payment plans by June 15. Tuition paid in full by June 15 will receive a \$200 per student discount. The school budget is largely based on tuition for the full school year.

Please contact the business coordinator if payment plans need to be changed. Parents' decision to withdraw a child during the year does not necessarily reduce all their financial commitment. See the "Withdrawal" policy on page 50 for details.

Extra fees may include instrument rental and class field trips. Additionally, parents may need to provide tutoring, remedial services, or private lessons if academic support is recommended.

Fundraising Commitment

To keep tuition and fees affordable, the school relies on all fundraising programs and activities as a key part of its income for the current year's budget. The school's annual raffle, the primary fundraising activity, has been

developed to help parents meet their mandatory \$500 fundraising commitment, if chosen. The fundraising commitment is described in detail on the PFC form and is discussed with every family in their enrollment meeting. Additional information is available on page 9.

Participation & Financial Commitment (PFC) Policy

Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School has developed a funding system for the parent portion of the budget for the school year. The system uses the following four fundamental elements to sustainably fund the school:

- Tuition of \$9,200 per grade student and \$7,200 per kindergarten student for the 2023-2024 school year.
- An adjustment process for those unable to pay the stated tuition.
- The collective fundraising goal for the entire parent community, which breaks down to a \$500 commitment per parent.

The tuition system was developed to address accountability questions and more accurately assess family financial contribution potential. Two main tenets of the system are that:

- Pleasant Ridge Waldorf school will accept any family that is willing to work with the school, is committed to holding Waldorf education high on their list of financial priorities and will make reasonable effort to pay for the education being offered.
- We continue our commitment to make Waldorf education available to all families who value the Waldorf curriculum.

This system looks to every family, first, for a commitment to the Waldorf curriculum and secondly, a financial commitment to PRWS.

The tuition is determined by the Finance committee each January, based on the projected cost of education per child at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School.

For families who are unable to pay the full tuition that is published, Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School will conduct a process of financial appraisal to determine an adjusted tuition which relates to each family's ability to contribute. The family's tuition is allocated in proportion to its appraised financial condition.

Families paying the published tuition amount per student will not need to participate in the financial appraisal process.

Tuition Adjustment Process

To participate in the tuition adjustment process for your family, please complete all questions, date, and sign the tuition adjustment form, and return it **with a copy of your most recent federal income tax return. We will not be able to process the adjustment without tax data.**

Please also have available for review any additional documents that may be needed to support claims of undeclared income, expenses, and net worth. The adjustment is not intended to support a family's discretionary expenses such as large amounts of home or property equity, second home, investment portfolios, etc. Having any of these does not preclude an adjustment, although will be taken into consideration in relation to the school's needs.

We expect all families to pay their adjusted tuition amount. Families unable to pay their adjusted tuition may request an additional adjustment by preparing a detailed written explanation to present to the business coordinator and the finance committee.

Appraisal Confidentiality: The information provided by families participating in the tuition adjustment process will be handled in a confidential manner by the finance committee.

Late Payment Policy: Payments due to the school include the tuition and fundraising commitments.

A family ending the school fiscal year on June 30 with an unpaid balance must have the previous year's balance paid in full or have an installment plan established with the business coordinator by the start of the school year in order for students to return to school. Please see the business coordinator for payment plan arrangements.

Withdrawing from the School

We consider withdrawal from school during the school year a serious matter that should be jointly discussed by the parents, class teacher, faculty chair, and administration. Parents should give at least one month's notice of desire to withdraw to allow ample time for consideration of the circumstances and for the class and teachers to have time for completing projects and saying farewells. It is requested that parents who are withdrawing their child from Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School (whether during or between school years) grant the school the opportunity to hear reasons for withdrawal, so that all concerned might learn and grow from the experience.

It may happen that the faculty or administration feels it necessary to request that a student be withdrawn from the class. This is not a process that the school undertakes lightly.

Parents may be asked to withdraw their child:

- If a conflict between parent and school philosophy cannot be resolved satisfactorily.
- If the school is unable to meet the child's particular needs.
- If the child's parents fail to uphold their financial responsibilities.
- If it becomes increasingly clear that a student's presence in the class continually makes the learning process untenable for the class.

If it should be necessary to ask that a student be withdrawn, a process is followed:

- Conference of parents with the class teacher and faculty chair.
- If the withdrawal is due to financial circumstances, there will be a conference with parents, class teacher, and administrator.

Parents will be notified of serious problems warranting possible dismissal, and time will be given for discussion and appropriate action. If the school asks parents to withdraw their child, payments will be due to the school in proportion to the months of school the child attended (i.e. withdrawal at the end of October means 2/9 of total payment is due).

If parents decide to withdraw their child(ren), the financial obligation will be calculated as follows:

- Withdrawal prior to September 1, 25% of the total amount is due.
- Withdrawal prior to November 1, 50% of total amount is due.
- Withdrawal prior to January 1, 75% of total amount is due.
- Withdrawal on or after January 1, 100% of total amount is due.

Intent to withdraw should be given **in writing** and must be acknowledged by the school administration by the deadlines listed above. The financial obligation includes the fundraising participation commitment. When parents decide to re-enroll their child(ren) after having withdrawn them, any outstanding tuition or fundraising balance due must be paid in full before re-enrollment will be considered.

Depending on the reasons for the withdrawal, the school has the right to require a meeting of parents, administration, and possibly class teacher(s), to determine whether those concerned can work together effectively and

harmoniously.

For students returning during the same school year, parents should write a letter of intent to the enrollment and outreach coordinator. For students returning in a new school year, parents should follow steps for admissions in that section of this handbook, filling out a re-enrollment application rather than an enrollment application.

Release of School Records

Student records will be sent directly to the requesting school upon receipt of a written request from them. Because our written reports may contain comments that are for the parents and may not be understood readily by those who have limited familiarity with the child and family, we will sometimes edit reports sent to other schools. Only official school records may be released and not those of independent agencies.

Other Resources

Recommended Reading List

- *Waldorf Education: A Family Guide*, ed. by Pamela Fenner & Karen L. Rover
- *Simplicity Parenting*, Kim John Payne
- *Soul of Discipline*, Kim John Payne
- *Teaching as a Journey*, Torin Finser
- *Toward Wholeness: Waldorf Education in America*, M. C. Richards
- *You are Your Child's First Teacher*, Rahima Baldwin
- *Teaching as a Lively Art*, Marjorie Spock
- *Creativity in Education: The Waldorf Approach*, Rene Querido
- *An Introduction to Waldorf Education*, Henry Barnes
- *Education in Search of the Spirit*, John Fentress Gardner
- *Youth Longs to Know*, John Fentress Gardner
- *Understanding Waldorf Education: Teaching from the Inside Out*, by Jack Petrash
- *Renewal: A Journal for Waldorf Education*, can be ordered at www.waldorfeducation.org
- www.waldorftoday.com
- See p. 23 for resources regarding media use.

Any of the above titles may be available in the parent library or from the admissions office.

