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*We receive the children in reverence,  
Educate them in love,  
And let them go forth in freedom.  
~ Rudolf Steiner*

### **Winterberry Charter School Mission**

Winterberry nurtures and promotes the development of healthy, responsible and creative human beings. Our aim is to provide a holistic learning environment and demonstrate that all children are natural and inspired learners who can achieve. Inspired by Waldorf educational methods, our integrated curriculum seeks to provide each student with meaningful, hands-on, developmentally appropriate experiences that inspire learning and personal growth.

### **Winterberry Charter School Shared Values**

Balance Community Mindfulness Growth Empathy Connection Courage Freedom Respect

### **Winterberry School History: The Birth of a School**

The concept of a public Waldorf School in Anchorage began with a conversation between mothers. We had experienced private Waldorf education and became completely enamored with the philosophy and devoted to making it available to all children. Four mothers with a singular vision founded what would become Winterberry Charter School. We were not teachers or principals. We had a vision of a beautiful school, joyful children, committed families and devoted teachers that loved Waldorf Education as much as we did. We had no idea what was involved in starting a charter school, but knew the State of Alaska had adopted the Charter School Initiative. We began meeting with the Anchorage School District's charter school liaison to begin the process of starting a school. We knew there were many Public Waldorf Charter Schools in existence in the U.S. thus providing a model of success that helped us forge ahead. We had many families and friends that joined our cause and together after much work, with many meetings in parks, on dining room tables, and in public coffee houses, the Anchorage School Board along with the Alaska Department of Education granted our Charter. A school was founded. Just days after our school was chartered, we attended the first ever, Public Waldorf School Conference, at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, California. Winterberry Charter School opened in the Fall of 2005. We did not make the enrollment numbers needed to meet our budget and our school building was not quite ready but our teachers were there and eager! The first years were not easy but with strong leadership and a commitment to having Waldorf certified teachers, our newly formed Parent Guild worked diligently to raise funds to provide summer training. Winterberry took its first steps. We sought out school mentors that would support us in nurturing our teachers, charter council, parent guild and community thus parenting our development towards a healthy living school. These past 10 years have been an extraordinary growing experience for Winterberry's community. It is the dedication and love, our teachers and community give to this wonderful school that make it a beautiful place to educate children.

## **A note about the Parent, Student, Teacher Handbook**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with a guide to finding your way into the life of Winterberry Charter School (Winterberry). The role of parents and staff at Winterberry are vital ones; your involvement and understanding of the objectives are basic to the school's success.

It is hoped that the information in this handbook will clarify school policy, provide information about Waldorf education and, most importantly, act as an invitation to explore your own personal connection to the school.

The production of this handbook has been a collective effort that continues to evolve. We are grateful to all whose work this handbook is built upon. It has been designed to be a permanent, easily update-able manual for reference throughout your child's life in the school. Updates will be provided periodically; each page is numbered so the updates can be inserted quickly in the correct place. The school will save a great deal of time, expense and paper with this system. Please take care of this handbook as it will provide you with answers to many questions over the years.

We have tried to anticipate every possible subject, but if you still have further questions, this handbook and its accompanying directory should help you find the right person to answer them. Errors, insufficiencies and omissions may have occurred in the making of this handbook. Please pass your comments on to the Winterberry Parent Guild and/or the Winterberry Faculty Council.

We look forward to a successful and exciting school year. Thank you for choosing to join the Winterberry community.

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## **Absences**

Send your child's class teacher and the front office an email when you know your child will be absent. The Anchorage School District recently adopted a new absence policy: absences are counted as unexcused unless a parent contacts the front office to excuse their child's absence within 3 days of that absence. Any child who reaches six unexcused absences will be marked as "at risk" in the district's attendance system. If a child reaches 10 unexcused absences, the school principal will contact the family for a meeting. The district has deemed these five circumstances as reasons an absence can be excused:

- 1) Legitimate illness
- 2) Death or serious illness in child's immediate family
- 3) Participation in a school event
- 4) Attendance at a religious event
- 5) Extenuating circumstances (must be approved by school principal)

All other absences, including family vacations, are considered "unexcused". Missing school days severely impacts students' learning, sense of rhythm, and comfort within the classroom community. Because the Waldorf grades learn through stories presented by their teacher and captured in their own textbooks and because students' learning depends upon their hearing of stories, participation in daily and weekly rhythms, experience of activities, and inclusion in their class' socially rich environment, it is impossible to recreate missed days of school. Daily attendance is clearly crucial! The faculty at Winterberry strongly encourages families to schedule all trips to take place during school holidays.

If, on the other hand, your child is showing symptoms of illness or is ill, the best place for her to be is at home, resting in the company of a parent. If we suspect a child is ill, we will do our best to soothe and comfort the child, and may notify a parent or guardian to pick him or her up from school. Children with a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher will be sent home for the day. We strive to maintain a healthy environment for all students, and parents can help by keeping sick children at home.

## **Bathroom**

Please be sure to bring your young child to the bathroom before coming into the classroom. This will help your child develop the habit of using the bathroom before school, and will cut down on bathroom interruptions during class. Please let your classroom teacher know if your child has special bathroom needs. Older students are also expected to use the bathroom before class and during transitions.

## **Birthdays and Birthday Invitations**

For the teacher, a birthday provides an opportunity to know the child more deeply, observing his or her special gifts, strengths, weaknesses and growth in the past year. Each class celebrates or acknowledges the birthday child in its own way. Celebrations are generally more elaborate in the kindergarten, but usually a shared snack from home accompanies a birthday celebration throughout the grades.

If your child wishes to invite all of the children in his or her class to a birthday celebration away from school, you are welcome to distribute party invitations at school. However, if invitations are selective, we ask that you extend them away from school.

## **Child Study**

Child study is a uniquely Waldorf way of looking at a child whose inner being is mysterious to his or her teacher/s. It is a whole-staff study, and the study remains confidential in the same way that others conversations about children in staff meeting do. This process is not part of special education, though on occasion children we hold in child study make their way into that system. Often the child exhibits traditional behavior or learning difficulties, but not always. The process of child study is a two or three week rhythm, depending on the nature of the child being held in this way by the staff . At the first meeting, the teacher presents the child in as holistic and objective a way as possible: the key word is observation. Once the staff knows which child is under consideration, every member makes a point, in the following week, to observe that child for a few moments in an unobtrusive way. The second meeting, we share our objective observations, and then the teacher shares his or her concerns regarding that child. If time allows, we turn our attention to practical advise to that teacher. The results of our study are then shared with the parents and a new child is considered for child study.

## **Class Coordinators**

One great volunteer opportunity is being the classroom coordinator for your child's class. Although the needs of each individual teacher are different, there are some duties that all classroom coordinators perform:

- Creating a parent contact directory for the class: A very important task is collecting contact information from the other parents in the class and putting it into a document for use by all . This can include emails, phone numbers, and addresses that families are willing to share with each other. This provides a great resource for parents and students for coordinating play dates and other after school activities.
- Maintaining a class email list: Although some teachers prefer to send class emails themselves, sometimes it is helpful to have the classroom coordinator send out group emails to the class.
- Finding volunteers for specific projects: Usually, finding volunteers for field trips and other class needs is not a problem. Sometimes, though, a field trip comes up at short notice or no one volunteered for a needed task. The classroom coordinator will sometimes be asked to call other class parents to fill a specific need. Other similar tasks include maintaining a sign-up sheet for bringing in bread, soup, snack items, or flowers if your class does any of this.
- Coordinating classroom volunteers for school wide events such as Enchanted Village and Winter Faire. The classroom coordinator plays a vital role in making sure the volunteer slots are filled and the rooms are transformed for the event, as well as returned to its normal state ready for school after the event. Although the classroom coordinator may find another parent to take on coordinating the volunteers, making sure this is covered is a critical responsibility.

Serving a class as the classroom coordinator is a very rewarding way to get in your volunteer hours. It's a great way to meet and get to know the other parents in your class. If you are interested in taking on this responsibility, please talk to your child's teacher to let them know you would like to help them in this very necessary way. Thank you for all you do to help make our community strong!

## **Curriculum**

The Waldorf curriculum is coordinated with the three phases of growth and development through which all children pass before reaching maturity. The first period extends from birth

through age seven. During this time, children learn through imitation, absorbing not only the words and gestures of those around them but the moral climate as well. The second period begins about the age of seven, when the child realizes new power through the forces of imagination and memory. The third period begins at puberty, when the child becomes aware of physiological changes. This is a time of increasing independence of thought and turbulent emotions for the child.

The curriculum reflects the idea that each child's development retraces the history of civilization. Therefore, the child learns to read after learning to write just as reading followed the development of notational systems. As the children become more interested in the practical aspects of life, the curriculum of the third grade moves to the practical arts such as cooking, farming and house building. A growing interest in social development in fifth grade leads the children into a study of ancient civilizations and issues of government. As children reach the seventh and eighth grades, they learn to think more abstractly and are introduced to the study of algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry and cause and effect in history.

The following is a description for each grade's general curriculum. Each grade focuses on speech and articulation through verse and song.

- **Kindergarten**

The Kindergarten program is based on the conviction that imitation of what is meaningful and true in life is the most important activity for strengthening and nurturing the young child. The Kindergarten provides a warm homelike atmosphere, and an opportunity for children to learn through imitation and play.. Play is a child's real work and way of learning. Fairy tales and other stories, regular creative activities, sharing of tasks, and group play are balanced in the rhythm of the day. The rhythm of the week is also carefully planned. There is a certain predictable pattern that the children can rely on, knowing that bread baking, for example, occurs each and every Wednesday, and painting each Monday.

Kindergarten is the time for the child to live in his/her imagination. The children become very engaged, for instance, in creating houses from cloth, performing puppet shows and plays and building with wood. It is also the time to develop social skills with playmates and teachers; the children learn to listen, to share, to help and to respect each other.

Circle time, time for singing games, verses and poems, nature stories, drama and beautiful seasonal songs, also play a part in the kindergarten experience. All are learned through imitation. Through the rhythm of word, music and movement, we work toward the integration of the whole being of the child, right down to fingers and toes.

- **First Grade**

Fairy tales, folk tales and nature stories, pictorial and phonetic introduction to letters and numerals; form drawing; reading approached through writing; qualities of numbers; introduction of the four processes in arithmetic and beginning multiplication tables (2, 5, 10's).

- **Second Grade**

Legends and animal fables, reading and writing. Arithmetic, times tables, place value, carrying and borrowing. Elements of grammar and cursive writing.

- **Third Grade**

Hebrew stories. Study of practical life: farming, housing, clothing. Reading, spelling, writing, composition, grammar, punctuation and parts of speech. Cursive writing practice. More complexity in the four math processes; weights, measure, and money.

- **Fourth Grade**

Norse mythology and sagas. Composition and letter writing. Local and state history, local geography and map making. Study of the animal kingdom. Fractions. Sleepover at Seward SeaLife Center.

- **Fifth Grade**

Greek myths, ancient civilizations through Greek times. North American geography related to vegetation, agriculture and economics. Composition, grammar, spelling and reading. Arithmetic: decimals, ratios and proportion. Botany. Greek letters and languages.

- **Sixth Grade**

Roman and medieval history. European and African geography, mineralogy, physics (acoustics, electricity, magnetism, optics and heat). Composition, grammar, spelling, biographies. Introduction to algebra, geometric drawing with instruments. Botany, astronomy and introduction to Latin. Kachemak Bay Trip.

- **Seventh Grade**

Arthurian legends. Voyages of discovery. The Renaissance. World geography. Physics (mechanics), physiology (blood and muscles), astronomy and inorganic chemistry, Composition, grammar, spelling, literature, arithmetic.

- **Eighth Grade**

Literature (short story, letters, dramatic contrast in Shakespearean drama), composition, grammar and spelling. Arithmetic (review of solids and measurement), algebra, grammar, world economic geography, American history. Physics (hydraulics), organic chemistry, physiology, meteorology. Eighth grade trip. Circus.

### **Artistic Activity**

Artistic Activity permeates every aspect of the curriculum. Children experience accomplishment when they create something useful and beautiful with their own hands. Drawing with crayons and colored pencils and beautiful penmanship are integral parts of main lesson work. Modeling with beeswax and clay and painting supplement the main lesson work. The power of concentration awakens as the child learns to knit and crochet and later, to sew and embroider. Handwork develops discipline, exercises the will and builds skill. In woodworking, the child finds the joy of working artistically with form and substance using a piece of wood that he or she must first come to understand in terms of geometry and platonic forms.

### **Main Lesson**

The class teacher covers one of the principle academic subjects, such as English, history, science and math, for two hours each morning. Generally, the subject, or block, changes after three or four weeks. The concentration achieved in the main lesson blocks allows each subject to be pursued in depth and with continuity. Subjects such as English and mathematics, which need frequent practice, are taught both in main lesson and as special subjects throughout each block.

Students put great care into creating their own “main lesson books”, rather than using conventional textbooks. The class teacher presents the material; from the base of his or her own study, experience, and memory in a lively, artistic and engaging way, most often through oral storytelling. The children take in the lesson, are given time to “sleep” on it, and reflect it back through work in class that ultimately is entered into the Main Lesson Book. They carefully write and beautifully illustrate a book for each subject. A main lesson book on chemistry, for example, may include quotations from early chemists and philosophers, pictures of fire and poems about fire, a detailed description

of experiments done in class, and qualities of fire that were demonstrated in those experiments. These books become a beautiful and valuable record of each child's particular style and are a source of pride for the child.

### **Language Arts**

The language arts program includes speech, handwriting, reading, grammar, composition, dictation, creative writing, theater arts, and world literature. These elements are woven through the entire curriculum and emphasized in specific blocks.

The reciting of poetry and telling of stories in the kindergarten form the beginning of the language arts program. In first grade, children begin writing in their main lesson books, and out of this activity they learn to read. The poems and stories that they have heard now become part of the material for writing and reading. By the end of second grade, the children make the transition from reading what they have written and illustrated in their main lesson books to reading aloud from a reader.

The class begins composing summaries of main lesson stories under the guidance of the teacher. This leads to individually prepared written material for the main lesson book. The guidance provided in the early years allows the children to develop their own creativity in language and writing skills. Upper grade students also receive additional instruction in English. Material covered includes spelling rules, grammar, creative writing and oral presentation.

### **Mathematics**

Written numerals are introduced in the first grade. The children explore the qualitative and quantitative aspects of numbers. They practice the four processes of addition, multiplication, subtraction and division in many lively ways such as stamping and clapping, walking geometric patterns, number games, stories and drawings.

Progressing through the grades, the children master the basics of arithmetic and then go on to work with fractions, ratios, decimals and percentages. Algebraic concepts are introduced in seventh and eighth grade.

Geometry is included in the curriculum in a wide variety of ways throughout the eight grades. In the first grade, the children walk straight lines, circles, triangles, rectangles and pentagons before beginning to draw them. Freehand geometrical drawing becomes more refined throughout the years and develops in the sixth grade into precise geometrical constructions using a compass, straightedge and protractor. Seventh and eighth graders create complex geometrical forms and proofs. Included in the study of mathematics are the history of number systems and biographies of the world's great mathematicians.

### **Science**

The study of science at Winterberry is brought to the children as an experience first; followed by observation and ending with concept. Nature stories present the natural world in imaginative pictures that foster a love and reverence for the earth and every creature. The children experience the seasonal rhythms and gifts of



the earth within the nurturing setting of Winterberry and the natural setting of the greenbelt and trail system that adjoins the school's property. Initially, nature stories present the outside world in imaginative pictures. In third grade, the children study farming, housing and measurement. The fourth grade science curriculum broadens to include the study of the human being and animal. The fifth grade expends to botany and the sixth, to mineralogy.

In the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, studies become more specific. Astronomy, physics, chemistry and physiology are introduced, with scientific concepts arising directly out of the artistic experiences of the early grades. For example, from music the student is led into the world of acoustics. From color and painting they are led to optics. Heat, electricity, magnetism, mechanics, hydraulics, and meteorology are areas of further practical experimentation. Biographies of the great scientists complete the curriculum.

### **Specialty Classes**

Subject classes include foreign language, form drawing, physical education/games, painting, music/singing/recorders, clay and beeswax modeling, and handwork. Most of these subjects are taught by subject teachers who work closely with the class teacher so that the children experience the curriculum as an integrated whole with one lesson or activity enhancing another.

### **Foreign Languages**

The study of foreign languages typically begins in the first grade. Through their strong powers of imitation, children develop a good ear and feeling for the languages by repeating poems, singing songs and playing games characteristic of the culture from which the language comes. Reading and writing of the languages begin in third grade, as well as a more systematic study of syntax and grammar.

### **Handwork**

Handwork in the Waldorf curriculum provides the opportunity to "ensoul" our surroundings with items made with conscious thought and care. Handwork brings a balancing element between intellectual activities and activities that draw more upon the will. When we engage in the act of making things ourselves, we discover the struggle and joy.

Rhythmic repetition such as knitting and crocheting offer subtle intellectual and moral benefits from the proper training of the hands. "A task worth doing is worth doing well." Flexible, agile fingers in childhood lead to mobile, creative thinking in adult life and lead to an enhancement of the faculty of judgment. Hand-eye coordination is essential for balance and harmony. Care and respect for materials lead to moral and social responsibility. Nothing is wasted and children must be helped to respect and be grateful for the gifts of earth, plants, and animals. This also leads to an appreciation for the work of others.

### **Movement**

In the younger grades, imaginative play and active non-competitive games are an essential part of the program. Students learn to work with one another as a part of team bringing their individual gifts to the class. The lower grades

participate in chase games, cooperative games, and many other imagination based play activities. At the end of the students fifth grade year they compete in a Greek Pentathlon alongside two other Waldorf schools. This culmination highlights their studies of ancient civilizations. Students recreate the original Greek Games competing in javelin, discus, running, long jump, and wrestling. In the upper grades they continue to play cooperative games as well as more team based sports. The eighth grade closes their year with a circus in which they learn to juggle, tumble, unicycle, and to entertain.

### **Music**

Music is an integral part of the Waldorf curriculum. It touches and nourishes the soul, enriching the child's inner life. Music class is taught two-three times each week. The children at Winterberry begin singing in Kindergarten with pentatonic songs. Students begin their formal music classes in the third grade where they transition from the mood of the fifth to the a firmly rooted diatonic scale. Students learn to sing as part of a chorus and a recorder ensemble as they travel through the grades. In their choral singing they begin with a single vocal line, then transfer to the singing of rounds, which leads to part singing in the upper grades. Students perform at assemblies, festivals, and concerts throughout the year.

### **Support Services**

#### **RTI**

Response to Intervention is provided through small group instruction with a Certified teacher, based on performance testing results.

#### **Special Education**

Special Education services are provided through a fully inclusive model, providing services through accommodations and modifications made within the general education classroom. Additional services can be provided through the District's Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Adaptive P. E., Assistive Technology, and School Psychologist.

**Discipline:** Appreciative Inquiry as a tool for Positive Discipline

*"Nature makes Human Beings into natural beings, society makes us into law-abiding ones; only the individual can make himself into a free being."* –Rudolf Steiner, Philosophy of Freedom.

Discipline, in its best form, means possessing the inner strength to achieve what one wishes to achieve. Appreciative Inquiry seeks to find what is best in a child, situation, or place and grow that, rather than simply "problem-solve," which focuses our energies on what is not working, rather than growing and expanding what is good, what is working (there is always something that is already working!)

*In my heart is a vision  
Of all that I can be  
And when I have become it  
I shall be free*

At Winterberry, we often share this verse with the children, for to ask a child to be something he or she is not (often the focus of traditional “discipline”) damages what discipline and self esteem already exists in the child. But to ask a child to hold in his or her own heart an image of what he or she wishes for himself is an entirely different matter, and is an expression of the idea that education is moving children towards freedom, rather than expecting free, conscious, responsible actions from such young beings. Therefore, discipline flows from images and examples of the above ideas, as expressed in the adults in our community. Each adult must be disciplined within him or her self, and must be working on self-discipline and inner growth continually, for this is what the children see (or don’t see) in us. We cannot escape this: it is an inevitable part of the relationship teachers and adults have with children they work with. Three core values guide us when it becomes necessary to correct behavior that is damaging to a child’s ability to be self-disciplined:

- Hold an image of the child who is in need of guidance in your mind during the period that you are focusing on helping him (days, weeks, months—it depends). Find the child in his best, most ideal state and let that be the image. Bring it to your mind at night, very briefly, and again in the morning, very briefly.
- Connect before you correct. The purpose of this form is to help those unfamiliar with a child, or uncertain about his inner being, to form connections more easily, thus allowing for the necessary correction and guidance. The better an adult knows a child, and the more productive and positive the basal relationship, the easier each connection and correction becomes.
- State what you want in the positive, rather than the negative. Be clear and direct. Simply tell the child what you want them to do, rather than what you don’t want. (“Please walk in the hall,” rather than “Don’t run in the hall.”) In relationships, as with all things in life, you get more of what you focus on—so focus on what you want

When a situation occurs which requires disciplinary action, the first step is to “right the wrong”. For instance, if someone has been hurt, the child responsible for the action will be asked to give aid (get an ice pack or lay a “healing hand”). Perhaps the child will need to say, “My hands are for good work and play”, or “I will use kind and gentle words”. If the child seems to easily forget the classroom rules, he or she will work in close contact with the teacher or assistant.

- If an incident is one to cause deeper concern, or if a student continues to be disruptive, and/or exhibit discourteous behavior, (taking into consideration age appropriate behavior), the teacher will call the parents to discuss the situation.
- Parent-Teachers conferences are helpful and in certain cases a meeting will be arranged with the parents, the teacher and one other faculty representative. Parents and teachers will work together as a team to jointly prepare a course of action. This plan will outline those steps that will be taken at home and at school to address the child’s behavior and help him or her to move in a more positive direction.
- If the above measures are unsuccessful in bringing about the desired changes in behavior, the Faculty may be asked to look at the situation and conduct a child study.

### **Dress Code**

The faculty and student council collaborated to create Winterberry’s dress code. The purpose of our dress code is to improve the learning environment by reducing distractions and ensuring that all students are wearing appropriate and functional clothing. Our dress code also aligns with our values by discouraging mass-marketing, embracing the natural beauty of the human being, discouraging screen-time, and encouraging healthy physical movement. Students not

abiding by dress code guidelines will be asked to change. Teachers have final discretion regarding unique dress or adornment issues. This dress code is subject to change.

### **Tops**

- Tops must cover a student's torso and undergarments completely.

### **Words and Images**

- Students in grades K-5 may wear clothing with stripes, patterns, and solids, but may not wear clothing with words or images of any kind.
- Students in grades 6-8 may wear shirts with words and images if those words and images are:
  - Neither negative, violent, potentially scary for young children, or including inappropriate words
  - Free from brand names and brand-name logos (example: the word Nike, or the Nike "swoosh")
  - Unrelated to video games and media
  - Examples of acceptable word and image clothing items for grades 6-8 are: the shirts of teams or organizations to which a student belongs, shirts from places a student has visited, and clothing with images such as animals, boats, hearts, planets, the ocean, etc.

### **Shoes**

- At school every day, students need:
- Indoor shoes that are safe, comfortable, light, and stay on their feet during dancing and movement activities.
- Outdoor shoes appropriate for the day's weather.

### **Legs**

- During winter, shorts and skirts must be worn with leggings, tights, or pants.
- When worn without pants or leggings, shorts and skirts must hang at least as low as three inches above the knee.
- Leggings may not be worn as pants.

### **Makeup and Accessories**

- Students in grades 6-8 may wear makeup that is minimal and naturally or neutrally colored.
- Jewelry should be safe for movement and not distracting

## **Eighth Grade Trip**

The purpose of the 8th grade trip is to create an experience in which students can bring closure to their years together as classmates, gain a sense of confidence from encounters with new environments and new challenges, and deepen understanding of the studies they have undertaken in the classroom.

Each class is unique. No two class trips will ever be the same. These guidelines present general principles and possibilities. In Steiner's view of child development, the end of the second stage of childhood (13 to 14 years) is marked by a need for independence, an interest in the world, a search for world-truth, a deep interest in one's own place in the world and the ability to genuinely transcend individual needs to work as a group.

### **Trip Location**

The location of the trip will be determined as follows. The teacher, administrator and students will enter into a preliminary discussion at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. Parents will be included in the process after preliminary discussions have been held, and 2 or 3 possible locations have been identified. It is suggested that the parents enter

the conversation at the first 8<sup>th</sup> grade parent meeting. The final decision, with parent input taken into consideration, will be made by the class, the teacher and the administrator. The reality of the class budget will guide the final decision.

### **Class Chaperones**

There are several components that lead to the fact that we invite non-parental chaperones. Fairness to all students is best achieved if none of the chaperones has a familial connection to any one student. Fairness to all parents is best achieved if no class parents attend the trip. The opportunity for parents to let go and allow their students to travel independently is potentially rewarding for the parents as well as the students. The students have opportunities to create new bonds with chaperones that are not part of their comfortable circle. The venturing forth in independence allows for a transformation for the individual students and for the class.

### **Cost/Budget**

The 8th grade trip is estimated to cost between \$2,000 and \$3,000 dollars per person (student/teacher/chaperone/administrator). This cost will vary by trip; however we ask parents to plan on paying \$3,000 dollars for their child to attend. If the trip costs less than this, adjustments will be made. Planning on the high side is a better strategy for our purpose.

Traveling on such a trip with a group of students is rewarding and valuable. It also requires the support of many adults, including a school administrator, the class teacher, and as many adult (non-parents) chaperones as it takes to reach the required 1:5 adult:student ratio. The Winterberry Charter Council (WCC) has set aside \$3,000 per year to cover the administrator's trip. Additionally, the Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG) has designated \$3,000 to cover the cost of one chaperone. The class teacher and necessary chaperones will be covered by the class participants through fundraising efforts, additional cost to individual families, or the choice of a more affordable itinerary.

### **Payment schedule and refunds**

Parents should plan on making payments towards their student's trip beginning in the fall of their student's 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. Generally, this will mean seven payments of approximately \$400, from September through March, with a possible reduction or elimination of final payments if the trip comes in at under \$3000 per student, or if class fundraising is robust enough to defray some individual student costs. This is to ensure that down-payments for reservations and other up-front costs can be met efficiently, and also helps families budget for the trip. Once funds have been used to pay vendors, family contributions are no longer refundable. The class teacher will communicate with families in a clear and timely manner as to the exact date after which no refunds will be available.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance will be need-based and developed to meet the individual. Two models are available based on the needs of the group and the preference of the class community. The Financial Assistance request will need to be submitted by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester.

~ Model 1: After paying for chaperones and teachers, the fundraising is split evenly between all students, with a request that willing families donate their portion of the funds to scholarships.

~ Model 2: After paying for chaperones and teachers, the money goes to scholarships, which will be determined based on conversations between teacher, administrator and family. Any excess moneys will be split between all other students evenly OR used to enhance the trip.

### **End of the Year Evaluation**

The end of year evaluation is a detailed narrative prepared by your child's class teacher describing your child's academic and social progress over the course of the year. This is the official transcript of your child's education.

### **Festivals and Seasonal Events at Winterberry**

The human spirit finds its expression in seasonal festivals celebrated through story and artistic activities. Students from a wide range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds attend Winterberry and differences are honored. The curriculum itself, through Nature Stories in the younger grades, to the Hebrew, Norse Myths, Indian, Egyptian, Roman, and Greek mythologies provide many opportunities to share many world cultures.

We strive to bring a universal nature to our celebrations of festivals through their connection with the rhythms of the earth and cosmos. We feel that the ceremonies and rituals associated with them help reveal the deeper significance of many everyday occurrences. The rhythms of the year, though taken up in each class in different ways, help provide a common foundation for the children. In preparation for the festivals, the teachers consider the mood of the season in the celebration. The nature of the festival is universal. The teachers do not seek to explain all this to the children, but allow them to take these things quietly into their hearts. Children love preparing for the festivals by decorating the room, baking special treats, learning special songs and more. Nature stories and special tales help bring deeper significance of the season to the children in a pictorial way.

#### **Back to School Picnic**

The Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG) hosts a back-to-school potluck at the beginning of each school year. Families bring a side dish to share while the WPG provides the main dish. We try to minimize our environmental impact and ask that families bring their own dishes and silverware.

#### **Harvest Dance**

The WPG hosts the Annual Harvest Dance to celebrate the Autumn harvest. Families bring a dish to share. A Folk Band and Caller comes in and leads the group in Folk Dancing. The eighth grade class offers a service silent auction to raise money for their 8th Grade Trip.

#### **May Pole Festival**

At Winterberry, we celebrate the arrival of summer with an all-school community gathering on or near the last day of school. May Day is an ancient festival honoring the changing of the season to spring. The tree of life was part of this ritual. The tree of life is the May Pole, bedecked with ribbons and flowers.

Children make crowns of flowers, with the help of many adults and upper grade students. Each class, Kindergarten to Grade 5 rehearse a Maypole dance which is presented to the whole school community.

## **Michaelmas**

Winterberry School's first school-wide Michaelmas Festival happened on September 30, 2015. It was born as our Hybrid students' first play in the Spring of 2015. The story of Saint George and the Dragon and the development of courage the theme of the play. All of the students took part as actors/actresses, chorus, choral readers, flute players or audience.

The seasonal components that are noted in the autumn have to do with noticing the glorious golden colors and the bountiful harvest and recognizing that as nature's life evidence fades away into the repose of winter, we are challenged to gather our courage and compassion to face our own dragons, whatever they might be. Another overriding theme of this season is to remember that good deeds can only strengthen us, and our world.

## **Lantern Walk**

As we enter the darkness of our winter, we create a reverent space for the children to face the darkness with the warmth and beauty of the sparks they carry in their lanterns. There is always a buzz of excitement as Kindergarten through Grade 5 design and create a lantern style for the year. Our music teacher and class teachers practice the many beautiful songs belonging to this festival. A dedicated volunteer group sets and lights a path of luminaries along a trail in the woods. Each child in the school is asked to bring in three votives for this festival each year. Children gather with their class teachers to walk the trail, singing their way through the beauty. Once all classes have had their turn, families are invited to walk the path. We request that the only human voices along the trail are lifted in song. Silent walks along the way are also very, very lovely.

Middle School students (Grade 6-8) are welcomed to attend with their families as respectful observers and assistants. Middle School classes may be involved with set-up, clean –up, luminary creation, etc. Please be listening for the news from your Middle School teachers about how Grade 6, 7,8 will participate this year.

## **Solstice Spiral Walk: Kindergarten and Grade 1**

In the winter season of long dark nights, many festivals of light are celebrated around the world. In its beautiful simplicity, the peaceful celebration of the spiral of stars is a visual representation of the return of light as the days grow longer. It allows us to observe and contemplate in quietude, offering a picture of simple beauty and mindful space; for the child it is a journey full of wonder.

During our winter solstice festival, each child is invited to walk into a spiral of evergreen boughs, carrying an unlit candle. At the center of the spiral is a burning candle from which the child lights his or her own candle. Walking out of the spiral, the child places the lit candle on a star. After all the children have completed their journey in and out of the spiral, we have a beautiful garden of light.

The spiral of evergreens is a reminder of the earth's green life, prevalent even in the cold of winter. We spiral inward, seeking the birth of light in the surrounding darkness, and we spiral outward, carrying our light into the world.

Our 5th and 6th Grade students lend additional beauty to this special event as choirs, singing the children through their walk

## **Santa Lucia Day ~ Grade 2**

According to the old Julian calendar, December 13th was the longest night of the year. The ancient people were very much aware of the diminishing daylight and feared the cold and hunger that accompanied the sun's decline. Human yearned for a friendly spirit to intercede, restoring light to the earth. Over many centuries, this spirit of light became personified in St. Lucia, the Queen of Light, who originally brought food to the hungry lighting her way with a crown of candles. In the present day, St. Lucia's Day is most commonly celebrated in Sweden. Families all over Sweden are awakened by "Lucia", who is usually the eldest daughter and comes singing the ancient Sicilian song "Santa Lucia". Dressed in white and wearing a crown of lighted candles, she presents saffron buns and Christmas cookies to members of the family.

## **Valentine's Day ~ (Specifics will be grade specific)**

Long before St. Valentine became the patron saint of lovers, a festival was held in ancient Rome during February in honor of the great god Pan. The festival was called Lupercalia and one of the customs was for the names of young men and women to be drawn in lottery fashion to choose token sweethearts. During the third century, the Bishop Valentine of Rome was martyred on the eve of the festival of Lupercalia. He was a man noted for his goodness and chastity and eventually the day acquired his name. The element of change and the theme of love remain. Cards are often sent to declare a person's love. There is an old belief that birds also chose their mates on this day for spring nesting. For children today, it is the element of surprise of a pretty card rather than romantic notions that holds enjoyment of the day. This favorite day of the heart is celebrated in the classrooms with small "parties" and the exchanging of Valentine cards. Children are encouraged to make their own cards or handmade tokens of friendship for classmates and teachers.

## **Fundraising**

Students in each class at Winterberry are able to officially begin fundraising in Grade 5. All students enrolled at Winterberry in Grades 5 are encouraged to participate in fundraising with their class community. Our hope and goal for students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 is that all will participate in some way for all scheduled class fundraisers.

### **Educational Value of Fundraising**

~ Grade 5: Students will have the opportunity to plan and organize an event. Students will be given the opportunity to see that working towards a communal goal can be rewarding and nourishing. A connection between inner motivation and outer results can be seen in those students who naturally want to participate. This optional process will hopefully encourage those who are more reluctant to engage do so more enthusiastically in the upper grades.

~ Grade 6: Key components of the Grade 6 math curriculum are personal finance, banking, and business math. Fundraising provides real world lessons in these areas.

~ Grade 7: Development of goal setting and practicing cause and effect thinking are nourished in the fundraising process.

~ Grade 8: Group decision making, hopefully by consensus, is practiced. The hope is that by creating group goals through teamwork and cooperative learning and working to achieve those goals the students will learn that such effort pays off.



Each class has the opportunity to participate in the following grade-specific fundraisers each year:

Grade 5:

- Booth of homemade/crafted goods at the Enchanted Village
- Preparation & Service of Curriculum Specific Event
- Spring Plant Sale
- Soup & Bread Sales (no more than once a week)

Grade 6:

- Booth of homemade/crafted goods at the Enchanted Village
- Preparation & Service of Curriculum Specific Event
- Ice Lantern Sale
- Pizza Sales (no more than once a week)

Grade 7:

- Booth of homemade/crafted goods at the Enchanted Village
- Preparation & Service of Curriculum Specific Event
- Holiday Wreath/Card Sales
- Popcorn Sales (no more than once a week)
- Winterberry Calendar

Grade 8:

- Booth of homemade/crafted goods at the Enchanted Village
- Preparation & Service of Curriculum Specific Event
- Bake Sale & Coat Check at Winter Faire
- Coffee Cart Sales
- Burrito (beans & rice) Sales (no more than once a week)
- Circus

In addition to these possible fundraisers, each class is able to submit proposals for approval to the Faculty Council for other fundraising possibilities. These fundraisers should be consistent with the fundraising guidelines established by the WPG.

The money raised in this effort will be used to fund the eighth grade trip in the following order:

1. To pay for the classroom teacher and necessary chaperones
2. Provide travel scholarships to families who need and qualify for assistance
3. Any excess funds can be used to pay for additional activities on the student trip or to offset individual family costs.

### **Class accounts**

Each class from Grade 5 through Grade 8 will have a parent class treasurer. The class teacher and the class treasurer will be responsible to keep track of all incoming and outgoing funds. The account balance will be noted at parent meetings. The class teacher and treasurer will report to families in a timely manner the results of class fundraising events, through newsletters and email. The WPG will hold class funds in its account.

### **School Wide Fundraising**

Parents, as well as children, experience a sense of community at our school. One of the best ways for a parent to get to know other parents, get a taste of the community that underpins our children's education and contribute to the ongoing health and well being

of the school, is to participate in periodic fundraising events. The funds we raise will go primarily towards teacher training but also towards improvements to our site, hosting our school mentors, and hosting community events such as the Back- to-School Picnic. The Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG) hosts these fundraisers so please share your insights with your representative or better yet, attend monthly meetings.

### **Annual Giving Campaign**

The first fundraising event of the school year is our Annual Giving Campaign. Our Annual Giving Campaign is the most direct way to contribute to the WPG as our only cost is printing this paper! The goal of the Annual Giving Campaign is 100% participation with each family contributing a meaningful amount. Our Annual Giving Campaign will run from the beginning of the school year through October. Families can make a “pledge” at that time to be paid throughout the school year. Thank you so much for your generous contribution to our school!

### **Enchanted Village**

Winterberry hosts the Enchanted Village & Craft Bazaar the Saturday before Halloween. Local artisans purchase craft booths to sell handmade treasures, local delectable, and wholesome, healthy goods and services offered to the community while children explore the land of fairies and gnomes and the harvest room (a pumpkin festival) and receive a gift for each traveler. The Arts and Crafts Bazaar has no entrance fee. There is a \$3 per room charge for each of the “magical realms.”

Grades K-4th are responsible for one of the following areas of this event.

#### **Kindergarten: Music Room**

- o Performers willing to share their musical talent (instruments, drumming circle, circle time songs) with children and families
- o Supervise children “playing” with the Orff Instruments

#### **First Grade: Vendors**

- o Work with acquiring vendors for the event and scheduling with them
- o Measure and mark out vendor space the Friday before
- o Help vendors load and unloading their supplies
- o Hospitality during the event
- o Help & clean-up afterwards

#### **Second Grade: Day of Volunteers**

- o Gem sale (“tickets” for each event)
- o School Store Sales
- o Face Painting Booth
- o Help & clean-up afterwards

#### **Third Grade: Cafe**

- o Plan and purchase for the menu
- o Prepare and monitor food according to Municipal guidelines
- o Schedule and run the booth through the event
- o Help prepare set-up, serve food, take money, clean-up

#### **Fourth Grade: Gnome Room and Fairy Room**

- o Responsible for developing and improving the supply of fairy, gnomes, houses and scenery. We have a nice, basic set but would like to see it grow.
- o Lots of people to help set up the tunnels and vignettes the Friday before
- o Help & clean-up afterwards

**Classrooms of “fundraising age” (5th to 8th grades)** get one free booth per class for class fundraising purposes. Other student (and parent) crafts may be donated to the school store to benefit the whole school. Parents of 5th through 8th children need to work with their students to prepare items to sell at their class fundraising booth, as well as a chair for each of these grades to schedule the running of their booths.

Do you make Winterberry-friendly items such as natural materials, handmade crafts, child-centered services, or wholesome, organic, and delicious edibles? Adult Craft Booth Applications are available at the school and on-line at the school website.

### **Head, Heart and Hands Auction**

Our annual Head, Heart and Hands Auction (HHH) is held in the Spring and is our biggest fundraiser for annual teacher training funds. Parents, teachers, staff and students all participate by gathering donations from local businesses in the form of merchandise or gift certificates. We ask that every family gather three donations (one from a business, one personal and one for a class basket). The larger items and class items are sold through a live auction, while other items are sold through a silent auction. Volunteers are needed to help with ambiance, food, set-up, procurement of items, data management of items in the web program, check-in and event support and clean-up.

### **Winter Faire**

This event celebrating the joy of winter includes many fun activities for your family to enjoy such as jump rope making, listening to music offered by Winterberry's very own faculty and students, watching a puppet play come to life and creating crafts to take home. Stay for lunch in the Winterberry Cafe, serving quesadillas, rice and bean bowls and our very own Winterberry sparkle is sure to fortify you for the day! Don't forget to stop by the baked goods room and take home a sweet treat. Volunteers are needed to run the music room, manage the craft and game rooms, cafe and gem sales. You can sign-up in the lobby of the school.

### **On-Going Fundraisers**

There are several on-going fundraisers through larger corporations that include Winterberry's participation. These events earn money easily and efficiently for our school. We are always looking for coordinators for these events, so please let the WPG know if you are interested.

### **Box Tops**

Box Tops for Education is a simple and efficient way to earn cash for our school. We ask that you bring an envelope or lunch bag to your friends and family members and request that they collect box tops if they are not collecting for another school or organization. You are not requesting them to purchase anything, but rather only to collect something they may usually throw away. Our goal is to have one-thousand (1000) by the end of the year. The collection basket is located at the front office.

### **Fred Meyer**

Support Winterberry with your shopping at Fred Meyer with your Rewards Card. All you have to do is link your Rewards Card and use it when you shop at Fred Meyer, [www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards](http://www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards).

### **Smile.Amazon.com**

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Winterberry every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

### **Target**

Take Charge of Education is an exclusive benefit of the Target REDcard™ program. Every time you shop, you benefit with 5% savings, and Winterberry benefits with up to 1% of your purchase.

## **Grade School Day Rhythm**

### **Morning Rhythm**

Children may be dropped off at Winterberry as early as 8:00am where they will remain in the lobby until dismissed to classrooms at 8:15am. Teachers stand at their classroom's doors each morning to receive students between 8:15am and 8:30am. Please bring young children to the bathroom before coming into the classroom, especially during the first month of school. The time between arrival and the day's beginning allows children to transition from "home" to "school". They need this time to make a stop at the bathroom, change into their indoor shoes, put away their belongings, and say hello to their friends before the school day formally starts. Please make sure your child has used the bathroom before entering the classroom and say goodbye to him or her outside of the classroom door. (The morning is not an appropriate time for parents to visit the classroom to see their children's work or soak in the classroom atmosphere. After School is a much better time for this sort of visit.)

Once students shake their teachers' hands at the door, they will enter the classroom, put away their coats, outdoor shoes, and lunches, and get ready for the start of their day. All students need to be in their seats by 8:30, at which time teachers close the door and begin the morning greeting, marking the start of the class' two hour Main Lesson or specialty class. ***The morning begins at 8:30am with a morning verse and song. If you arrive at 8:30 or later, please wait with your child in the hallway until our morning verse and song have ended. Students who arrive at 8:30am or later must be accompanied inside the building, signed in for the day, and delivered to class by a parent. We encourage you arrive promptly so that your child will experience this very important time of the day without interruptions.*** Unless prior arrangements have been made, an adult must always accompany to and from class children in kindergarten during arrival and pick up.

Each class teacher has his or her own way of beginning the day. Typically, main lesson starts with a morning circle or morning movement time, which may include singing, recitation, focused movement, and recorder/flute playing. New academic work is concentrated during morning hours when children are most alert and receptive. After the main lesson, class teachers and subject teachers divide the remainder of the day

into shorter periods that are taught. Artistic subjects, rather than academic subjects, come later in the day, when the child's ability to concentrate intellectually wanes.

### **End of the Day**

Afternoon pick up takes place between 3:30 and 3:45pm every day except Thursdays. Thursdays are half days to accommodate Winterberry Faculty meetings and pickup takes place between 1:30 and 1:45pm. When picking up your child in the afternoon, please park and walk to your child's class' pickup area in the front of the school. When a child sees his or her parent, he or she may shake the teacher's hand to say goodbye for the day. Teachers may release children only to their parents or others who are authorized via paperwork at the front desk to take their children home.

Keep in mind that morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up are very busy times for teachers. While they provide an excellent chance for teachers and parents to shake hands or connect quickly, they are not the best for serious one-on-one conversations or questions. Teachers are available for more focused and lengthy conversations by appointment scheduled by email.

### **Homework in the Early Grades**

Students in grades K – 2 will have no daily or weekend homework in the traditional sense. Beginning in these grades, and continuing throughout a student's academic life at Winterberry, we encourage families to build in time for playing, talking, and enjoying nature together. Families are also asked to make time to read together and have healthy meals together whenever possible. All of this work outside of school is the homework that builds strong family connections and happy, healthy children.

Beginning in grade three, projects related to the curriculum are assigned to the children and class. These projects are designed to inspire the students and build their passion and desire to connect with the content. Assignments that are given to students will have specifically designed outcomes and purpose connected to the child's ability to access the curriculum. Students in grades 3-8 do have meaningful homework appropriate to their developmental stages, and do need parent assistance in creating healthy homework habits. It is always recommended to have your child read (or be read to/with) for 20 minutes a day.

### **Hybrid Program**

Winterberry Hybrid Program (WHP) serves students in grades K-8 and utilizes a professionally crafted, Waldorf-methods curriculum with close support by Waldorf-experienced staff. A variety of parent classes to train and enhance the curriculum delivery by parents. In addition to curriculum, specialty classes and certified teacher support, our hybrid program provides families with a grade specific resource materials, instruments and high-quality art supplies needed to successfully deliver the Waldorf-inspired program to their children.

Community-building and parent collaboration are other core components of this program. There are many weekly opportunities for parents and students to interact, to get to know one another and to build relationships, offer support and PLAY!

### **Lost and Found**

The lost and found is located in the west entrance, near the Kindergarten classroom. It is strongly advised that all clothing items are labeled or marked for easy identification.

## **Media**

The activities of our days are much like the foods of our diet. The more healthy activities we can include in our days, the better we feel, each day and in the long run. We want to minimize unhealthy activities; both because they don't help us to grow, and because the time we spend doing them is time we don't spend doing something that does help us to grow. This is the first reason we want to minimize children's screen-time, and, because young children learn primarily through imitation, our own screen-time as well.

The second reason to minimize children's screen time is the power of the images on-screen today, and the feelings they evoke. Television's images and dialogue intermix with our own memories and thoughts and slipping into our dreams. Children are even more absorbent of these images and more affected by their disruption than adults. As Waldorf teachers, we spend much of our time trying to help children create images in their own minds, so that they can comprehend the stories they are hearing and later reading, so that they can think in images, and so that they can create from the images of their imaginations. Instead of showing storybooks, we tell them stories rich in detail, allowing them to create the pictures they need, inside of themselves. The images children absorb from screens disrupt their inner images.

A third reason to avoid screens is simply to protect children from the scenes they encounter in the media. Children are far more sensitive than adults to tension, horror, and violence, and far more likely to retain memories of disturbing screen-experiences as if these were traumas of their own. Furthermore, the values presented on television are almost always not the ones we want to be guiding our children's interactions. Children's TV, even cartoons, tend to show children putting each other down, being rude, making fun of each other, laughing at weakness, and ignoring adults. These are all values we work hard at home and school to avoid. Thank you for your attentiveness to limiting and screening what your child is exposed to.

These three reasons are why we advocate for a media restricted environment for children. At a minimum we ask that families limit media on Sunday evening through Friday afternoon. When evaluating whether or not to allow your child to watch something, ask yourself if it has elements of truth, beauty and goodness. Every moment (or hour) a child stares at a screen, be it a computer screen, a television screen, a movie screen, game nights, a phone screen, or a video-game screen, is a moment (or hour) that the child is not engaging in a physical activity, having quiet time, helping mom or dad, practicing social interactions, moving vigorously, soaking in the natural world, sleeping, imagining, creating, or *even moving their eyes!* Growing children need these activities, and screens often rob them of the time they have to do them. A good way to maintain or transition into a media limited household is to ask yourself "what else can they/we be doing".

## **Non-Violent Communication**

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a method of communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg often referred to as compassionate communication. NVC is a process to connect compassionately and powerfully with oneself and others. It involves four components: observation, feeling, needs and requests. Core understandings of NVC is that all human beings have the same essential needs and everything that we do is a strategy to meet a needs. When we fully realize that all actions, helpful or hurtful, are expressions of needs we see the humanity in every person at every moment; which is the foundation of compassion.

Winterberry strives to utilize NVC style of communication and conflict resolution to perpetuate a climate of collegiality and mutual trust by facilitating the resolutions of differences in a direct, timely, objective and respectful manner.

Disagreement may arise in any community. Such differences are an inevitable consequence of human interaction. In a majority of these situations, the parties involved can resolve the issue through direct personal communication. In our school community, complete resolution without lingering negative feelings is important for maintaining healthy relationships between the adults in our community and to insulate our students from the effects of negative adult interactions. The following practices are designed to assist in the resolution of disagreements in a manner that recognizes the dignity of all persons involved.

### **NVC Conflict Resolution Practices**

- **Self-Connection:** Individual's practice self-connection, self-awareness, and self-empathy, as a way to find inner clarity, transform their pain and cultivate self-responsibility when experiencing tension or conflict.
- **Empathic Listening:** Individuals intentionally seek support from an empathic partner when experiencing tension or conflict to find self-connection, inner clarity and self-responsibility. (This differs from sympathetic listening which leads to a shared concern and gossip.)
- **Conscious Dialogue:** Two or more people experiencing tension or conflict have a direct conversation with each other- listening empathically and expressing themselves self-responsibly- seeking to understand each other more fully and to recover connection and trust.
- **Mediation:** A third party facilitator supports conscious dialogue between two or more people, contributing their presence as needed to support reconciliation, from silent witnessing to active facilitation.
- **Restorative Circle:** When a conflict has more intensity or relevance for multiple people, someone can initiate a Restorative Circle, which is a community-run process for restoring connection and trust.

The school has trained facilitators, Compassionate Communication Committee, to help assist families and staff in times of conflict and crisis and offer ongoing training and practice.

### **Nutrition**

All day long, children need nutritious food. We recommend vegetables, whole grains, protein-rich foods such as meat, fish, eggs, soy, cheese, and yogurt, healthy fats such as olive, flax, and coconut oils, nuts and nut butters. In school, children should bring sizable snacks and lunches rich in proteins, fats, complex carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. Fruits, carrots, sliced bell peppers, cauliflower, broccoli, and small tomatoes are very good as finger foods.

Children should have little or no sugar present in their lunch boxes. Please do not send your child to school with soda, fruit juice, candy, fruit rolls, gummies, sugary yogurts, cookies, sweet crackers, other dessert-like foods. Birthday celebrations are an exception. Children may share healthy-ish small desserts with classmates on their birthdays. We ask that your child's snack and lunch are best stored in a reusable lunchbox or lunch bag that is free of media designs and/or advertising.

## **Parent Nights**

One of the unique opportunities of a Winterberry parent is the chance to attend parent evenings. Unusual in public education, these evenings address topics of child development, Waldorf curriculum, and offer parents a chance to meet, share refreshments, and build bonds that support them through their 8-year journey together. Parents get to experience some of the activities that the children do during the school day as well!

It is of greatest importance to teachers that at least one adult from each family be present at each of the parent meetings each year. Teachers understand that parents are busy, and that making time to attend parent nights can be difficult. Please recognize that your presence at these meetings not only benefits you, but that your presence at these meetings is also a gift to your child, the class, and the school in building our community and attending to this important time in your child's life. Childcare is usually available for a small fee via the upper grades classes, who are fundraising for their 8<sup>th</sup> grade trips.

## **Parent/Teacher Relations**

Winterberry teachers value open and honest communications of needs, concerns, opinions, suggestions, questions, and comments from parents. As Winterberry parents and teachers, we are joining together in a special partnership for the care and development of your children. As partners, we need to be in close contact. You are the "eyes and ears" at home, just as the teachers are the "eyes and ears" at school. Teachers encourage parents to ask clarifying questions about anything from changes they see in their children to specific curriculum questions. Your children are so precious and we are incredibly grateful to be entrusted with them by you!

We encourage you to share your insights, questions and goals regarding your child's development with us. Regular parent meetings, parent-teacher conferences and visits with the teacher help maintain the communications so vital to our work together. Parents are requested to observe the confidentiality of the relationship of the class with the teacher. Please take any concerns you have about a student who may be having difficulty to the teacher involved and not to other parents who may not see the context in which the concern presents itself. We appreciate your observations and hope they will serve to deepen our mutual understanding of the children.

In the early morning the teachers have their attention on the children and are focused on the work of the day. It is very difficult to stop and have conversations with parents in the morning, and also at closing time. Parents needing to speak with teachers can email, leave a message for them at the front desk or quickly request a meeting at the beginning or end of the day. Of course, there are always exceptions such as the need to communicate unexpected occurrences. Your consideration concerning this important issue is greatly appreciated.

## **Communication**

Throughout the year, teachers send emails out with information about upcoming events, supply needs, and newsletters, or to changes to dates or times of field trips. If you do not check email regularly, please let your child's teacher know, so that he or she is able to find an alternative method of communicating this news to you.

## **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled two times each year. These conferences are held to discuss the development and well-being of your child. The teacher will present the child's classroom and an evaluation, in addition to providing an opportunity



to exchange ideas and questions. Additional conferences may be requested by the parent or teacher.

As teachers, we ask for parent support in ensuring that the children are well prepared to receive the full benefits of a Winterberry education. Home life is essential to the growth of the children as is the quality of education they receive at school.

### **Home Visits**

Teachers realize the value of seeing the child in his or her home environment and so may arrange home visits as often as busy lives and circumstances permit. Please feel free to invite your class teacher into your home for a visit or a meal together.

### **School Mentors: George and Donna**

The Winterberry staff first met George Hoeffcker and Donna Burgess during our summer training in 2005. From our first meeting we knew there was a future to be created together. Beginning in the spring of our second year, 2007, they became our official school mentors. Our first community experience with them was designed to identify shared community values and create healthy and respectful relationships. From there, the relationship has evolved to include teacher, administrator, parent, and board mentoring. George began his career in education as a public school special education teacher and became a class teacher in both public and independent Waldorf schools. Donna continues to teach folk dancing at public and private Waldorf schools. George moved on from the classroom to become the first administrator of Yuba River Charter School, the longest established charter school inspired by Waldorf education.

### **Sleep**

In general, children learn best during the first part of the day. This is why we schedule Main Lesson to happen in the first part of the day, before they break for recess and lunch. Please take care that your child gets to bed at an hour that makes it possible for them to wake with ease to arrive at school by 8:15. Dr. Susan Johnson writes in detail on this topic and more information can be found at:

<http://www.youandyourchildshealth.org/youandyourchildshealth/articles/sleep%20i.html>

### **Sports**

Winterberry students in grades six through eight participate in cross-country and volleyball in the fall, ski team in the winter, and track and field in the spring. As an Anchorage School District student attending a charter school, your child may also try out for additional sports at another middle school. Please see the office if you have more questions about this option.

Athletes need to have:

- □A current physical on an ASD form □
- An ASD "Middle School Activity Participation form"□
- A Complete Concussion Screening □
- Pay the activity fee of \$110 per sport (payable to Winterberry or online at ASD) or get a fee waiver

### **Three-Body Governance**

The successful functioning of Winterberry depends on the cooperative efforts of three vital groups: the Winterberry Charter Council, Winterberry Faculty Council and the Winterberry Parent Guild.

#### **Winterberry Charter Council (WCC)**

The WCC is a representative body that currently has approximately eleven elected members: seven are parents, two are teachers, one is a teacher or staff member, and one is a community member. All parents, faculty, and staff of Winterberry may vote on WCC membership. Elections occur every February. It is strongly advised that all interested people attend three meetings before joining the Board to gain an understanding of the work.

The WCC is responsible for the governance of the school: making sure we are operating in accordance with our charter and are being fiscally responsible with our public funds. The WCC is also responsible for hiring an Administrator who manages the day-to-day operation of the school. The WCC operates on a consensus model.

The WCC meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at Winterberry. Changes to the regular meeting schedule or the addition of any special sessions will be posted on the calendar on our website. The agenda for each meeting is posted at the main entrance of the school 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The past agendas and minutes are available on the school website listed above.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend! There is time allotted at every regular meeting for "Community Comments," so please feel free to come to any meeting.

### **Winterberry Faculty Council (WFC)**

All Winterberry teachers are members of the Faculty Council. Members are not elected but they participate in school governance as part of their duties. The WFC's serves as expert guides on pedagogy and Waldorf methodology in the school's governance, rather than as community representatives. The WFC meetings are part of faculty workloads and may involve confidential information, thus, the meetings are not generally open to the public. However, written testimony, suggestions, and other input can be submitted to any class teacher for discussion by the Faculty Council.

Collectively, the WFCI is responsible for pedagogical issues and decisions. This collaboration among the faculty on school governance allows the faculty to apply their expertise to school-wide issues and helps ensure that Winterberry's decision-making process truly supports the goals of Waldorf education. The WFC leads the school festivals to ensure that these events meet their educational purposes.

### **Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG)**

The WPG is a representative parent body made up of one member per class (9), a faculty member, and six officers. Each class also elects an alternate with full voting rights to fill in when the primary representative is not available. In addition, one elected parent member is appointed by the WPG as the WPG/WCC liaison who is a voting member of both bodies.

The WPG is primarily focused on raising funds for the school and dispersing those funds equitably in support of enhancing Waldorf inspired education. The WPG is established as a 501c3 non-profit. The most important and expensive funding so far is Waldorf teacher trainings each year for all of our teachers. The WPG also supports after school programs, teaching materials, and educational field trip expenses. In order to raise funds and to encourage community participation, the WPG organizes

the Annual Giving Campaign, Harvest Dance, Enchanted Village, Winter Faire, Head-Heart-Hands Auction, and other fundraising and community building events. Finally, it is the WPG who holds the lease with the owner of our building, and thus, it is the landlord for Winterberry Charter School.

The WPG meetings are at 6:00p.m., at the school, on the first Thursday of every month and everyone in the school community is encouraged to attend as often as possible. Agendas are posted online and in the school foyer in advance of the meetings. Past agendas and minutes are available the school website listed above.

### **Decision Making: Consensus Model**

Many people assume that a consensus means a unanimous agreement in which all the individuals involved get their way. As practiced at most Waldorf communities, including Winterberry, consensus is not just an end result but a specific process for arriving at decisions. It involves working together to make decisions that reflect the values of the group.

The “Consensus at Winterberry” document outlines the goals and principles of the consensus process used by our school. Since the fall of 2010 the faculty and the WCC have used this process in their decision making at all times. The WPG uses it at three-body meetings, and also strives for consensus as a group. The first major decisions we made as a community using this process led to the eventual construction of our new building.

### **Consensus at Winterberry**

#### Rule of Three...

- If the group is going to make a major policy decision it should be brought to no less than three meetings. When there are time concerns special meetings can be called, but the format should be:
- Mtg 1: Introduction of the issue and dialogue (20-30 minutes): Prior documentation should be provided to committee/board/group members. From here the issue gets sent to committee with the mandate to create/bring a proposal. This should be sent out to members prior to the second meeting.
- Mtg 2: Full discussion of the proposal by the group (60-90 minutes): Send all recommendations back to committee for revisions after input. Once revisions are finished the new proposal should be sent out to group prior to the third and final meeting.
- Mtg 3: Final discussion and decision (45 minutes)

#### Decision Options

- Unity, not unanimity...  
Ask yourself, “Is the spirit of the action moving in the direction of the shared values?”
- Discernment...Standing Behind the Principle vs. Personal Preference  
Ask yourself, “Is having my strategy adopted important for the nature of this particular decision or is this more about steering the decision in a direction that is closer to my own personal preference?” Clearly identify if this about principle or preference before adding to the discussion.
- Stand Aside / Step Aside...

Typically happens when a person realizes they are too attached to personal preference and are only holding the group process back. Once a person stands or steps aside he or she is agreeing to let the group move forward without them. In doing so they agree not to undermine group decisions. The aforementioned behaviors uphold the integrity of the body and its agreements.

- Blocking (secular term) or Standing in the Way (Quaker term)... This technique should rarely be used and has been estimated that a person who uses consensus consistently in their everyday life should use this no more than six times in a lifetime! In terms of an organization, it should only be used when a particular decision would lead to a probable disaster for the group as a whole. It should only be used to ensure the survival of the group or if the proposed action can be shown to conflict with group's shared values. The blocker bears responsibility to group and process to identify a valid reason for blocking and should provide evidence to support the decision to block.

### **Things to leave at home**

Most items your child will need for their daily classwork is provided by the school. Besides their clothing, outdoor gear, and lunch, they will be provided with all of the supplies they will need to work with during the day. Please help teachers keep items from home out of the classroom by ensuring that your child is bringing to school only what he or she needs to be successful during the school day, and is leaving all other items at home.

### **Traffic Info**

As many of you already know, the Winterberry site is accessible by trail and bus. There are trails from the Dog Park by Alaska Pacific University, East High School, and the Goose Lake parking lot. People Mover Routes 3C and 3N stop on the Northern Lights near Wesleyan. The more families who access our site via busing, walking, biking, skiing, or any other form of non-vehicular transport, the more it helps the overall community, the neighborhood, and the planet! We appreciate the efforts you make to come to and from school without a car or by ride sharing.

For those times when we do need to drive to school, we have a traffic plan to help make drop-off and pick-up times as safe and efficient as possible. Here is a quick summary to keep in mind when driving to Winterberry.

- When entering and exiting the school grounds, please keep to the right around the turn.
- Traffic moves in a counterclockwise direction in the parking lot. Please note the "Do Not Enter" sign!
- Please always remember to use the pedestrian crosswalks when coming to and from the parking lot.

#### **Special Events Parking**

- Use one of the 76 parking spaces we have in our lot.
- Use street parking that is not in front of driveways, mailboxes, or in the designated Bryn Mawr condos guest parking lot (just NW of the Winterberry sign as you enter our drive). This includes street parking on Wesleyan Drive.
- Park at East High School (this has been approved by East High Principal Mike Graham) and walk over the pedestrian bridge to our school. This option takes approximately 15 minutes if you are taking a leisurely stroll.

- Park at the University Dog Park and make your way to our school via the APU trail system. This is a lovely walk that will take approximately ten minutes.
- There remain numerous ways to gather at Winterberry by foot, bike, ski, etc from your house to the front door of our school!

### **Volunteer Hours**

Winterberry functions so well largely because of the dedication of the school's parents who volunteer their time and their services. Our school asks that each parent give 20 hours of time/per student each year to the school. Parents have many opportunities to support their children's individual classes and the school as a whole. Keep on the lookout for volunteer opportunities and class materials "wish lists"! Sign up online at <https://www.trackitforward.com/>.

All forms of volunteer hours count towards the number requested by the school. Some parents take home materials, prepare them at home, and return them to the teachers in time for the class activities. Some parents chaperone field trips, assist in the classroom, contribute to work parties, recruit other parents and community members for projects, and/or serve as classroom coordinators. Serving on the WPG and WCC are also important volunteer activities.

### **Winterberry Enrichment Program (WEP)**

Winterberry Enrichment Program (WEP) offers a licensed child care program for children attending Winterberry Charter School. All rules and policies of Winterberry Charter School will pertain to those students enrolled in the KinderCare, AfterCare and Summerberry.

KinderCare serves those Kindergarten families who need afternoon care from 12:30-3:30. After-Care serves the whole school with care from 3:30-6:00 and some In-Service Days. Summerberry is the summer program. For more information the front desk will put you in contact with the Administrator of WEP.