

WISHING WELL SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK

2019 - 2020

www.wishingwellschool.org
805-235-4401 (landline)
805-471-2870 (cellphone)

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Welcome to Wishing Well School!

Welcome to our community of lively children, creative and dedicated teachers, faculty, staff and parents who have come together to support their child's journey through Waldorf Education. We are so pleased you have chosen Wishing Well School!

Our Parent Handbook is intended to provide you with useful information regarding the school's policies and practices. Please visit www.wishingwellschool.org for more information. If you have further questions, please ask them! See the "Communication Flow" section; asking questions and open communication are important parts of helping our school stay healthy.

We are honored to have you with us on this journey.

With gratitude,

Wishing Well Faculty and Staff

Mission Statement

We are committed to providing an education that engages the whole child by integrating academic excellence, artistic expression, and practical life-skills. This education is based on the understanding of the development of the child as a physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual being according to the pedagogical and spiritual principles of Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf Education.

Our Mission is carried out in the following ways:

- To teach with a developmental and artistic approach that allows the healthy development of the child's thinking, feeling, and willing.
- To foster students to become life-long learners, self-motivated and heart-felt human beings who are responsible citizens of society.
- To acknowledge each student as an individual with a body, soul, and spirit.
- To cultivate a relationship with the earth that honors nature and enables students to become stewards of the environment.
- To cultivate an appreciation of the diversity of human life.
- To support teachers with the knowledge, strength of soul, and pedagogical practice to realize these aims.
- To carry this impulse into our school and to bring it to our surrounding communities.

Governance & Organization

- *Faculty* – The faculty is dedicated to bringing the children a living experience of Waldorf education. A faculty meeting is held every week to work on educational and daily operational components of the school.
- *Pedagogical Director* – The Pedagogical Director collaborates with the Faculty, the Operations Director, the Board, and the parents to create and ensure the implementation of the goals and mission of the school. The Pedagogical Director is in charge of holding the Faculty, as well as the Parent Body, and reports to the Board. In addition, the Pedagogical Director oversees hiring, hears parent concerns, and collaborates with Faculty and Staff to provide a high quality of teaching, curriculum, and educational experience.
- *Administrative Director* – The Administrative Director oversees admissions and enrollment, tours, outreach, communications, program coordination, and community development. In addition, the Administrative Director answers questions regarding payments, payment plans, fees, and donations. The Administrative Director provides the processes and organizational structures that support the Faculty in creating a positive learning experience. The Administrative Director reports to the Board and works closely with the Pedagogical Director to help Wishing Well achieve its mission statement goals.
- *Board of Directors* – Wishing Well School is governed by a Board of Directors, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization registered in California. The Board bears legal and financial responsibility for the school. The Board meets once a month and all meetings are open to the public. Copies of the minutes are available in the school office. Parents interested in serving on the Board or any of its committees are encouraged to contact a Board member, attend the meetings and get involved. Names and contact information of board members may be found in the school directory.
- *Parent Council* – A parent run organization that supports the faculty, staff, and the Board of Wishing Well School. The goal of the Parent Council is to help coordinate family volunteer efforts with the needs of the program and community. If you are interested in getting involved please contact the Parent Council (see directory).
- *Parent Body* – That's you! We wouldn't be here without you. Join in the community!

Communication Flow

Communication is vital to the functioning of our school. Please seek out answers to any and all of your questions and concerns. We value input and feedback from all community members as we work together to provide the best educational environment for our children. Please help to support this endeavor by following the process outlined below and not participate in gossip or hearsay.

If you are concerned or have questions about:

Your Child, Their Class or Curriculum, Classroom Policies and Classroom Behavior

Please contact your child's teacher first. Parent-teacher communication is of paramount importance. If you are concerned about your child or classroom situation, it is critical that you share these concerns with your child's teacher.

A teacher's time during school hours is reserved for the children, so please plan to call or meet outside of class time- even for a short discussion. Teachers will do their best to return phone calls and/or set appointments in as prompt a manner as possible.

Issues with Your Child's Experience with His or Her Teacher

Please use direct speech with the class teacher whenever possible. Then, please go to the Pedagogical Director, Kim Wishon, during a scheduled meeting. A parent grievance policy will be given to the family at this time.

Homeschool Enrichment Program

Please reach out to the office regarding any Homeschool Enrichment Program issues.

Attendance and Absences

Please call (805-235-4401) or text (805-471-2870) the school when your child will not be attending school. The office will communicate this information to your child's teacher.

Tuition and Fees (Information, Billing, and Tuition)

Please speak with office staff.

Volunteering

Speak to your child's teacher regarding volunteering in the classroom. For all other volunteer activities and needs, connect with the office and / or the Parent Council. You may review your total number of volunteer work hours in the school office.

General Business, Including School Policies, Calendar, Communications

Please contact the school office.

Student Conduct and Behavior

At Wishing Well, we meet the child exactly where they are, with the understanding that each child is inherently good. The word “discipline” comes from the word disciple, which means “to follow.” Teachers strive to appeal to the higher nature of the child by educating them in social and moral capacities, as well as academic skills. Children are learning how to behave cooperatively; there are many factors that contribute to each of their behaviors. When a disciplinary need arises, a specific path is followed to ensure each child and family is being met with heart and understanding. Open dialogue between children, parents, and teachers is the essential component in maintaining healthy student behaviors. The contribution and support of the community is paramount in creating a safe and loving environment, where respect for people, ideas, and our environment are foremost.

Early Childhood Discipline

1. The teacher seeks first to model appropriate behavior, thus leading the children to right action.
2. When inappropriate behavior occurs, the teacher will address the child according to age and the nature of the disruption. Whenever possible, the teacher involves the child in righting the wrong. For instance, the teacher may ask a child to console a friend that was hurt, mend a broken toy, etc.
3. If a child's behavior continues to be disruptive or poses a safety threat, the following process will be followed:
 - a. The teacher responds with appropriate care of the child and classmates. Separation may need to occur.
 - b. The teacher contacts the parents within 24 hours and describes the situation. A parent may be asked to pick up their child.

Grades Discipline

1. The teacher seeks first to model appropriate behavior and reinforce positive behavior, thus leading the children to right action.
2. When inappropriate behavior occurs, the teacher will address the child according to age and the nature of the disruption. Whenever possible, the teacher involves the child in righting the wrong. For instance, the teacher may ask a child to console a friend that was hurt, get an ice pack, etc.
3. If a child's behavior continues to be disruptive or poses a safety threat, the following process will be followed:
 - a. The teacher responds with appropriate care of the child and classmates. Separation may need to occur.
 - b. The teacher contacts the parents within 24 hours and describes the situation. A parent may be asked to pick up their child.

- c. If necessary and behavior continues, a behavior report is written, and a conference is held with the parents to discuss the situation and collaborate to come up with a plan of action (this plan may include other faculty members support in addition to the teacher).
- d. The student's progress will be monitored and reviewed. A follow-up conference will be held with the teacher and parents.
- e. The faculty will do everything in their power to resolve the inappropriate behavior within the school community. However, if little or no change is evident then the faculty may recommend the withdrawal of the student. Parents will be notified in writing of a decision and reasons for expulsion.

Disciplinary Action

A child who is disruptive not only affects themselves, but their classmates too. Disruptive behavior will be addressed in the moment and, if necessary, a phone call home will be made to come pick up the child. The following behaviors will not be tolerated at Wishing Well:

- Careless or aggressive behavior that results in injury of person or animal.
- Repeated refusal of teacher's guidance.
- Running away.
- Aggressive misuse of toys or classroom materials.

Wishing Well will make every effort to resolve inappropriate behavior within the community. However, if no change is evident in the student's progress after many attempts of remediation, if the parent commitment is lacking, or if no improvement is discernible, Wishing Well may conclude that the child's needs are not being met or that they are not ready for school and withdraw the privilege of attending Wishing Well.

School Rhythm

At Wishing Well our priority is to have all the children safe and cared for. Early childhood parents, please sign your child in and out. Adult supervision begins at 8:30am for all students. Grades aftercare students need to be signed in for aftercare and out upon pick up. After you sign your child out or pick up, s/he is in your care.

Regular School Hours

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Early Childhood | Monday-Friday | 8:30 am -12:30 pm |
| Grade 1 | Monday-Thursday | 8:30 am – 2:00 pm |
| | Friday | 8:30 am – 12:30 pm |
| Grades 2-6 | Monday-Thursday | 8:30 am – 3:00 pm |
| | Friday | 8:30 am – 12:30 pm |

Aftercare Program

After-school care is available to all children until 5pm.

- *Early Childhood:* Children staying past 12:30pm will need a lunch from home. Naptime is from 1-2:00pm. Please bring nap supplies in a bag from home that can be stored at school. An afternoon snack is provided. At 4:00pm, the older grades children join the early childhood for the last hour of aftercare. **There will be a charge of \$1 per minute, if the child is picked up after 5pm.**
- *Grades:* If the parent is late to pick up from the regular day, the child will be admitted to aftercare. At 4:00pm, the older grades children join the early childhood for the last hour of aftercare. **There will be a charge of \$1 per minute if the child is picked up after 5pm.**

Absences

An excused absence is when a student misses school due to a family emergency, illness, natural disaster, or religious holiday. In this case, the teacher will decide the best course of action to make up what was missed. An unexcused absence is when a student misses school for any other reason than family emergency, illness, natural disaster, or religious holidays. In the case of an unexcused absence, the student will be required to make up the work outside of the classroom.

Please notify the office of absences by 9:00am. Attendance is taken in the morning in each class and shared with the office. Wishing Well cannot be responsible for the academic progress of a student who accumulates excessive absences. Tutoring may be needed and is the responsibility of the parents.

Late Arrival

Please do what you can to ensure that your child is punctual and you are not rushing. Please respect the teacher's plan and start of the day. If you are late, go to the office to receive a late slip and guide your child to enter the classroom at the appropriate time.

Nutrition

Early Childhood

In the early childhood program, we provide a morning organic snack prepared, in part, by the children. Parent volunteers will be asked to help with "birdie snack."

Grades

Grades students, enrichment students, and aftercare students are expected to bring a hearty snack and lunch to school every day. Children are not to swap or share lunches. If lunch is forgotten, the student may receive a snack from the kindergarten classroom or eat eggs and vegetables from the garden, if available. We emphasize healthy eating, so please: no juice boxes, candy, or packaged sugary treats in lunches.

****PLEASE NOTIFY IN WRITING OF ANY FOOD ALLERGIES****

Health

It is in the best interest of our school and community to keep our children home when they are not feeling well. At times, our children may appear to have adequate energy to play and interact despite being sick. However, because colds and other illnesses are easily spread and often exacerbated in the school environment, we ask that you keep your child home from school if s/he is experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- runny nose with green discharge
- tummy ache
- headache
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- fever of 100 degrees F in the past 24 hours
- signs of weak or inactive behavior
- signs of any contagious illness

By allowing our children to slow down and spend time at home when they are not feeling well, we are also modeling the lovely lesson of listening to our bodies and resting when we are called upon to do so. If a child becomes sick during the school day, parents will be called and asked to pick up their child.

Medications at School

If your child needs any special medications on a temporary or occasional basis - prescription or over the counter such as ibuprofen, Benadryl etc. – you must provide both the medication and written instructions to the class teacher, signed by a physician. Any chronic conditions requiring medication should be documented and told to your child’s teacher. Children are not to have medicine, over-the-counter or otherwise, in their lunch baskets or cubbies. It is to be handled adult to adult. The school has basic emergency medical supplies on site. All medications are kept in their original box and kept in a locked box as well.

Visitor Policy

Please check in at the office if you are visiting our school. If no office staff is present, please check in with the main teacher in the preschool/kindergarten or grades classrooms.

Our insurance policy requires that we clearly state that no weapons are allowed on campus.

Dress Code

Physical warmth is vital to the health and well-being of each child. Our students spend a portion of their day outside, rain or shine. Please dress your child in layers, considering factors such as:

- Free movement: jumping running, moving arms overhead
- Appropriate for all weather: rain jackets, boots, sun or winter hats, etc...
- Wholesome: play clothes that are free from media characters, caricatures, and advertisements
- Natural fibers are highly encouraged: cotton, wool, bamboo, hemp, and other natural, breathable materials to aid in the child’s comfort at school
- Sturdy: closed-toed shoes with socks
- Weather appropriate outdoor wear: rain jackets, rain boots, warm layers
- Shorts / skirts: fingertip length
- No tops with spaghetti straps or that expose the midriff

Field Trips

Faculty and staff will give guidelines for adults volunteering for field trips including:

- Insurance and safety guidelines for all adults who drive children on a field trip (parents must complete a form before driving for any field trips).
 - Instructions to all participating adults regarding safety issues and other responsibilities when supervising children during trips.
 - Instructions on first aid issues and check lists, which ensure that all accompanying adults are aware of the specific dietary and health needs of individual children.
 - A permission slip must be signed before any child is allowed to go on a field trip.
- Participating in field trips with children can be a wonderful, unforgettable experience. Enjoy!

Non-Discrimination Policy

Wishing Well School welcomes students of any color, race, or sexual orientation, and ethnic, national, cultural, social or religious backgrounds. Wishing Well School is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) educational organization.

Parent Involvement & Volunteering

Like many schools and nonprofit organizations, Wishing Well School relies on the volunteer efforts of members of the community to support its work. We encourage parents to become involved with the school by joining the Well Wishers, joining a committee or contributing time and talents to the many events and projects organized by the school. Among the parent body, we are seeking 100% participation. Children thrive knowing that their parents are supporting their endeavors at this growing school and we appreciate and need your involvement.

We require 40 hours per family per year of volunteer time¹. If you wish to pay for volunteer hours, we bill at the rate of \$20 per hour. Families will be informed quarterly of the volunteer hours each has accrued. Volunteers may enter hours through an online form (available on the school website) or by stopping by the Wishing Well office. There will be plenty of volunteer opportunities throughout the school year including, but not limited to: parent evenings, nature walks, painting day, meal preparation, festivals, washing classroom materials, marketing events,

¹ For 2-day enrollment, the requirement is 20 hours; for 3-day enrollment, the requirement is 30 hours; 4-day or 5-day enrollment, the requirement is 40 hours.

grant writing, buying supplies from our wish list, fundraising events, etc. If you have a special talent or skill and would like it put to work, please include them on your volunteer interest form and we will find tasks best suited to you. The result of all of us working together creates positive momentum, lighter workloads, raises community spirit, and energies, and increases our ability to receive grants.

Media & Screen Time

We know that a child's imagination is blossoming during the early developmental years setting the stage for learning. Many parents at Wishing Well have committed themselves to limiting/or refraining completely from their child's exposure to screen time in order to allow their child to be fully present in the moment, to play and learn creatively, and to set forth an environment that supports the healthy growth of the child.

Early Childhood

Please keep media exposure to a minimum/or not at all. We kindly ask that you do not allow screen time the day before or the morning of a school day as this can often become a distraction as children tend to play out what it is they have seen on the screen, instead of allowing their imaginations to guide their play with other children.

Grades

We kindly ask that you not allow screen time the day before or the morning of a school day. If you are wanting to engage in screen time on the weekends, we recommend one hour per day maximum.

Emergencies

SCHOOL LANDLINE 805-235-4401

SCHOOL CELL PHONE 805-471-4401

We conduct regular fire drills and have an emergency plan for large disasters. In the case of a major emergency, you will be notified to come and pick up your child.

Cell Phones

To model conscious media use, we ask that adults also refrain from using cell phones, texting or using other electronic devices while moving through the school buildings, walking on campus grounds, and while dropping off and picking up their children.

Lending Library

We have a lending library in the office where you are welcome to check out books of interest to you. Please sign books in and out in the library binder. We also welcome donations, if you have a book that you believe would enhance our library and you'd like to share.

How Parents Can Support Their Child's School Experience

- Learn about Waldorf Education.
- Attend all parent meetings and stay in touch with your child's teacher.
- Create a home environment that supports the teacher's work.
- Make sure your child is ready for school, on time, dressed properly, lunch packed.
- Encourage your child to play outside and limit screen time.
- Get involved, volunteer, meet new parents, lend a hand!

Recommended Reading

General

Simplicity Parenting by Kim John Payne

Waldorf Education by Jack Petrash

The Essence of Waldorf Education by Peter Seleg

Early Childhood

A Guide to Child Health by Michaela Glockler & Wolfgang Goebel

Beyond the Rainbow Bridge by Barbara Patterson and Pamela Bradley

Festivals, Family and Food by Diana Carey & Judy Large

Heaven on Earth: A Handbook for Parents of Young Children by Sharifa Oppenheimer

Earthways by Carol Petrash

Endangered Minds: Why Children Can't Think by Jane Healy

The Education of the Child by Rudolf Steiner

The Kingdom of Childhood by Rudolf Steiner

www.sparklestories.com

Grades

Waldorf Education: A Family Guide by Pamela Fenner & Karen Rivers

School as a Journey: The Eight Year Odyssey of a Waldorf Teacher and His Class by Torin Finser

Adventures in Waldorf Education by Brien Masters

The Four Temperaments by Rudolf Steiner

www.storynory.com

Wishing Well School Calendar

| | |
|--|----------------|
| First day of school & Rose Ceremony..... | Sept 3 |
| First day of Homeschool Enrichment..... | Sept 9 |
| Grades Back-to-School Night..... | Sept 17 |
| Michaelmas..... | Sept 27 |
| Indigenous Peoples' Day, **NO SCHOOL** | Oct 14 |
| Halloween..... | Oct 31 |
| Dia de los Muertos..... | Nov 1 |
| Teacher Development day, **NO SCHOOL** | Nov 8 |
| Martinmas & Lantern Walk..... | Nov 8 |
| Veteran's Day, **NO SCHOOL** | Nov 11 |
| Parent Teacher Conferences, **12:30 DISMISSAL** | Nov 18 - 22 |
| Thanksgiving Holiday, **NO SCHOOL** | Nov 25 - 29 |
| Advent Spiral..... | Dec 1 |
| Bartermart..... | Dec 6 |
| Advent Assemblies..... | Dec 2, 9, 16 |
| Winter Faire..... | Dec 14 |
| Winter Holiday, **NO SCHOOL** | Dec 20 - Jan 3 |
| School Resumes..... | Jan 6 |
| Martin Luther King Jr. Day, **NO SCHOOL** | Jan 20 |
| Open House..... | Feb 1 |
| Valentine's Day Assembly..... | Feb 14 |
| Teachers' Conference, **NO SCHOOL** | Feb 17 - 20 |
| Parent Teacher Conferences, **12:30 DISMISSAL** | March 9 -13 |
| Spring Fundraiser..... | March 14 |
| Spring Break, **NO SCHOOL** | April 6 - 10 |
| May Day..... | May 1 |
| Memorial Day, **NO SCHOOL** | May 25 |
| Summer Fest..... | May 30 |
| Last day of Homeschool Enrichment..... | June 3 |
| Last Day of School & Assembly..... | June 4 |

Monthly events:

Parent Council -- 1st Wednesday, 6:00pm
Parent Tea --- 2nd Wednesday, 9:00am
Garden Day -- 3rd Saturday, 10:00am