



Olympia Waldorf
SCHOOL

EST. 1985



Family Guide

2015-16 EDITION

Family Guide to OWS

Revised September 2015

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Phone: (360) 493-0906

Fax: (360) 493-0835

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 130, East Olympia, WA 98540

Street Address: 8126 Normandy Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501

E-mail: info@olympiawaldorf.org

Website: www.olympiawaldorf.org

Start and End Times: All our classroom programs are based upon rhythms and routines that support children's healthy development in all areas. Please refer to the starting times for each program. Consistent on-time arrival serves your child(ren) as they are able to begin the day in the rhythm of their classroom. Punctuality creates healthy lifelong habits and parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to have their children to school on time to cultivate this capacity. Students may be dropped off 15 minutes prior to the beginning of school.

Preschool: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Kindergarten: 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Grades 1-8: 8:15 a.m. - 2:15 p.m. (morning bell rings at 8:10 a.m.)

School Holidays and Events: Check the school calendar on our website, or call or visit the school office.

School Closure: In case of inclement weather or an emergency situation, visit www.schoolreport.org for up-to-the-minute information. You may also call the school after 7:00 a.m. to hear a recorded message.

Visitors On Campus: All visitors on campus, including our parents/guardians, must check in the office first to sign in and sign out when leaving. This procedure allows us to account for every person on school grounds in the event of an emergency.

Weekly Bulletin: Submit timely and newsworthy entries to info@olympiawaldorf.org for electronic publication weekly. Submissions are due the Friday afternoon previous to the bulletin in which you'd like your item published. Please indicate "Bulletin" in the subject line. OWS staff reserves the right to edit all submissions.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Arrival and Pick-Up Parents/guardians are responsible for the supervision of their children until they are in the care of their teacher. Parents/guardians are responsible for their

children in the parking lot or play areas before and after school hours, unless they are in the care of Extended Care staff.

Parking Grade school families may park in the lot on the south side of Prairie Hall or in the lot between the Middle School and Prairie Hall. Kinderhaus families should park in the north parking lot near the playfield. Parking is strictly prohibited on Normandy Street for emergency vehicle and fire station access.

Late Arrival Please make sure your child arrives at school on time as there is a rhythm to the school day that is carefully planned by the teacher. If you are late, you **must** check in at the main office. Kinderhaus families check in at the Kinderhaus. If your child is in the lower grades, please wait with them in the hallway outside the classroom until the teacher comes out to greet them.

Late Pick-Up All students who do not have pre-arranged Extended Care must be picked up promptly at dismissal time. Grades children who are not picked up at their class dismissal time will be escorted to the front steps of the school for a 15-minute grace period. After the 15-minute grace period, a \$15 late fee will be applied to the monthly statement, and the child will be taken to Extended Care. Families will be charged an additional \$10 per hour for Extended Care for late-pick up.

After School Supervision Students not in the care of Extended Care staff must be within eyesight of an attending adult (e.g. parent or caregiver) between the hours of 2:15 and 5:30 p.m. All activities must be safe and appropriate.

Planned Absence Because the Waldorf curriculum is living and dynamic by nature, it may not be possible to adequately make up missed class time. Therefore, we place a high value on consistent and timely attendance. We acknowledge that there will be times when children must miss school for various reasons and ask for your cooperation in facilitating a smooth transition for the children who are absent for multiple days of school. For a planned absence, a written notification is requested.

Unplanned Absence/Illness For unplanned absence, such as illness, please call the school office as soon as possible. In order to ensure the children's safety, office staff will call the families of any child absent without notification. All students will be accounted for by school staff at the start of every school day.

Illness at Home Keeping your child at home at the first sign of communicable disease protects your child from additional health problems and protects other students from exposure. A child must be fever-free and diarrhea-free for more than 24 hours before returning to school.

Illness at School When a child becomes ill or injured at school, the teacher will notify the office that the child is ill and unable to participate in school activities. Two actions may then be taken:

- The child remains in the classroom if the teacher judges this to be appropriate; or
- The child is taken to the office where he or she is cared for and observed. In the case of vomiting, fever, or any injury or symptom that may require a physician's observation, one of the child's emergency contacts will be called to take the child home. If no one can be reached and the staff has deemed the illness or injury to be potentially dangerous to the child's health, 911 will be called.

Every faculty and staff member is First Aid/CPR-certified. First aid will be administered appropriately should injury occur.

Medications at School If your child must receive over-the-counter or prescribed oral medication during the school day or on any school-sponsored activity such as field trips and overnight excursions, you **must** have a Medications Request Form signed by the parent/guardian **and** health care provider on file at the school. This includes Epi-pens that may need to be administered for allergies, vitamins, and homeopathic remedies. The medication must be in its original marked container and clearly marked with the child's name, medication name, and dosage. Medication must be handed directly to a staff member. All medications will be returned to parents or disposed of at the end of the school year.

Phone Use Limited telephone use is available to parents/guardians and students on the courtesy phone in the copy machine alcove. Social activities and "play dates" must be arranged in advance and not on school phones after school.

Dropping Off Items To reduce distractions to and interruptions of classes during the school day, please drop off any items for your child at the office. We will ensure the items gets to your child.

Home Visits A home visit takes place for all new students either before or near the beginning of the school year. The visit allows the teacher to become more familiar with the child's life and family and builds a bridge between home and school.

30-Day Probationary Period Every new student will undergo a one-month period of evaluation. During this time, the student's parents/guardians will have the opportunity to become familiar with the school, and the teacher will be able to observe the student's needs and abilities. At the end of the one-month observation period, the teacher may terminate the enrollment contract, or the student may be transferred to a more appropriate class. If the contract is terminated, tuition will be charged on a prorated basis.

Classroom Observations A teacher's primary responsibility is to attend to the class. Parents/guardians with children in the class are encouraged to schedule an observation. All

visitors must make arrangements with the teacher in advance. Visits to the classroom are solely at faculty discretion.

Safety Fire and emergency evacuation drills are conducted in compliance with local and state authorities. All students must have a comfort kit at school in case of emergency.

Field Trips Parents/guardians will be notified at least one week in advance in writing that a field trip is planned, including the date, time and place. A permission slip must be signed and returned to school before a child can participate. Provisions will be made for children whose parents/guardians choose for them not to attend. Transportation will be provided by teachers and class parents/guardians. All vehicles used for field trips will be insured and have adequate seat belts. All field trip drivers will be required to complete a Field Trip Driver Authorization Form once per year before driving students on field trips.

Lunch and Snacks Parents/guardians will provide a wholesome snack and lunch. Preschool, Kindergarten, and Extended Care will provide supplemental snacks, which are paid for by the supply fee.

Clothing and Accessories The intent of our dress code is to ensure students' health and safety and foster a distraction-free learning environment. Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather, has sturdy play shoes, and at least one full change of clothing in a bag at school, and appropriate outerwear. Waldorf students of every age spend time playing outside, even in the rain. It is imperative that students have dry clothes to change into when they return to the classroom. Students may express their individuality within the following guidelines.

- Students will dress in a neat, clean, and modest manner, reflecting both self-respect and respect for others. No ripped clothing is allowed.
- Clothing will be suitable for both indoor and outdoor classes, including games and gardening.
- Clothing will be free of prominent advertisements and media images, as well as images that may be offensive, disturbing or distracting.
- No glasses other than prescription will be worn inside.
- Hair will be clean, neat, and out-of-the-face, with no distracting or unnatural dyes.
- Moderate use of cosmetics is allowed for middle grades students.
- No dangling jewelry, earrings, necklaces or bracelets.
- No watches that beep or jewelry that makes noise.
- Closed-toe, closed-back shoes without heels will be worn at all times when outdoors.
- Hats and hoods must be removed inside classrooms and school buildings.

Playground Attire Playground clothing requirements vary depending on weather and age of children. We suggest the following as a guide:

- Hot weather: One layer of clothing.

- Warm weather: Two layers (shirt and sweater or jacket).
- Cold weather: Three layers, including warm coat and warm hat or hood.
- Rainy weather: Full rain gear, including boots, for kindergarteners. Waterproof jackets and head protection for grade students.

Playground Behavior

- **Respect.** No forms of physical or verbal abuse by children or adults will be tolerated. Examples of inappropriate behavior: pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, use of profanity or derogatory language.
- **Swings.** Swings should be shared in a timely manner. No “push-off” surfaces may be placed near swings. No side-to-side swinging. No wrapping swings around frame to increase height.
- **Slides.** No pushing or rough play at the top of the slide, going down backwards, creating pileups, or blocking others from going down.
- **Fences.** No climbing on, digging under, or dismantling of fences.
- **Digging.** Allowed in designated areas only.
- **Ropes.** Ropes are to be used for jumping or other games and are not to be tied to climbing structures, trees or rocks, unless approved and supervised by a teacher or designated supervisor.
- **Tree climbing.** Tree climbing is allowed only as part of a class activity and under the direct supervision of classroom teachers and other faculty/staff. Tree climbing is only permitted in the Apple Garden by the Main Building and not in the Kinderhaus grounds. Tree climbing is not permitted during recess or extended care times.
- **Banisters.** No sitting, standing, or sliding on stair banisters.
- **Rocks.** No throwing rocks, sticks, or dirt clods.
- **Food.** No food, beverages, candy, or gum on the playground at recess.
- **Toys.** Children are not to bring toys from home. This includes rollerblades, skateboards, dolls, boomerangs, etc. Sports equipment such as basketballs, baseballs, soccer balls, etc. are allowed with approval of the class teacher.
- **Spitting.** Spitting on school grounds is prohibited to ensure the health and protection of all students, and promote a sense of responsibility and goodwill toward others.

Dogs No dogs may be on school property. Children may not play with, pet, feed, or encourage any dog that comes onto school property. Adults must attempt to send the dog away. If the dog will not leave, it will be reported to the office and Animal Control will be called for pick up.

Media Guidelines Since the Waldorf curriculum relies on enlivening the imaginative life of children, many faculty members and families in the community find that restricted media exposure for children at the school allows the students to best take up the education. Every family is different, and every year more types of media exposure are available in our culture, so it is impossible to make a blanket statement about how families can or should

chart their course through these decisions. The following are some suggestions and ideas you might explore in this arena:

- Limit or eliminate television, videos, or movies, especially for young children.
- Limit or eliminate video game use, especially for young children.
- Many families eliminate these activities completely during the school week and make reasonable limits during weekends and vacations.
- Limit or eliminate computer use until middle grades, and provide training and supervision of students as they begin using computers, especially the internet.
- Develop activities other than media-based ones to share as a family.
- Talk with other parents about their choices, past and present, and share observations and ideas for finding the right balance in your family.
- Keep open communications with other parents about play date activities. Don't assume standards for media exposure are the same from family to family.
- Respect the choices and values of all families; engage in dialogue with open minds and interest, not judgment.

The most important aspect is that parents make conscious choices about their children's media habits or exposures, and that they become keen observers of the effects of these activities on the children. Reading on the subject includes: *The Plug-In Drug*, Marie Winn; *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, Jerry Mander; and *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman.

Cell Phones We prefer that students not bring cell phones to school. In the event that a family decides that a student must have a cell phone while at school, the student must give the cell phone to his or her class teacher upon arrival at school. The teacher will make sure the phone is turned off and will return the phone to the student at dismissal. Students needing to make phone calls during the school day are expected to ask permission in the office. parents/guardians needing to leave a message for a student during the school day may do so by calling the main office.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Families participate in the life of Olympia Waldorf School in diverse ways. Their participation is critical to ensure a growing and thriving school, and it enhances our sense of community and shared purpose.

Class Meetings Teachers regularly hold parent/guardian evenings for the families in their class to share what is happening in the classroom, to discuss the growth and development of the children, and to plan for class activities. Regular participation in these meetings is an important part of supporting your child's progress at the school.

Classroom Tasks Teachers request on-going support from parents/guardians with specific classroom tasks such as laundry, room cleaning, ironing, and mending. The class teacher

and the Parent Association representative organize and lead the class families in filling these needs.

Encouraging a Love of Reading Reading is a lifelong skill that is essential in our society and can bring much joy throughout a person's life. For young children, a strong foundation for reading is built through a variety of activities based in play including running, jumping, drawing, listening to stories, and building with blocks. For a great description about how to build this strong foundation for reading with our youngest children, refer to the following article by Laura Grace Weldon at:

<http://lauragraceweldon.com/2012/08/07/reading-readiness-has-to-do-with-the-body/>

As children begin to learn to read in the grades, creating a daily routine for reading can solidify those developing skills. New readers love to show off their new skills by reading aloud to anyone and everyone who will listen! As children gain more skill and confidence in their reading abilities, they are able to follow their interests and begin exploring different genres. Families can support a love of reading by making reading a family event, encouraging children to read daily, and expressing confidence in your child's ability to become a competent, lifelong reader. For suggestions on age-appropriate reading material, please ask your child's teacher.

Adult Enrichment Activities Faculty and staff at the school organize activities to help parents/guardians understand and experience our unique curriculum in various ways. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to attend these offerings as suits their interest and availability.

Family Mail Cubbies In order to receive school communication, each family has a cubby outside the school office in Prairie Hall. Cubbies for families of children in Huckleberry and Sunflower Kindergarten are located in the Kinderhaus. The cubbies are organized by the student's last name and are intended for school-related community communications. If you have something Office Staff before distributing it. If your children collect items from the family mailbox, please be aware there may be items in the box not intended for children.

Family Service Hours Families are encouraged to contribute their time and talent each year towards supporting the classroom, facility, festivals, and outreach efforts at OWS. Many hands make light work and the faculty and staff at OWS are deeply grateful to our families and community partners who help make our school so vibrant. We encourage a thoughtful consideration of the school and class needs in balance with one's family and personal needs. Only when honestly seeking this balance can healthy growth be attained for both the school and its families. Please see our Volunteer pamphlet for volunteer guidelines and the ways you can support the school community.

Site Work Parties The Site Committee and Facility Manager oversee playground, garden, and building improvements and maintenance. Several times a year they organize work

parties to involve the broader community in helping with these tasks. Families are encouraged to participate in at least one of these work parties each year.

Parent Association (PA) Each class has two representatives to the Association serving staggered two-year terms, who facilitate communication and organization between the Association work, the class teacher, and other parents/guardians in the class. Class representatives attend monthly PA meetings.

Board & Committee Work Membership on the Board and participation in the committee work is open to all interested parents and guardians.

Communications Day-to-day feedback, including commendations, questions, and complaints, should be directed according to the following process:

- First, share concerns or questions directly with the person involved, for example, your child's class teacher.
- Second, if a satisfactory resolution was not possible with the person involved, please bring your concerns to Dean of Education or Dean of Administration.

Throughout this process, we ask that that adults strive to maintain social hygiene by bringing concerns in a direct and timely way and maintaining positive intentions to resolve any issue respectfully.

Building a Strong OWS Community Families are our greatest support and resource. We strive to maintain respectful and positive relationships with all our families at all times. These are just a few tips to support a strong and vibrant school community:

- *Approach the relationship between yourself and your child's teacher with respect.* This relationship is critical to your child's success at school. Speak positively about your child's teacher in front of your child. Any concerns can be brought up privately between you and your child's teacher and should remain within the adult realm. Approach this relationship as you would any long-term relationship with a willingness to get to know one another, work on building trust, and with a commitment to working together in the best interest of your child.
- *Share your talent.* Do you have a skill or talent that can be used to support your child's class or the school community in general? Let us know and we will find a way to help you shine.
- *Praise the school in public, air concerns and resolve issues privately with school personnel.* Your positive regard of OWS is our greatest compliment and most effective advertising tool we have. And with any relationship, misunderstandings and problems occur. We are committed to working with families to resolve any issue, so please contact us directly before misunderstandings grow.

SOCIAL HEALTH

“The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human soul, the whole community finds its reflection; and when in the community, the virtue of each one is living.”
- Rudolf Steiner

OWS CODE OF CONDUCT

We operate under two guiding principles: **Safety and Respect**

As we live into these ideals, we encourage the following behaviors:

- Use kind words.
- Offer helping hands.
- Be careful and safe with our bodies.
- Include everyone.
- Forgive mistakes and start over.
- Bullying is repeated, harmful behavior and is not acceptable.

Our Approach to Discipline Our philosophy of discipline is rooted in a recognition of and respect for that which is unique and highest in each individual human being. In order to nurture new steps in growth, our school is a place where safety, security and protection, both physical and emotional, are asserted.

Disciplinary Procedures When a student's behavior does not comply with the Code of Conduct or disrupts the healthy flow of school activities, we recognize five levels of response that may be taken: informal consequences, formal disciplinary action, disciplinary conference, suspension, and expulsion. Some acts of emotional or physical violence may warrant swifter, stronger action. In these instances parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible and appropriate action will be taken to ensure the health and safety of our community. In some cases, law enforcement may be required to be notified.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy The Olympia Waldorf School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our students so they can learn in a comfortable and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind, including harassment or intimidation, is unacceptable at our school and will not be allowed. We are a vigilant, informed school and community. This means that bullying which is known or suspected will be reported. Incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. If you are concerned about possibly bullying towards or by your child, please contact your child's teacher immediately.

Student Dismissal In the case of a student dismissal, parents/guardians are asked to remove a child from the school before the term is expired. Dismissal is a rare event in the life of a school and is only undertaken after careful process and deliberation. The school's process includes a faculty study of the child's situation, meetings with the parents, consultation with the Dean of Education, and an opportunity for appeal of the decision.

HISTORY AND PRESENT STRUCTURE

Olympia Waldorf School is part of an international Waldorf School movement of more than 1000 schools in over 60 countries worldwide. Our school was founded with the understanding that this type of education will engage and nourish the whole child in body, mind and spirit.

History of Olympia Waldorf School Inspired by an introductory lecture given by Elana Freeland in 1983, a handful of parents set to work to establish a Waldorf school in Olympia. In March 1985, the Olympia Waldorf Education Association was formed and was recognized by the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA). After gaining legal nonprofit status and adopting bylaws, Olympia Waldorf School opened its doors to 17 young children that fall.

The school added grades one by one until in June 2000 we graduated our first Grade 8 class. Now, each spring we send out into the world a group of amazing young people. Our program has expanded to include a preschool, two kindergartens and grades one through eight.

Olympia Waldorf School's Prairie Hall was formerly the home of the East Olympia School and was originally called the Chambers Prairie School. It was built in 1914, and opened its doors in 1916 to 38 students and two teachers in Grades 1 through 8. This homey, wooden building has been in continuous use as a school ever since. After five years of renting space, Olympia Waldorf School took a great step forward in 1990 and moved into this beloved historical site. In 1999, our community built a new Middle School building, and in 2007, we renovated and opened the Kinderhaus on adjacent property.

Current Programs OWS has grown and currently offers the following programs for our families: Parent and Tot, Preschool, Kindergarten, Grades 1-8, Extended Care, and Camps.

Community Festivals The Waldorf festival life has roots in Christian culture, but it is cultivated as a means for instilling in children a reverent attitude toward life, not as a dogma or theology. Thus, we use the word "God" without defining it in our poems, songs, and graces before meals and snacks. The attitudes of joy, reverence, and gratitude are apparent during our school-wide seasonal celebrations, which include our Michaelmas Harvest Faire, the Enchanted Winter Faire, and May Faire. Out of our desire to embrace our multicultural community, we may also celebrate Jewish holidays such as Hanukkah, the

European festivals of Advent, Santa Lucia, and the Chinese New Year. In this way we hope to reflect for the children the richness and bounty of our many homelands.

Administrative Staff The administrative staff is responsible for the administrative needs of the school. Staff members serve on committees, report to the Board, and oversee the day-to-day operations of the school. Typical positions within the administrative staff include the Business Manager, Dean of Education, Dean of Administration, Development Manager, Enrollment Manager, Facilities Manager, and Administrative Assistant.

Faculty The faculty, under the direction of the Dean of Education, is responsible for all educational matters of the school. This includes curriculum, student discipline, and admission of new students. Faculty members are represented on the Board of Trustees, the Parent Association and most committees. The faculty includes a class teacher for each grade and each Early Childhood class, as well as teachers of the specialty lessons which supplement the main lesson curriculum.

Extended Care Our extended care staff administer our before school, after school, break care, and summer programs.

Board of Trustees The Board of Trustees is responsible for oversight of the financial and legal matters of the school. The Board is comprised of a Faculty Representative, and community members, with each member serving a three-year term. Board members are elected by vote as the terms of their predecessors expire. Meetings are open to the community, though parts of meetings may require confidentiality and may be closed to non-Trustees. The Board holds monthly meetings and also convenes All-School Meetings twice a year, in October and May.

Committees The Board and Administrative staff delegate some of their work to committees that engage faculty, staff, parents/guardians, and Board member participation. The current committees are as follows:

- Finance Committee holds the school's short-term and long-term financial vision and assists the Board of Trustees in the stewardship of the financial resources of the school.
- Fundraising Committee holds the long range planning for the school and manages activities relating to fundraising, annual fund drives, and capital development.
- Site Committee supports the work of the Facility Manager in helping to prioritize and organize the maintenance and improvement of all school property and structures.
- Hiring Committee carries out administrative tasks related to hiring.
- Facilitation Team serves Olympia Waldorf School as the vessel that supports and guides the process of concern or grievance resolution within the school community.

Parent Association The Parent Association is comprised of members of the parent/guardian community and seeks to inspire, inform, and organize the parent/guardian body. The Parent Association nurtures a healthy social network at the

school through fostering warmth and communication between all members of the community. The Parent Association is composed of two members from each class who serve staggered two-year terms. There are additional liaisons from faculty and staff.

For more information on our programs, enrollment, tuition, financial policies, discipline and other policies and procedures, please contact our office.