

# *The Siskiyou School Parent Handbook*



## *Siskiyou School Mission Statement*

*To honor and cultivate the intellectual, imaginative, artistic, and individual gifts  
in each student within a community that celebrates childhood, practices  
compassion, and inspires a passion for learning and service.*

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Non-Discrimination Policy: The Siskiyou School will not discriminate against any person, adult or child, on the basis of race, creed, religion, sex, color, gender identity, sexual orientation or national origin. This Non-Discrimination Policy applies to, but is not limited to; the admission of students, the hiring of faculty and staff, the use of school facilities, the participation in school programs, policies, practices and the administration of educational policies.

## **PART I: SCHOOL HOURS & SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

### **Office Hours**

Monday-Thursdays: 8:00 - 4:00  
Fridays: 8:00 - 1:00

### **School Hours**

8:10 School officially opens for business  
8:25 Morning Bell Rings  
2:05 Dismissal for Class 1 for the first semester  
2:55 Dismissal for Class 1 for the second semester  
3:00 Dismissal Classes 2-4  
3:10 Dismissal Classes 5-8

### **Friday & Half-day Dismissal Times**

12:20 Grade 1  
12:30 Grades 2-4  
12:45 Grades 5-8

### **Schedule of Classes**

8:25-10:20 Main Lesson  
10:20 Snack & Recess  
10:50 Classes Resume  
10:50-11:35 First Period  
11:40-12:25 Second Period  
12:25 -1:05 Lunch & Recess  
1:05-1:15 Reading Time  
1:15-2:00 Third Period  
2:05-2:50 Fourth Period  
2:50-3:00 Class Clean-Up & Homework Review, Grades 2-4  
2:50-3:10 Class Clean-Up & Homework Review, Grades 5-8

\*First and second grade recess times may vary by 5-10 minutes from the above.

## **PART II: DAILY LIFE & ALL THE LITTLE THINGS PARENTS NEED TO KNOW**

### **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

#### **Morning Arrival**

Teachers give a lot of thought to the children's first hour at school, knowing its effects reverberate through the day. In keeping with our conviction that predictability and consistency are healthful to the growing child, we ring the morning bell at exactly 8:25 every day. As soon as the bell rings, class teachers begin leading their children through a rhythmic sequence of activities designed to bring the class together and each student into a place of openness and readiness for main lesson. Getting your child(ren) to school 10-15 minutes before the bell to give them a moment to settle in, put belongings away, and connect briefly with their friends and their teacher is a gift you can give them every day. The faculty greatly appreciates your help with morning timeliness.

## **Opening Time**

The school officially opens for the children at 8:10. At 8:10 parking lot helpers come out to monitor traffic flow and help children out of cars, classroom doors open, recess monitors go on morning playground duty, the ball box is unlocked, and the play area becomes available for children to begin their games. Until 8:10, the playground and classrooms are closed to students as teachers are prepping for the day.

## **Early Arrivals**

Children arriving before 8:10 wait in Pine Hall under the supervision of a teacher, doing homework, reading, or talking quietly. Children may be dropped off as of 8:00 without advance notice. If you occasionally need to drop your child off earlier than 8:00, contact the office the night before to get permission and ensure that a staff member will be there to welcome him/her.

## **Late Arrivals**

Children who arrive after the 8:25 bell has rung must stop by the office to pick up a tardy slip. If your child is a first through third grader, please park and accompany your child to the office. Fourth through eighth graders can stop in the office on their own to pick up that slip. Repeated tardiness is handled as per our Tardy Policy.

## **Early Pick-Ups**

In any given day, quite a few children may have to be picked up early for one reason or another. In order not to have office staff going back and forth to classrooms throughout the day to bring children to their waiting parents, please note the following guidelines.

- If something unexpected comes up and you suddenly need to pick up your child in the middle of the day, call the office and a staff person will be glad to go to your child's class and bring your child out front.
- If, however, you know ahead of time that you will need to pick up your child early on a given day, do not notify the office ahead of time; send your child in with a note for his/her class teacher.
- Students in grades 5-8 are expected to coordinate with their teacher to come out front to meet you at the time you have requested in the note to the teacher.
- Parents of children in grades 1-4 are expected to park and come to the office. At that moment, a staff member will go to your child's class and bring your child to you.

*Please be sure the class teacher or the office knows when your child leaves early. The school needs to know where all the students are at all times during the school day.*

## **Late Pick-Ups**

There is a 15-minute window for afternoon pick-up. For grades 1-4 it is 3:00-3:15; for grades 5-8, it's 3:10-3:25. A "late pick-up" begins after that 15-minute window. Please be assured that during that 15-minute window your child will not feel alone as *many* children are out front together also waiting to be picked up. After 15 minutes, the duty teacher will make calls to parents of children who are still waiting out front to confirm that the parents are on their way. *Please do not call the office to say you will be late unless you know you actually WILL be late, i.e. that you will arrive to pick up your child after the 15-minute window.*

Dismissal is a super busy time; office personnel are often out front, helping teachers load kids into cars and/or helping parents who have in-person office business.

## **First Grade Pick-Up Monday through Thursdays**

Pick-up for first graders, on Mondays through Thursdays until the end of the first semester (end January), is at 2:05. After January pick-up is 2:55.

## **First Grade Pick-Up on Fridays and other Half Days**

Half-day dismissal for first graders is 12:25.

### **'Hanging Out' after School**

Children are not allowed to play out back after dismissal unless they have the permission of the office. Children must be under teacher supervision if they stay after school.

### **Where Parents Should Wait at Pick-Up**

Parents who arrive on foot to pick up their child(ren) are to wait out front by the bike rack or under the front portico. That's where teachers bring their classes at dismissal. We ask that parents not wait out back in front of the classrooms. Classes are in session until dismissal.

### **Arranging Play Dates**

Please finalize after-school plans with your children before dropping them off in the morning; it's stressful for children and parents to negotiate play dates in the stream of afternoon traffic. If your child does call out to you in the drive-through lane about a play date, please park and then come back to have the conversation. Students are not allowed to phone parents in the day to arrange play dates.

## **NEIGHBORLINESS & OUR PARKING LOT PROTOCOL**

We are a school among many houses in a residential area. Being respectful of our neighbors is not only the normal and right thing to do, but it is part of our agreement with the City under the terms of our Conditional Use Permit. Our continued presence on this site depends on those good relations with our neighbors.

The biggest strain revolves around Siskiyou School parent parking and traffic on the street. We are a BIG group and at drop-off and pick-up time, Clay Street can be overwhelmed by our school traffic. Also on big festival days when, in addition to our own parents, we have many visitors in attendance, we especially need to keep our neighbors in mind in choosing how we drive on the street and where and how we park. Gridlock can take but a few minutes to form. In the blink of an eye, traffic moving too slowly in the parking lot and/or too many incoming cars on Clay can cause both entrance and exits to get blocked and traffic to stall for everyone.

The Board and faculty are acutely aware of the importance of neighbor relations as we field complaints when our traffic interferes with their lives. Having our parents *also* carry a keen consciousness and awareness of our neighbors and their role in making traffic safe and efficient is hugely helpful.

To this end, we have formulated a list of rules to make clear which behaviors and practices are key to making it all work. Years of experience by faculty who daily monitor traffic at drop-off and pick-up have shown us that a parent or two violating any single rule during rush hour can in an instant adversely affect the entire flow of traffic and cause frustration, delays, and accidents. Please read the list below.

## **OUR PARKING LOT PROTOCOL**

### **The Basic Rules**

- Never make U-turns on the street during rush hour.
- Never leave your vehicle unattended in the traffic flow lane.
- Never stop your car in the crosswalk itself.
- Never pull out into the right-hand lane in the pickup area unless directed by the traffic helpers.
- Never park in the entrance to our school parking lot.
- Never enter through the exit way.

- Never block a driveway anywhere when parking.
- Never block a fire hydrant when parking.
- Never talk on your cell phone while driving on Clay Street – even hands free.
- Always drive slowly and with care on Clay Street.
- Always park your car as close to the “curb” as possible to leave room for traffic.
- Always park in the direction of the traffic flow.
- Always pull up as far as possible in the drive-through lane before stopping to drop off or pick up your child. Two cars fit past the crosswalk.
- **ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIVES OF THE TEACHERS, EVEN IF THEY SEEM COUNTERINTUITIVE.** Traffic helpers may be aware of children that drivers cannot see, such as the child coming around to get into a passenger side seat or about to open a passenger door or step out from between parked cars. Waiting patiently in single file, in spite of how tempting it may be to pull into the right lane and exit quickly, is a necessary precaution and small price to pay for guaranteed safety. The close calls are terrifying.

### At Drop Off

- Do not allow your child to jump out of the car at the back of the parking lot even if there is a line of cars ahead of you. Have your child stay in the car until your car reaches one of the three drop-off points where a staff member is available to help open car doors and ensure safety. The first two drop-off spots are in front of the crosswalk. The third drop off spot is just before the crosswalk.
- Finish conversations and after-school arrangements before you pull up at the drop-off spot and encourage your child(ren) to have backpacks and lunch bags in hand so they are ready to step out quickly when the helper opens the car door.
- If you are in the drive-through lane, do not get out of the car to help your child out or to say goodbye; those extra seconds can cause back-up in the traffic loop.
- If your child is seated next to you in the passenger seat, caution him/her to check for oncoming traffic before opening the passenger side door. Exiting cars pose a danger.
- If your child is not sitting up front with you, have him/her sit behind the driver’s seat so that he/she can get out on the sidewalk side versus the lane of traffic.
- If your child or carpool group has school gear stowed in the back or trunk, please park on the street, unload there, and walk up to the crosswalk so as not to hold up the flow of traffic.

### At Pick-Up Time

- Pull as far forward as you can before stopping to pick up your child. If there are no cars ahead of you, pull up to the Pull-Up Line. Two cars fit past the crosswalk.
- Have your back seats free and clear so your child(ren) can get in and seated quickly.
- Keep driving at a steady pace down the drive-through lane rather than slowing down to scan the crowd of children for your child; slowing down affects the flow for all the cars behind you; teachers have a system for finding your child and getting your child to you.
- Do not arrive earlier than the designated pick-up time of your oldest child; the more cars that have to circle, the more congested the flow becomes.
- If your child’s class is late getting out, circle until the class comes out.
- If after-school plans need to be discussed, park and then have the conversation.
- Prepare to be patient; even though all teachers are out to help with the process, it sometimes takes a minute.

The teachers are very grateful for your cooperation. Your patience and good will can make all the difference. THANK YOU!

## **COMMUNICATING WITH THE SCHOOL DURING THE DAY**

### **Notifying the Office about Illness**

Please leave a brief message on the school answering machine before 8:00 if your child is going to be late or out for the day. It can be as simple as “*Johnny in first grade is out today with a fever*”. Messages are downloaded and passed on to class teachers before the school day begins. If a child has a contagious illness, the office may email other parents in the class to give them a heads-up.

### **Leaving Messages on the School Phone**

If you get the answering machine when you call the office, please leave us a message. Voicemail is checked regularly throughout the day. Please keep in mind that afternoon pick-up times are particularly busy and that messages left in the last hour of the day may not be listened to until after 3:25.

### **Getting Messages to your Children**

Before dropping off your children in the morning, please make sure they have their lunches and know who will be picking them up. The predictability, clarity, and foreknowledge is reassuring. If the pick-up changes in the course of the day, call the office and we will be happy to get the message to your child(ren).

## **ABSENCES AND MAKE-UP WORK**

### **Scheduling Appointments**

Please try to schedule appointments with doctors and dentists after school or at lunch times (12:20-1:15) so as not to break the rhythm of the day for your child or the class. We certainly understand that this is not always possible.

### **Make-Up Work for Absences**

If children are sick, teachers want the children to take a complete break and not even think about schoolwork. There will be time enough to catch up later. If the child starts feeling well enough to do *some* work, parents of upper grades students can request a homework packet by emailing their teacher and the office. Although it is not always possible, we will do our best to put a packet together that can be picked up in the office. In the upper grades students often have a “homework partner” who carries responsibility for putting together those folders by gathering any handouts or assignments during the day for their missing buddy.

### **Main Lesson Catch-Up Work**

Main lesson is a living, whole class experience; the drawings and texts assigned by the teacher are a way for a child to express his experience of the living lesson. Out of context, those assignments lose their purpose thus are not usually given as catch-up work. When children return after a short absence, class teachers find a moment to “brief” them so they can follow the flow of the new lessons. Because main lesson is such an important part of the Waldorf curriculum and cannot be caught up in a meaningful way, we sometimes encourage children who are beginning to feel better but just don’t have enough energy yet to be at school for a whole day to come in *just* for main lesson.

### **Missing School for Family Trips**

We recognize that some family trips can only be scheduled outside of official vacation times. Check with the class teacher to see whether there is a better or worse time for that trip in terms of the whole year’s schedule. When looking at travel dates, please avoid overlap with major class events such as class plays and class trips. Equally important, please note that official return days -- the day after Winter

Break and the day after Spring Break-- are usually the start of a new block and very high on a teacher's list of not-to-be-missed days!

In the event of a family trip outside of official vacation days, the class teacher will spell out expectations for work to be completed by your child during the time away. A teacher may assign writing, reading, and math. Parents should not expect class teachers to catch students up with missed main lesson work. In middle school, credit will not be given for a missed main lesson block unless the child completes an independent study.

While recognizing the genuinely priceless value of those special family trips, we also want to advocate for the value of consistent school life for young children. Each main lesson day and block has its own nourishing quality and seeing a school-year commitment through communicates something important to the children as well. The fewer days missed in a school year, the greater the children's sense of connection with and investment in their schoolwork and life.

## **FOOD AT SCHOOL**

### **Snack and Lunch**

Good nutrition during the school day is vital for focus and balanced energy. School takes energy and children get very hungry! Please pack a substantial, nutritious snack and lunch. Teachers will make sure the children get the time and space they need to eat quietly and peacefully. We ask that children not bring food that requires heating and that no candy, soda, or gum be brought to school. Gum chewing is not allowed at school.

### **Water bottles and drinking water**

Teachers encourage the children to drink frequently throughout the day to stay well hydrated. All children in grades 1-8 are expected to have a labeled water bottle at school every day. The water bottles are kept in the children's cubbies, and taken home to be washed on a regular basis as directed by the class teacher. Children can refill their bottles with filtered water from their classroom sink.

### **Recycling & Composting**

Our goal as a school is to be as 'green' as possible and to keep trash to a minimum. To this end, we ask parents to send snack and lunch foods in reusable containers, and ask children to pack out what they bring in. All students help with our recycling program.

### **Fundraising Lunches**

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade may choose to offer a pizza, burrito or other lunch program as a fundraiser. Watch the Tuesday Notice for information about these programs.

### **Forgotten Lunches (& Homework!)**

When children forget their lunch or homework, they usually find it hard to focus until that is resolved! Please make a habit of asking your children as they leave the house in the morning, *Do you have your lunch? Your homework?* The office will call you if a missing lunch or homework situation is brought to our attention. When you bring in a late lunch or missing homework, please drop it off in the office and we will deliver it to the classroom. If you can't get back before snack or lunch to bring your child food, we will make sure your child gets something to eat!

## **CLOTHING**

**Cold/Wet Weather Gear** When the season calls for it, please make sure your child leaves home with the necessary outerwear, including rain boots and jacket, to stay dry through the day. Children with proper weather clothing *will* be allowed to play outside at recess in all weather; children without the weather gear will stay indoors at recess times.



**Change of Clothes** Children in grades 1-2 are asked to keep an extra set of clothes at school for those occasions when emergency changes are necessary.

**Labeling clothing, water bottles, etc.** We encourage parents to label all sweatshirts, jackets, lunch bags, and water bottles. Children arrive in sweatshirts or jackets in the cool mornings but then take them off as they warm up during recesses and forget them outside. Those items end up in the Lost and Found. If they are labeled, we can make sure they get back to the child. We also encourage labeling of potluck dishes using masking tape. Labeling is a big help in our being able to get your things back to you.

**School Dress Code** We do have a school dress code. It is outlined under the policy section of this handbook. Ultimately, it is a teacher's call if the item of clothing in question meets code or not. The heart of the code is that we don't want a child's clothes to be distracting to other children or to the teachers. Read the Dress Code for details.

### **SNOW DAYS AND LATE STARTS**

We follow the Ashland School District's lead on calling snow days or late starts. If the District calls a snow day or a late start, we also have a snow day and/or a late start. The best place to check is the Ashland School District website [www.ashland.k12.or.us](http://www.ashland.k12.or.us); they flash snow day announcements on their home page.

Exception to the rule: The only time we do not follow the District's lead is on Fridays which are always half days for us. When the District calls a *two*-hour late start on a Friday, we do not have school at all. If it's a *one*-hour late start, we do have school. On late-start days we adjust the day's schedule to ensure that the children get main lesson. If you cannot access the website or don't have a radio, try calling the school office, not your class teachers.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Teachers host a birthday acknowledgment moment in class for every child each year up through middle school. In the younger grades parents are invited to attend and to bring a fruit treat for the whole class to share. Traditionally, the teacher invites the birthday child forward, and one by one classmates share something they appreciate about the child's unique gifts and qualities. All the children in the class know from firsthand experience the specialness of the moment, and the birthday child receives the words of his/her friends with shy wonder. It is a reverent moment and special circle for all.

The subject of outside birthday parties is usually on the agenda of one of the first Parent Evenings because it is a delicate matter. For children even up through middle school, receiving an invitation to a classmate's party is the most exciting thing. Conversely, children who learn that a classmate is having a party and that they weren't invited can hurt for a long time. To maximize the chance of not hurting any child's feelings, teachers recommend one of three options to parents: (1) make your child's "party" so intimate, with just a "best" friend or two, that the other 20 plus children in the class are unlikely to feel excluded even if they hear about it; (2) invite *all* the boys, or *all* the girls, not, say, 7 out of 11; (3) invite the whole gang! Invitations to birthday parties are always distributed *outside of class*, with discretion as needed.

### **FIELD TRIPS & END-OF-YEAR CLASS TRIPS**

#### **Chaperoning & Field Trip Rules**

School trips are wonderful opportunities for the children to be together in new ways. It is also an opportunity for parents in the class to be with the children. The class teacher invites parents to be chaperones. Before getting into the cars, the class teacher reviews the rules with the children and the chaperones so that everybody is on the same page. The five big ones are as follows:

- Class teachers decide who rides in which cars. Parents are asked to support the teacher's decision and not negotiate seating arrangements for their child. If your child has any special needs, please make sure the teacher is aware of these before the trip so that the chaperone assigned can help.
- Chaperones are asked to make sure the seatbelt rule is enforced in their cars. By law all children must wear seatbelts and are not allowed to “double buckle.” Students in the lower grades should not occupy a front seat. Please take this into account when notifying the teacher of seating spaces available in your car.
- Chaperones are asked not to make a food stop for their particular car unless it has been agreed beforehand that *all* the chaperone cars will be stopping. Every car is to carry extra food and water.
- Chaperones are asked to uphold the school rule about electronics. No electronics are allowed - no cell phones, iPods, iPads, or video games. We also ask that chaperones keep the radio turned off to optimize the chances for the children to engage with one another and to ensure that the talk does not revolve around which music station to listen to. Without the distraction of radio or electronics, the children soon “drop into” talking among themselves and having fun making up car games. The car trip itself can become a highlight of the field trip experience.
- Chaperones are asked to model courtesy to hosts and a willingness to follow guidelines prescribed by the class teacher and/or trip leader.

### **Paperwork required of Field Trip Volunteer Drivers**

Parents interested in being a driver on a field trip must have completed the *parent volunteer and background check paperwork* included in their child’s enrollment packet. If you are not sure if your paperwork is up to date, check with the office. Field trip drivers are required to have 1) a clean background check, which includes a clean driving record 2) a current insurance policy that indicates the prescribed level of liability limits and 3) a completed auto maintenance report.

### **End-of-Year Class Trips or Outings**

Most classes have a special outing at the end of the school year. In first grade it may be a class picnic, by third there is an overnight. The class teacher decides what trip or outing will be best for the class. Parents help with logistics and chaperoning. Teachers announce outings well in advance. The cost is included as part of the child’s tuition. The exception is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip, a capstone event where the children may be away for a week or more. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class trip requires a substantial family contribution as well as help with class fundraising all through the year. (See Money Matters)

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **The Lost and Found**

Please LABEL your child’s belongings to ensure misplaced items will find their way back to you. Any unlabeled item left outside is brought to our Lost and Found, the front hallway closet. Children know to look in the Lost and Found if they are missing something. Before each school break, all items are set out in front of the main building so that parents can easily check for their child’s unclaimed belongings when they come for pick up or drop off. After a couple of days, unclaimed items are taken to Goodwill. Please check frequently, especially if your child is missing belongings. (Literally, bags full of lost and found clothing items are delivered to Goodwill each year!)

### **Dogs/Pets**

Teacher permission is required before a beloved pet can be brought to school to show the class. Please keep your dog in your car (or in your arms) at drop-off or pick-up. In the event of a pet day in the classroom, please notify your teacher of any allergies to animals that your child(ren) has.

### **Electronics/Toys**

No electronic devices, toys, or personal items are allowed at school as they can distract the children from healthy play at recess and be disruptive in the classroom. The safety of such items cannot be guaranteed, offering still another reason for keeping them at home.

### **Cell phones**

Students are not allowed to use cell phones during school. If children need to call their parents during the day, they must go to the office to use the office phone. After school, if given permission by a teacher, students may use their cell phones out front to contact a parent but not to listen to music or play games. Cell phones will be collected by the teachers if they are out during the school day. Students may not use cell phones as a calculator in math classes. If there are repeated offenses, the child will not be allowed to have a cell phone on campus.

### **Bicycles**

Children are encouraged to ride their bicycles to school, and many of our students do. No bike riding is allowed in the parking lot area or on the asphalt behind the school building. At dismissal, bikers are asked to walk their bikes from the end of the exit ramp across the crosswalk in the street, as traffic is busy and unpredictable. We recommend that parents scope out the safest route to school and ride with your child for the first few days to help foresee any hazards your child should be aware of. Helmets are a must! Locks are highly recommended if bikes are left at school overnight. Unfortunately, we have had several bike thefts with bikes left overnight. The police recommend that families register their bikes at the police station to facilitate recuperating them should they ever be stolen.

### **Forgotten Homework or Books**

If your child has forgotten something he/she needs for homework, call the office. There is a chance someone will be around to help even if it is after hours.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE & COMMUNITY OUTREACH DAYS**

Cultivating in our children a habit and love of service is part of our school mission. All of our classes perform community service activities of some kind. Some of that work is right around our own campus, some off campus. Class teachers, with parent help, look for activities that can be meaningful for their classes to participate in. Examples include clearing trails for the Park Service, maintaining Clay Street Park (our school is the steward), providing artwork and performing music in nursing homes and hospitals. The school community as a whole engages in outreach as well. Each Thanksgiving, we do a food drive to replenish shelves at the Ashland Food Bank. In December, through our Holiday Angels Program, classes sponsor families, fulfilling their wish list needs for the holiday season. We remain committed to having community service be a way of life for our students.

## **PART III: COMMUNITY LIFE:**

### **SCHOOL GATHERINGS & CLASS GATHERINGS**

Being part of the Siskiyou School is being part of a community. Parents have occasion to experience that community at all-school events and at class events that punctuate the year. When our whole community comes together, we number about 600! We use different venues to host our gatherings, and we shape our events partly in consideration of our space limitations. Class gatherings and plays are easily accommodated in Pine Hall.

## **Festivals**

Cultivating an awareness of the rhythms of the year through seasonal celebrations is a central part of Waldorf education. Some festivals, such as Michaelmas and May Day, are celebrated at Clay Street Park which adjoins our campus, allowing our whole community -- children, parents, grandparents, alumni, preschools, and friends – to enjoy the experience together. Other seasonal celebrations such as advent time are celebrated quietly just by the children and their teachers in Pine Hall as part of the weekly Friday Assemblies. Each celebration has its accompanying rituals, songs, and verses. As the years pass, the children acquire a repertoire of songs, verses, and stories associated with the big turning points of the year. The school does not teach a particular religious view; the festivals are universal in nature.

## **Class Visits, Class Nights, Music Nights, Class Plays**

Parents are offered several opportunities through the year to observe their child's class and spend time with their fellow class parents. **Class Visits:** Class teachers in the upper grades invite parents to observe during main lesson for special presentations such as an author's tea, a business fair, animal or state reports, Rome projects, or a PowerPoint presentation. Parents of lower grades may be invited to watch circle activities or to help with a project. On **Class Nights**, parents are invited to Pine Hall to watch their child's class share work from main lesson such as 6<sup>th</sup> grade Volcano Night or 7<sup>th</sup> grade Simple Machines Night. **Class Plays** are a highlight for every class. Just about every month, a class presents its play to the community in Pine Hall. Premiers of the plays usually are scheduled on a Thursday evening. The following morning the play is performed again, this time for all the children of the school. Parents of the class often attend this show as well, glad for a second opportunity to see their child's class on stage. Parents are encouraged to attend all the plays. Watching class plays is a great way to get a feel for each class and witness the children's engagement with the curriculum. All students look forward to seeing the plays of other classes. After a performance, the younger children are frequently overheard commenting – regardless of the subject – that it was “the best play (they) have ever seen!”

## **Community Assemblies**

We have two community assemblies per year. At the *Winter Assembly* in December, parents get a sense of the whole school as grades 1-8 present pieces from their class work as well as holiday songs. The Middle School Choir performs as well. *8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation*, in early June, is open to all families of the school, but attendance by the upper grades is required. Graduation allows the community to witness and participate in the completion of a class's eight-year journey and serves as a formal community ending to the school year. In recent years, graduation has been held at Temple Emek Shalom. The *Eurythmy Assembly* in March is held in Pine Hall for parents of grades 1-6, the classes which have Eurythmy. A *Music Night* is hosted in Pine Hall by our school music teacher, Melissa Archer. Students from lower grades present to their parents instrumental or vocal pieces they have been working on. Dates for assemblies are on the school calendar. Reminders are sent out in the Tuesday Notice.

## **The Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting (also known as “State of the School”) is hosted in Pine Hall in January or early February by the Board and the Faculty. This evening is designed to familiarize parents with the work of the Board, to give them an opportunity to get a picture of the “state of the school”. Parent understanding of how the school works and what it needs to sustain and grow is vital to the long-term well-being of the school. The evening includes a reception, a presentation by board and faculty, and a Q&A time. Look for announcements in the Tuesday Notice for the date and agenda.

## **WinterFaire**

Held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, WinterFaire is the biggest community event of the school year. It draws not only alumni and old friends, but hundreds of people from all over the valley who don't necessarily have any affiliation with Waldorf education. They come because WinterFaire has a

long tradition and is renowned for its holiday spirit and crafts. It features children's activities, the works of regional crafts people, crafts made by Siskiyou School parents and students, a silent auction, and cafes which serve light fare throughout the day. Proceeds go to support the school's operating budget and the school's tuition assistance program.

### **The Auction**

Held the first Saturday in March, the Auction is a fun event for current parents, alumni parents, grandparents, friends of the school, and invited guests. In recent years the event has been held at the Elk's Club. The evening includes a reception with open bar during which people check out the silent auction items. After dinner is served, the live auction begins. The evening ends with dancing which goes on late into the night. Families and friends contribute items to be auctioned off. A great time is had by the whole community!

### **Friday Assemblies and In-House Gatherings**

Teachers and students gather each Friday morning and occasionally on other days to celebrate a particular holiday or event. We refer to these as "in-house assemblies". There is always singing and usually some sharing of main lesson work. Sometimes birthdays are acknowledged. Sometimes matters of importance to all the students are brought up or shared. Occasionally we host visitors - singers, instrumentalists, puppeteers, acrobats, or former Olympians! If the occasion lends itself, parents are invited by way of an email from their class teacher or through a mention in the Tuesday Notice. At gatherings where a holiday is being celebrated, the heart of the assembly is a story told by a class teacher. These gatherings are vital to fostering a sense of community between teachers and students, as children get to know students from the other grades and class teachers other than their own.

## **PART IV: OUR SCHOOL YEAR: OPENING DAY TO GRADUATION**

### **Opening Day Ceremony**

Each year on Opening Day we hold a ceremony to welcome our new class of first graders. All first grade parents are expected to attend, and all parents of the school are welcome. When the morning bell rings, children in grades 2-8 gather with their teachers outside by the maple tree on blankets in a semi-circle. New first graders are also in the circle, sitting with their parents. Following a welcome and an introduction by the Head of School, the first grade teacher steps forward to call up the incoming first graders, one by one. The child gets up from his parents' side and walks up to the teacher to be welcomed. From the other side of the circle, a sixth grader comes carrying a flower for the little one and gently leads him/her to the students' side of the circle. The ceremony ends with the whole school singing as the first graders, led by their new teacher and their new 6<sup>th</sup> grade buddies, walk off to their classroom to begin their first day. Following the ceremony, all parents are invited for an Opening Day Tea.

### **Parent Welcome Night & First Class Meetings**

Parent Welcome Night takes place on Wednesday evening, exactly one week after Opening Day, and lasts from 5:30-8:00. It is expected that at least one parent from every family will attend. The evening includes two parts: class meetings and a community meeting that includes dinner. Between 5:30-6:30, every class teacher holds what is usually their first class meeting of the year. Parents of the class reconnect and the teacher gives them an overview of the year's curriculum, the key dates and special events, etc. Between 6:30-7:00 parents come out of their class meetings for a dinner on the blacktop, some socializing, and words from the Board, teachers and parent leaders about topics of interest to the entire school. A sense of community and shared purpose prevails!

## **Michaelmas**

The last weekend of September, just as we feel fall in the air, the Siskiyou School, like all Waldorf schools around the world, celebrates Michaelmas. Michaelmas is an ancient festival named after the Archangel Mi-cha-el, conqueror of darkness, a symbolic source of strength as the life-giving forces of Nature recede. The festival is held on our school campus late on a Friday or Saturday afternoon so that our whole community can attend. The afternoon has three parts. For the first hour, the children delight in participating in games and challenges organized by parents at Clay Street Park. Then everyone files back onto campus for a Michaelmas Assembly where each class offers songs or verses related to the Michaelmas theme. The highlight of the afternoon is the re-enactment of the archetypal Michaelmas drama, a brave knight saving a stricken village from a terrifying dragon. The dragon represents inner and outer darkness. George, a brave knight, receives help from Mi-cha-el in subduing the dragon, transforming the darkness. All the children know the story, and each year as their understanding grows, their appreciation for its powerful symbolism increases. Fortified by these images, the community ends the afternoon with a huge community potluck/harvest supper. While parents sit and chat in the glow of sunset, the children play. It is a wonderful way to usher in fall. (If you are interested in helping organize the festival, look for emails and announcements in the Tuesday Notice in the weeks leading up to Michaelmas. Katie LaCroix, our Director of Community Development, will be in touch.)

## **First Parent-Teacher Conferences**

There are three *required* parent-teacher conferences each year: mid-October, end January, and end May. These conferences are always held on the Thursday and Friday of Conference Week. Parents are expected to be available on the designated Thursday or Friday rather than asking to schedule a conference on another day. For the students, Thursday and Friday conference days are NO SCHOOL days so class teachers can give their full attention to conversations with parents. Conference sign-up sheets go up online two weeks before. Parents with more than one child in the school are encouraged to sign up as soon as the sign-up sheets are posted to get back-to-back time slots with their children's teachers and avoid having to make several trips into school. Conferences last a half hour. Teachers ask divorced parents to attend conferences together, so both parents or sets of parents, hear the same thing at the same time. In cases where it is not possible, parents should contact the class teacher to see if an accommodation is possible.

## **Halloween**

On Halloween Eve, children in grades 1-8 carve pumpkins together, with buddy classes paired. On Halloween morning children and teachers arrive at school in costumes. Imagination and creativity are encouraged; keep in mind that we have highly impressionable young ones on campus, we ask that no children wear masks or scary costumes, no blood and no weapons. Parents are invited to walk their children to class to see the extraordinary and colorful cast of characters strolling around campus! When the bell rings parents leave and the children go to class to start their day. A short while later they hear a call beckoning them to join a procession which winds its way into Pine Hall illuminated only by hundreds of jack-o-lanterns. Then music, dance, and story bring spirits to life!!! (When Halloween falls on a school day, we have a half day so families can attend the town parade.)

## **Lantern Walk/Martinmas**

Martinmas is another ancient festival that we bring to the children in fall. Like Michaelmas, it offers the children a picture of how we humans can bring light and warmth to one another even as the light from the sun grows progressively scarcer. The festival is celebrated in Waldorf schools in early November, around the time of St. Martin's Feast Day. Legend has it that Martin, a soldier in the Roman Army, tore his cloak in half to warm a shivering beggar at the gates of the French city of Amiens. Later in a dream, the holiness of that poorest and most wretched of all beings was revealed to Martin, affirming that all human beings are "God's creatures" and equally worthy. In commemoration of this image, children in

the younger grades make a lantern symbolic of the light each of us carries within. Then the class teacher chooses an evening and a place for the class to meet. The children process with their lit lanterns through the darkness to experience the radiance of light. Gatherings frequently take place in Lithia Park or North Mountain Park, or perhaps through a neighborhood to deliver baskets of goodies. Traditionally, cider and special breads are shared around a fire at the end of the walk. It is a lovely and quiet ceremony.

### **WinterFaire**

WinterFaire, traditionally scheduled the Saturday before Thanksgiving, is a huge event for our school, requiring a lot of parent volunteer help, bringing in visitors from all across the Valley, and a major highlight of the year not just for our students but for the hundreds of area children who can't wait for the Siskiyou School WinterFaire! The school is transformed for this event. On the Friday, eve of WinterFaire, parent decorators and craftspeople stream into Pine Hall and begin creating a holiday atmosphere and setting up wares. Students clear their classrooms so that WinterFaire set-up crews can transform the classroom into a café or craft center. On Saturday, every inch of campus is occupied with WinterFaire activities, with Pine Hall hosting most of the artisan booths and the classrooms hosting children's activities. 8<sup>th</sup> graders are allotted space in Pine Hall to host their own "Entrepreneur Table" where they display and sell products they have made as part of their fundraiser for their 8<sup>th</sup> grade class trip. The Faire lasts from 10:00-4:00. Clean-Up crews move in at that point and continue Sunday morning. By noon on Sunday the campus is put back together. The warm glow of the event is felt for weeks thereafter. WinterFaire in November and the Auction in March are the two biggest parent-run fundraisers of the year.

### **Thanksgiving Food Drive**

November marks the beginning of an active period of outreach by our school to our larger community. In early November, we begin a food drive for the Ashland Food Bank. Bins are set out in front of the bulletin board and through the month families are encouraged to make donations – a can a day or whatever works for each family. The Tuesday before Thanksgiving, the bags of food the children have brought in form the centerpiece of an assembly in Pine Hall. Children see with their own eyes how their individual gestures can add up to a BIG gift. A teacher tells the children a Thanksgiving story and students and faculty join in traditional Thanksgiving songs. The assembly ends with the middle school children loading the food into vans and then going over to the Food Bank to help unload the food and stock shelves.

### **Holiday Angels**

In December, we organize a Holiday Angel Drive to give the opportunity to families within our school who want to reach out to families in need. We post holiday wish lists from families in the larger Ashland area, and families can sign up to sponsor a child or family for the holidays. Wish lists include necessities such as gas gift cards or food gift cards as well as clothes and toys. Our students take great joy in being part of the shopping process with their parents for these gifts for others.

### **Advent & Hanukkah**

Between Thanksgiving and Winter Break, faculty and children gather each Friday morning to celebrate the season by lighting the Advent wreath, the Menorah, and the universal light, singing seasonal songs, and hearing stories.

### **Winter Assembly**

Winter Assembly is held in December at a venue that accommodates our whole community. The program includes seasonal songs as well as curriculum pieces. Every class presents pieces. The evening

ends with the whole community singing together. All children are expected to attend and to come dressed in their “best” for this celebration.

### **Caroling Night**

Occasionally, in December, Mrs. Archer, our Music teacher, organizes a caroling night in Pine Hall. Parents come with their children and are handed booklets with all the seasonal songs. People call out the song they want to sing next. The children have their favorites. It is a sweet hour of singing at a time of year rich in songs!

### **Winter Break**

We have two major vacations in the school year: Winter Break and Spring Break. Both last two weeks. We ask parents to schedule trips within these dates so the children are back in time to resume classes in January. The first day back usually marks the beginning of a new block.

### **End of First Semester**

The halfway point of the year falls at the very end of January. That semester point is marked by three events: our second parent-teacher conferences are held at that time; first graders move to the full-day schedule, ending school at 2:55 in the second semester rather than at 2:05; and Grades 1-5 switch from Mandarin as their foreign language to Spanish.

### **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Teachers and children gather for an in-house assembly to speak of MLK’s life and the significance of his work and message for all of us in our lives and these times.

### **Valentine's Day**

Valentines’ Day is a favorite of the children. The day is marked by classroom celebrations with exchange of handmade cards shared among classmates and by an all-school circle in Pine Hall whereby students deliver an extra special card they have made to their Secret Valentine, a student from another grade whose name they drew a couple of weeks earlier. Valentine’s Day is a particularly big day for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. Following a tradition of many years, they set out in the morning in small groups, chaperoned by parent drivers, and deliver singing valentines throughout the valley. For weeks beforehand, the halls of the school are filled with the sound of old favorite love songs! Singing Valentine forms are attached to the Tuesday Notice so parents can order a Singing Valentine surprise for their loved ones. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders dress formally for the occasion and people receiving their surprise visit are touched to the core. The 8<sup>th</sup> graders are too, having had a firsthand experience of how a song can be a gift.

### **Presentation of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Projects**

A highlight of February-March is the presentation of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Projects. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade project schedule is published well ahead of time so parents can reserve time to come watch. All the children of the school gather in Pine Hall to watch these presentations. There is always a lot of excitement and anticipation. Younger children, watching eighth graders present, begin to dream of what they one day will do for *their* project. Parents are welcome to attend, as space allows. Once all 8<sup>th</sup> graders have presented their projects, an open house is scheduled, usually on a Friday evening so parents who weren’t able to attend in the day can see the projects and talk to the students about their experience. The whole 8<sup>th</sup> grade is jubilant now that months of work are behind them, and they have all successfully completed this major rite of passage.

The eighth grade project is an independent study that extends over several months, an opportunity for students to go outside of the curriculum, to name and pursue something of personal interest, and to work in depth around a subject of their own choosing. It extends their own sense of



what they are capable of achieving. Projects can include internships or apprenticeships, doing research about a field of interest - architecture, alternative medicine, law - building something, making films, learning a language, acquiring a new skill - piloting, cooking, blacksmithing.

For our 8<sup>th</sup> graders the process begins in the fall of their 8th grade year. That is when they officially have to say what their project will be, find a mentor to guide them, and begin devoting a couple of hours each week to the project, be it a weekend morning or a school day afternoon. Students keep track of time spent; the total amount of time will be no less than forty hours but may exceed that.

The last stage of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade project is preparing a presentation for the community. This is a big job in and of itself and usually takes 10-15 hours, including several afternoon and weekend rehearsals before their actual “day”. Faculty help 8<sup>th</sup> graders prepare these presentations which include a tightly orchestrated 10-15 minutes of displays, slide shows, descriptions and demonstrations designed to communicate what they did, what they learned, and the richness of the experience in a nutshell. In addition to having to overcome fear of public speaking, oratorical and writing skills are honed during this part of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade projects. After they present, students have been heard to exclaim that they feel they now can do “anything”! Siskiyou School alumni have a reputation for being able to “stand and deliver” and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade project experience certainly fosters that confidence.

### **Spring Break**

The Siskiyou School takes one major break during the January through June stretch. It is two weeks long and usually includes the last week in March and the first week of April. The Easter holiday may or may not fall in that time. Check the school calendar for exact dates.

### **Grandparents' Day**

On Wednesday and Friday of the last week of April or the first week in May, according to how the calendar falls, we host two special days: Grandparents' Day and May Day. On the Wednesday grandparents are invited to spend a morning sharing in their grandchild's school life. They take part in their grandchild's main lesson, attend an all-school assembly, and tour specialty classes to experience the breadth of the curriculum. The morning ends with a delicious sit-down lunch served by students and an opportunity to have a professional photo portrait taken with their grandchild. Grandparents' Day is a special day for all. Aunts, uncles, grand-friends are welcome.

### **May Day**

May Day is usually celebrated on the Friday closest to the first of May, a couple of days after Grandparents' Day so that visiting grandparents can also attend. Siskiyou School children celebrate the coming of spring by making May crowns and dancing around the Maypole. On May Day, the mood is set by all teachers and all children arriving at school dressed in dazzling white and there are bouquets of flowers everywhere! Children spend the first part of the morning making flower crowns in between their lessons. Then after recess, at around 11:00, grades 1-8 process out to Clay Street Park to the Maypole, where they take turns dancing around the pole accompanied by singing and instrumental music provided by the other students, teachers, and parents. The morning ends with a huge round of the Virginia Reel in which all parents and visitors are invited to join. After the morning celebration, children go home with their parents or stay for a picnic at the park. This is one of our community events where area preschools and kindergartens are invited as well. May Day sometimes includes the drawing of our May Raffle, an important fundraiser for our tuition assistance fund.

### **Talent Show**

Each May we host a Talent Show in Pine Hall as part of our end of year festivities. It has a family night kind of feeling. Children sign up to perform by filling out forms a couple of weeks beforehand, indicating what they will be presenting and what props they may need. When show time begins, our students display an amazing range of talents – from singing to dancing to just hammin' it up!

## **Graduation**

Graduation is a big deal at the Siskiyou School, a rite of passage. For eighth graders it marks not only the end of their time together as a class but their transition to young adulthood. Students shape the graduation program with their class teacher to include songs, speeches, and tributes. Every graduate shares a reflection of their time at the school, in keeping with our belief that to have good closure, every student needs to say goodbye and thank you for himself or herself; it's not something someone can do for you or speak on your behalf. Attendance at graduation is required for middle schoolers and their parents. In recent years, graduation has been held at Temple Emek Shalom between 4:00-6:00, the day before the last day of school. The ceremony is followed by a reception hosted by the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class for the graduates and their guests. Graduation day is a half day for the whole school.

## **The Last Day of School**

The last day of school is the day after graduation. It is a half-day. 8<sup>th</sup> graders come for the morning -- and they are happy to be there -- even though they have graduated! It begins with an all-school goodbye assembly among teachers and students. Each class offers a goodbye song, verse, or reflection to the 8<sup>th</sup> graders; 8<sup>th</sup> graders acknowledge specialty teachers. Departing teachers are also acknowledged. When the children return to their classrooms, they have their own class ceremony, sometimes receiving their bound main lesson book if it has not happened earlier in the last week. The whole school participates in a Field Day at Clay Street Park. At the end, the children go back to their classrooms for a closing with their class teachers before dismissal and...summer!

## **PART V: COMMUNICATION FROM THE OFFICE**

### **The Tuesday Notice**

The Tuesday Notice (TN) is a newsletter emailed to all school families each Tuesday. Parents are expected to read or at least scan it; the TN is a way of ensuring that everybody has the same information about school matters. It is the school's main vehicle for communication about upcoming events, school and classroom news, and topics affecting the school community as a whole. It always includes weekly updates and messages from every class teacher, and several times a year from the specialty teachers as well. A few hard copies are also always available on the front hall table. The back page of the TN is dedicated to announcements about community events, children's programs, and classifieds. If you want to include an ad, email it to us in *ready for print* form (a few lines in length) no later than Tuesday morning 10:00 a.m. We may edit it for space purposes and they get printed for two weeks.

### **Fliers and our Community Bulletin Board**

We very rarely send home fliers with children or attach fliers to the Tuesday Notice; however, parents are welcome to post fliers on our Community Bulletin Board out front. Fliers related to children's activities take priority, but there is usually room for fliers related to activities or classes our parents are sponsoring, organizing, hosting, or teaching. We are happy to help with that networking. The office must approve all fliers before they can be posted. To get maximum coverage for your event within our school community, post your flier and then email a synthesis of the information for inclusion in the TN announcement section with this closing line: *For more info, see flier on bulletin board.* Both the TN and the bulletin board are good vehicles for getting your news out.

### **Friday Reminders & Community Emails**

In addition to the Tuesday Notice you will receive emails from the school with time sensitive materials that can't wait for the Tuesday Notice. By the end of the week, announcements often have piled up and

a “Friday Email” is sent out as a bridge before the next Tuesday Notice. As needed, other time-sensitive news is also emailed out. If you do not get email, please let the office know so we can make sure you are contacted with important communications. We do not share the school’s email list.

### **Photo Release Authorization**

We use photos from class plays, classroom activities, and school events for our website, fliers, newsletters, or other school literature. If you do not want your child’s photo used for school purposes, contact our Director of Community Development, Katie LaCroix. She will have you sign a form to that effect.

## **PART VI. COMMUNICATION WITH THE TEACHERS**

### **The Parent-Teacher Partnership**

The parents of a child and the class teacher create an important team and can be of great help to one another in their shared work of supporting the child. When they see eye to eye about what a child needs, the child feels it and progress can come quickly. Parent teacher meetings are invaluable for sharing reflections and getting on the same page. The social and emotional development is often a big component of those conversations as that is often where the most important work is done. In between the thrice-yearly parent-teacher conferences, please keep your child’s teacher informed of important household developments (change in living situation, death of grandparent, shift in health or sleeping pattern). For their part, class teachers will be quick to notify you if they feel something is going on that requires more immediate attention.

### **Teacher Office Hours**

Parents understandably feel pressed to talk to their class teacher when an incident takes place that upsets their child. Teachers want to have that conversation too. A good conversation needs the right moment, when parent and teacher have the time and are in a good space to have it. When something suddenly comes up, leave a message for your teacher asking what the best time is to reach them. Your class teacher will do the same if something comes up in class they need to relay to you. Being respectful of each other’s time boundaries as well as communicating respectfully whatever the concerns are critical to building a good relationship. *Please do not discuss issues related to your child at pick-up or drop off or when your child is within hearing distance.*

### **Procedures to follow with an ongoing concern**

If you have a concern, we ask that you bring it first directly to your teacher. If your concerns are not cleared up by your talk(s) with your teacher, the faculty has formulated specific steps for parents to follow. See our *Protocol for Parent Concerns* under School Policies.

### **Class Meetings/Parent Nights**

Class teachers schedule two to four class meetings a year. Parents are expected to attend. Teachers use meetings to share information about curriculum and practical matters, but meetings are also invaluable opportunities for parents and teachers to support one another in the work of raising the children! Teachers speak of what they see in the class when all the children are together and parents bring their perceptions by sharing parenting experiences. Connections are deepened through these conversations. Over the years parents develop a sense of shared responsibility toward all of their child’s classmates. They come to see that the well-being of every child in the class has a bearing on the health of the class as a whole. Children feel that holding.

### **Parent Enrichment Series**

Each year the school organizes a parent enrichment series which includes talks, lectures, workshops, or study groups designed to offer parents insights into Waldorf education and child development. These

are led either by our Pedagogical Director, the Faculty or outside specialists. The list of events is usually published in late September. Reminders about are posted in the Tuesday Notice.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Six parent-teacher conference days are built into the school year, two days in October, two days in January, and two days in May. The dates are posted on the school calendar. Attendance at parent conferences are a core responsibility of all Siskiyou School parents. Conference days are NO SCHOOL days for the children, but childcare is available in Pine Hall on those days. In addition to the three scheduled conferences, a conference can be called any time, by teacher or parent, as the need arises. Teachers post regular office hours for questions or concerns as they arise.

### **Communication with Specialty Teachers**

Communications from specialty teachers about a child are usually transmitted to parents via the class teacher. Specialty teachers do not post official office hours. If a specialty teacher has a concern about a child, he/she will communicate it to the child's class teacher and together they will decide on next steps. Parents always receive feedback about their child(ren) from specialty teachers at the conferences in October, January and May via the Class Teacher.

### **Check-ins with Teachers at Drop-Off and Pick Up Times**

Please do not try to have a check-in about your child with your class teacher at either drop-off or pick-up. In those transition times the teacher's attention still needs to be fully with the children, and your child is hungry for *your* undivided attention when they first see you after a long day at school. Most importantly, we want to keep conversations about children away from the ears of the children. If you have something on your mind when you see your child's teacher, use the moment to let him/her know that you will be leaving a voice message or calling during office hours.

### **Progress Reports and Student Assessments**

Assessments are administered in age-appropriate ways across the grades throughout the school year. Should concerns arise about a student's academic progress or behavior at any point in the year, parents will be called and a conference scheduled. Otherwise parents should expect to receive a full progress report three times a year at the October, January, and May parent-teacher conferences. Formal written reports are handed out at the end-of-year conference, checklists at the midyear conference. If it becomes clear that a child is unable to keep up in a given class even with the school's best available help provided, the school will recommend private tutoring and/or additional assessments by an outside evaluator.

## **PART VII: HEALTH & SAFETY**

*In the case of a health or safety emergency at school for a child, the school wants to be able to reach the parents ASAP. As a matter of course, we ask parents to be tuned in to the possibility of calls from the school at any moment during the school day; checking at regular intervals and having all relevant school numbers in their phones to recognize a school call when it comes in.*

### **Emergency Information & Authorization Forms**

It is vital that the school have up-to date medical and contact information for each child at all times. To this end, parents are required to fill out an Emergency Forms and Field Trip Permission Forms for their child each year before the first day of school. Parents are responsible for notifying the office immediately any time that information changes.

### **Immunization**

The school is required by law to have updated immunization records for each child. Parents are asked to fill out immunization forms upon admission. The form includes a religious exemption clause that parents can check if their children are non-immunized or only partially immunized. These children may be asked to stay home from school in the event of an outbreak of certain illnesses, as per standard health laws for schools. The Siskiyou School wishes to inform all current and prospective parents that our school population includes a significant number of partially immunized and non-immunized students.

### **Illness**

Keeping in mind not only your child's well-being but that of all his/her classmates, please do not send a child to school if he/she is not feeling well, even if it appears to be a mild illness. We also ask that children be kept home for 24 hours after an incident of vomiting or fever.

### **Children not feeling well at school**

If a child complains in class of not feeling well, he/she is brought to the office by the teacher or accompanied by another student. The office staff assesses the need. Sometimes, the child just needs “a moment” and then is well able to go back to class. If it is clear that the child needs to go home, the parents are called and the child is made comfortable until the parent arrives. As the school does not have an official school nurse or sick room per se, a place where a child can rest quietly and privately, we ask parents to make every effort to come promptly when called.

### **Minor Accidents & First Aid**

Children who receive scrapes and bruises on the playground are treated by faculty or office staff with traditional first aid supplies including homeopathic arnica and Rescue Remedy as deemed helpful in the moment. Parents are not usually called in the cases of scrapes and bruises. Please let the office know if you prefer your child not be given arnica and/or Rescue Remedy or if you have special requests with regard to first aid products.

### **Major Injuries & School Response**

If your child receives a serious injury at school, you will be called ASAP. In the event you cannot be reached, the emergency contacts on the Emergency Form will be called. As needed, the school will call an ambulance and get your child to the ER.

### **Medical Conditions**

If your child has asthma, allergies, or other medical conditions that can require medical attention at school or the administration of medication, be sure the information is included on your child's Emergency Form and that you speak in person to your child's class teacher and/or the office about your child's medical needs.

### **Nut & Bee Allergy Precautions**

If your child is allergic to peanuts or bees, please make sure that is stated on your child's emergency form. Again, please take the extra step of speaking in person with the office and your child's class teacher. ***Parents are responsible for keeping a current epi-pen, labeled for their child, in the school's first aid cabinet.*** Faculty and staff receive regular training to refresh their awareness regarding precautions, symptoms of exposure, and necessary response steps. With the consent of the parents, other parents and children in the class are informed that one of their classmates has a severe allergy and are given information as to how to help in the event the child in question has a reaction while at school.

## **Medications**

Students are not permitted to carry or take any medication at school on their own; a teacher or staff member must be on hand. If your child has to take a certain medicine during the school day, please hand deliver that medication to the office and brief office staff on how it is to be administered. If the medication is a prescription, the prescription and physician information must be included with the medicine. Please note any allergies to medications on your child's emergency form, as well as medication to be administered in an emergency situation.

## **Hearing & Vision Screenings**

The Siskiyou School does not administer vision, hearing, or any other medical screening or testing. Parents are asked to make their own arrangements with family health-care providers. Initial hearing and vision screenings are recommended in first grade.

## **Lice and Communicable Medical Conditions**

Dealing with lice is a major headache if not caught early. The school itself does not conduct routine screenings of children for lice. We rely on parent monitoring at home and prompt communication to avoid a class-wide or school-wide lice infestation. To help keep lice checks happening at home on a regular basis, the school sends out email reminders monthly and also before the children return to school after summer or school vacations.

In the event that you find that your child has lice, please notify the school immediately and keep your child at home until you have applied the appropriate treatments. Students will be re-admitted to school only after nits are removed and the family and home environment have been treated.

If a case of lice is confirmed at school, the child's parents will be notified. The child will not be sent home, but all siblings of confirmed cases will be discreetly checked. Parents of a given class will be notified by the office of a confirmed case of lice. The school has high quality nit combs available for sale in the office.

Students who contact contagious diseases or communicable conditions (such as pink-eye, foot & mouth disease, ringworm and pinworms) must seek medical treatment and have their doctor give the o.k. that they are no longer contagious before returning to school.

## **Social/Emotional Health Care**

We encourage parents to seek the support of professionals when a child is showing need of help with an emotional issue that is beyond what the family/teachers are able to carry alone. It is vital to the child that parents provide full disclosure of ongoing therapy so that the teachers can support the student's life at school. Teachers will ask that a child be kept home and/or not attend fieldtrips if he/she feels that the child's emotional health is too fragile for the activities being offered. If a child has a serious emotional health issue before applying to the school, the faculty requires full disclosure and access to the therapist to help determine that our program is a good fit. Failure to disclose a pre-diagnosed issue can result in dismissal from the school.

## **Fire Drills and Disaster Preparedness**

In accordance with Jackson County regulations and our own Emergency Preparedness Plan, we perform all-school evacuation drills, lockdown drills, and earthquake drills to ensure best possible readiness in the case of an emergency. In the case of a school-wide emergency or if school needs to be closed early in the event of extreme weather conditions, parents will be notified via our instant alert notification system.

## **PART VIII: SCHOOL POLICIES**

### **SISKIYOU SCHOOL MEDIA POLICY (Fall 2014)**

#### **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY**

As a Waldorf elementary school, protecting the kingdom of childhood is core to our mission. We seek to create an environment where imagination, relationship, learning, and play can flourish. In our view, less exposure to media is better for the growing child, and less to no media supports the education we are providing. We recommend no media exposure through fifth grade, and strictly monitored access once it *is* introduced, ideally not before middle school.

Our opinions and suggestions regarding media grow out of our view of child development, our collective experience with children, and our mission as a Waldorf elementary school. We find that the less screen time children have, the more receptive they are to the stories brought by their teachers. We also see that, with little to no screen time, it is easier for children to enter into the imaginative play we consider so essential to their development. We see more authentic personal connections. We see stronger social fabrics within classes. We have also observed a correlation between increased levels of attention span, centeredness, and grounded behavior among children who have little to no media exposure. Lastly, research about brain development in children supports this view. (Please contact your child's class teacher if you would like further reading on this research.)

Media is an unfolding reality of our time. As parents and teachers we are being asked to participate in an ongoing conversation about the pros and cons of this new "media-rich" world. Indeed, being open to and engaging in this conversation seems required of us to navigate this uncharted territory. Thus, another central component of our school philosophy is the importance of talking together about it.

We recognize that one of the reasons families join Waldorf schools is to find an environment where their values about the media issue can be supported by the school and community. To this end, we communicate our recommendations and provide information through class conversations and parent forums so that parents can be educated and informed.

#### **SCHOOL-WIDE RECOMMENDATION FOR PLAY DATES AND SLEEPOVERS**

- No media/electronics during play dates and/or sleepovers through fifth grade.
- In middle school years, we recommend open communication and agreements between parents prior to play dates about screen time and content. We encourage openness on the part of all parents to honor no screen time if requested by another parent. This is vital for the social health of the class.

#### **PRACTICES RECOMMENDED FOR IMPLEMENTATION AT HOME FOR CHILDREN IN 1<sup>ST</sup>-5<sup>TH</sup>**

- Upholding a no screen time policy at home during the school week
- Supervising screen time and monitoring media content if it does happen
- Installing security software on home computers
- No social media
- Encouraging books on tape rather than movies
- Making movie-watching a family time versus alone time for the child
- Modeling independence from screen time and cell use when you're with your child

## **PRACTICES RECOMMENDED FOR IMPLEMENTATION AT HOME FOR CHILDREN IN 6<sup>TH</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup>**

- Upholding very limited screen time, if any, during the school week
- Monitoring amount of time spent on media and devices
- Monitoring content of all media
- Installing security software on home computers
- No social media is ideal. In the cases of exposure to social media we recommend that it is both limited and carefully monitored.
- Carefully hand-picking movies and watching them with your child while encouraging conversation after viewing so your child can better “digest” what was taken in
- Providing instruction for how to use media as a research tool for educational purposes

## **POLICIES ENFORCED ON CAMPUS**

- No cell phones, iPods, or electronics are to be used on campus by students at any time
- No conversations about media or films in the classroom to avoid creating feelings of exclusion

## **MEDIA MISUSE**

In cases of media misuse in which students of the Siskiyou School are impacted (such as, but not limited to, cyberbullying), the school reserves the right to take disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis.

## **COMMUNICATION AMONG PARENTS**

Open communication and mutual respect among parents will foster a strong social fabric in the class and a healthy sense of community. We encourage open communication among parents of a class about their choices and values related to media. We encourage conversation; it is a, “Do ask, do tell” situation.

We encourage parents, led by the class teacher, to make agreements as a class and with one another regarding media. As Waldorf educators our wish is that when children get together outside of school, they just play – entirely media free, but if, as host of the playdate, you plan to have children watch a movie, check in with the other parent. Children are so different; what might feel fine to one child may be terrifying to another.

Families are equally as diverse; what might feel fine to one family may be unacceptable to another. The children shouldn’t be caught in our ‘grown-up’ struggles about this. We must be willing to have the hard conversations with one another, so that the children are allowed to be children. Key to this is working with and acknowledging our own fears and concerns and talking together.

**\*Recommended viewing: Marin Waldorf School Website: Media Policy Segment**

## **DRESS CODE POLICY**

The dress code is one of the school “rules” that parents can help us enforce as children dress at home before coming to school. Please familiarize yourself with the list of clothes below which we consider inappropriate for school. If you think your child’s choice of clothes for the day may be in violation, please have him/her change before they arrive at school. That is a real help. In keeping with our Waldorf philosophy, we discourage clothing that draws more attention to the child’s clothing than to the child. Below is a list of clothing and attire considered inappropriate for school:

- Underwear showing
- Sagging pants below hips
- Very short shorts or skirts
- Shirts or blouses draping off the shoulders
- Holes or rips in pants



- Large logos, graphics, or writing on shirts
- Graffiti-type writing on pants
- Slippers or pajamas
- Bare midriffs
- Bare feet or flip-flops
- Accessorizing considered inappropriate includes excessive make-up, tattooing, piercing, and use of hair dyes.

**What we encourage** - Siskiyou School children engage in a variety of activities and vigorous play every day and thus their clothing and footwear should allow them *comfort* and *freedom of movement*. We are also big believers in the importance of *warmth* for the growing child and thus ask parents to make sure their children come to school with appropriate outerwear when the weather gets chilly. Additionally, it's important that the children wear "solid" shoes. They do a lot of running and jumping on the chips and the blacktop and we want them to have the best possible footing. Sneakers -- or equivalent athletic-support shoes as approved by the Games teacher-- are *required* for Games classes and strongly recommended as footwear for all day/everyday use. Sandals, flip-flops, Crocs, etc. may be worn indoors, but they do not provide the support the children need for their morning recess play, movement activities, and games classes. *Children who don't have proper shoes will be asked to sit out during Games class.* Bare feet are not allowed indoors or outdoors. Class teachers of the younger grades will indicate to parents whether children should bring a second pair of shoes to be worn in the classroom. Children are to remove caps/hoods/hats as they enter classrooms. **Consequences:** It is the teacher's call whether an item of clothing meets the dress code or not; it will not be up for negotiation or discussion. Within the above-defined spectrum of acceptability, teachers of 6th-8th graders may allow their students more latitude than teachers of younger students. If the teacher deems the clothing inappropriate, one of the following consequences will ensue: **First Offense:** The student will receive a warning. If needed, alternate clothes will be provided to put on over the clothing considered inappropriate. **Second Offense:** The student will call home to have parents bring in acceptable clothes. In the meantime, the student will be provided with appropriate attire. **Third Offense:** In addition to calling home and having parents bring in a change of clothes, the student will complete a half hour of detention between 3:15-3:45 on the same day the offense was committed. During that time the student will perform community service work.

## **TARDY POLICY**

The morning bell rings at 8:25 and class teachers begin their morning activities with their students promptly at that time. We place great importance on timeliness and very much appreciate parents doing everything that they can to get their children to school even 5-10 minutes *before* the bell rings so the children have time to land. Late arrivals are distracting to the teacher and to the other students and not an optimal way to start the day for the children themselves. Any child arriving after the morning bell must stop in the office to get a late slip. The office designates a late arrival as either an *excused tardy* or an *unexcused tardy*. The tardy slip the child receives is marked either excused or unexcused. Excused tardies include dentist or doctor appointments, family emergencies or, say, a car breakdown on the way to school. Unexcused cover a range of possibilities from "*I overslept*" to "*I couldn't find my homework,*" etc. The child hands the tardy slip to the class teacher when he/she enters the classroom. The child may be asked to wait outside the door of the classroom until the next transition in order to avoid disrupting the class. **Consequences:** If a child in Grades 1-5 has three tardy slips within one term, parents will be called for a conference or check-in to come up with a solution that supports the child being on time. If a child in Grades 6-8 has three tardy slips within one term, parents will be called and notified that the next tardy slip will result in a half-hour detention. Detention for the fourth tardy slip will be scheduled in advance. Detention runs from 3:15-3:45 and will include community service done at school.

\*Please send in a note to your child's teacher or call the office to explain excused absences.

## **GUM POLICY**

No gum chewing is allowed at school. The first time a child is found chewing gum, he/she will receive a warning. The second time, parents will be notified, and he/she will spend the next recess on a cleaning project, and warned that the third time there will be a \$5.00 fine imposed. The third time, that \$5.00 fine will be levied, parents called, and the student will be asked to write a reflective piece demonstrating that he/she has really taken note of the rule.

## **VANDALISM AND GRAFFITI POLICY**

Students are told at the beginning of each year, in age appropriate ways of course, about the preciousness of school property and our expectation that they will not in any way deface or degrade it by writing on it, carving into it, “trashing it”. They hear the words graffiti and vandalism and are told that any graffiti writing or act of vandalism will be treated very seriously. There will be no first reminder or warning. With the first offense, parents will be called, a recess or more spent cleaning, and possibly a fine imposed. Repeated offenses can result in suspension.

## **HOMEWORK EXPECTATIONS & POLICY**

Teachers review homework expectations at the beginning of each year with students and parents.

Teachers begin to assign homework in small doses in third grade and gradually increase expectations.

The chart below gives an idea of what parents can expect per night, per grade:

3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	-----	10-30 minutes
5th grade	-----	30-45 minutes
6th grade	-----	45-75 minutes
7th grade	-----	75-90 minutes
8th grade	-----	1.5 - 2 hours four nights a week.

Under the best of conditions, children take pride and pleasure in homework well done. We want to encourage their attitude of self-motivation, care in work, and eagerness to study and learn. Parents can help children gain strength and independence in their study skills by providing them with a quiet place for concentrated study and by limiting distractions.

Children are expected to track assignments and turn homework in on time. If they are consistently late in handing in assignments, teachers will give parents a call to let them know and discuss ways to remedy the situation. If you find that your child needs more time than seems reasonable or is having problems completing the work, please schedule a meeting with the class or subject teacher. This is important feedback for the teacher.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Discipline grows out of an orderly and loving environment. Children need examples, guidance and clear expectations for their actions. They also need affirmation of their efforts. At the Siskiyou School, we strive to support children in all these ways. Situations requiring students to be ‘disciplined’ are seen by the teacher as learning opportunities, a chance to deepen a child's understanding of core values and the delicacy of human relations. These moments are integral parts of the education and growing up process and when handled well can bring important shifts and a renewed sense of belonging and willingness for the child.

To help lay the groundwork for this aspect of the education process, teachers create guidelines and set certain standards of behavior which they communicate to the children. Parents help out by familiarizing themselves with the school's policies and supporting them through their parenting. Most discipline situations are handled by the teachers on an individual basis. The child is respected at all times. There is no place for humiliation or labeling. Communication between teacher and parents is key in moments of setting consequences to help the

child learn from disciplinary situations. We thank you ahead of time for familiarizing yourself with the Discipline Policy.

### **Level I Infraction: Disruptive Behaviors**

Disruption of the classroom environment by calling out in class, speaking inappropriately to a classmate or teacher, passing notes, swearing, or neglecting to respect the rules/wishes of a teacher, falls under the jurisdiction of the class or specialty teacher. The teacher responds as she/he feels is appropriate. Responses to the occasional disruptive behavior can include giving the student a simple reminder, asking the child to take a time-out within or outside of the classroom, staying in at lunch or recess, doing a class chore, and/or writing a reflective piece. Parents are not generally notified in cases of the occasional Level 1 infraction. *Repeated Level I infractions may result in a review of the child's overall behavior at the level of the faculty and a parent conference. In such cases, consequences can include temporary suspension of the student from the class.*

### **Level II Infraction: Violent or bullying behaviors**

We have a zero tolerance policy regarding physical violence and bullying. Any behavior that involves violence or puts another child's physical or emotional safety in jeopardy is considered a "Level II". Level II includes punching, hitting, spanking, slapping, kicking, pushing, pinching, biting and chronic teasing, exclusion, or intimidation. The consequence for a Level II infraction is decided on a case-by-case basis by a small group of teachers (Class Teacher and/or teacher who witnessed the incident, in consultation with the Head of School and/or Pedagogical Director). Parents are always notified in Level II cases. As necessary, a meeting is called, and the Head of School or Pedagogical Director joins the Class Teacher and parents for this conversation. Consequences include being sent home immediately, suspension from school or from a particular class, writing a reflective piece, loss of a field trip opportunity or class privileges.

A frequently asked question is, "If a child hits another because he/she was provoked, shouldn't both receive equivalent consequences?" Physical violence is not tolerated. That is a message we want to communicate to all the children of the school. If provoked, we want to encourage students to seek the immediate help of a teacher rather than respond with violence.

All children involved in an incident are led through a conflict resolution process to ensure that each and every child involved in an incident takes ownership for his/her part. We have qualified people on staff to help the children work through their emotions when such incidents occur. Cases involving children and high emotions can be difficult to sort through. Parents are asked to trust the teachers to make the call.

### **Sending a child home**

Teachers reserve the right to send a child home at will. Sometimes a teacher feels this is what is needed to get the child's attention and correct the child's behavior. The situation that might justify such a call is difficult to predict but may range from a child failing to bring in his/her homework just one too many times to engaging in a behavior which he/she has been asked to stop many times. Sending a child home is a last resort type action and designed to bring about change. We communicate with parents about the decision and ask for parent support, trust, and follow-up in those instances.

### **Conflict between Child and Teacher**

In the case of a conflict between a child and a teacher, a third party (the Head of School or Pedagogical Director) will be brought in to act as a witness and advocate for the student as needed.

### **DROPPING A CLASS**

Careful consideration is given before a child is allowed to drop a class that all of his/her classmates are taking. If a teacher deems the expectations of the class are not suited for the student because the student is either too far advanced in that subject or because the student lacks the ability to succeed at grade-level work, then the teacher will consider alternatives and initiate the following steps to move the process forward:

- The teacher brings the situation to the faculty.
- The parents are notified and brought into the discussion.
- Alternatives (study hall, independent study, tutoring, etc) are discussed by the faculty and relayed to the parents.
- A meeting is held with the student and parents, as appropriate, to finalize the plan.

### **DISMISSAL FROM A CLASS**

Occasionally students are asked to leave a class and are no longer welcome to attend. If a teacher deems the student's poor attitude and behavior are seriously impacting his/her ability to teach and seriously affecting the experience of the rest of the class in an adverse way, consideration will be given to dismissing that student from that class. The faculty will be consulted, meetings held with the parents, strategies explored, help sought as needed. If after a trial period the behaviors continue, the child will be asked to leave the class.

### **DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL**

Occasionally a child is asked to leave the school. As a private institution, the Siskiyou School is legally within its rights to dismiss a child "at will", precluding discrimination. This literally means that the school has no legal obligation to provide a reason for asking a child to leave. Though we are under no legal obligation, the faculty and Administration are committed to making every effort to communicate effectively with parents in situations where teachers have concerns about a child's fit for the school. Ideally, through conversations leading up to the decision, parents and teachers come to a shared perception of what is in the best interest of the child, the family, and the school, and hard feelings can be avoided. But this is not always the case. Decisions regarding dismissal are made by the faculty in conjunction with the Pedagogical Director and Head of School. The Head of School communicates the faculty's decision to the Board and to the family.

### **Conditions for Dismissal**

#### **(1) If a child's teacher(s) feel that our program is not meeting the child's needs**

Though we do our best to individualize our program, we do not have the staffing or resources to provide for the special needs of every child. Sometimes a teacher may conclude that a student may be better helped in another setting. In such cases, teachers will recommend a change of school or an alternative educational plan to the parents.

#### **(2) If the needs of one child are so dominant that the ability of the teachers to deliver the program to the rest of the class is seriously & continuously compromised**

This is a case where a student's teachers conclude, as a group, that the disruptive behavior of one student is too great a cost to the rest of the students to justify having the disruptive child continue to be part of the class.

#### **(3) If a child's teacher(s) feel that a child is 'caught in the middle'**

The teacher-parent partnership is key to the well-being of the children, especially when children experience difficulty of any sort (academic, emotional, social). When teachers and parents are in agreement about the problem and the course of action to take, the children feel that alignment and are well served by it. When parents and teachers disagree about what is going on with a child and how best to address that need, the child feels that lack of alignment and can feel caught in the middle between these two central sets of people in his/her life. This is highly stressful for the child and can lead to an aggravation of the behaviors. It is certainly not in the child's best interest. Trust is at the heart of the parent-teacher relationship and when that trust is broken, the child pays the price. If the teacher reaches

the conclusion that the child is "caught in the middle" the parents will be so advised and asked to find another place for their child.

#### **(4) If a child's teacher(s) feel that our program is not a fit with the parents**

The Siskiyou School doesn't work for all parents. This may not be immediately apparent upon a family entering a school. As in all relationships it takes time to get to know one another. But, if after a while, a class teacher or several teachers(s) feel that a set of parents are consistently unhappy, find it consistently difficult to support school policies and structures, and frequently express that their expectations and needs for themselves and their children are not being met at one or more levels, the faculty will ask that family to look for another school, accepting that it is just not a good fit, that the cost energetically of trying to 'fix it' is too great to the school, and that it is thus best for both to move on. If the faculty reaches the conclusion that the relationship with the parents just is not working, the Head of School will communicate and ask them to find another school for their family.

The decision to dismiss is reached after a careful review of all the information and much deliberation. It requires consensus of the faculty as does every major decision.

### **ADMISSIONS POLICY**

**Non-Discrimination Policy:** The Siskiyou School will not discriminate against any person, adult or child, on the basis of race, creed, religion, sex, color, gender identity, sexual orientation or national origin. This Non-Discrimination Policy applies to, but is not limited to: the admission of students, the hiring of faculty and staff, the use of school facilities, the participation in school programs, policies, practices and the administration of educational policies.

Admissions decisions for a particular class are based on two primary factors:

1. the child's fit with the class from the standpoint of social and emotional development and academic abilities and potential as determined by the class teacher and other teachers who have observed the child and
2. the family's support of the school's Waldorf philosophy. Precedence of consideration is given to children coming from other Waldorf schools.

Other factors a teacher considers in accepting a new student are sibling considerations and the ratio of class size to needs. If there is only one opening in a class, a sibling is likely to be given priority.

**Meeting Special Needs** Our school is designed to meet the needs of children with an *average* range of intellectual, emotional, and physical needs. We do not have the resources to address children who have academic and/or behavioral needs require them to have individualized instruction or assistance. Upon application, teachers will conduct an assessment of the child's abilities and this - along with a review of the child's records - will help the teacher determine whether or not our school might be a good fit for a particular child. Sometimes the initial assessments do not reveal the full range of a child's needs. Should a child be admitted and it be determined that the needs were greater than originally thought, the class teacher will invite parents to a conference to discuss those needs. Options include parents arranging tutoring outside of school, parents paying for tutorial help to be held during school hours at the school in lieu of another class, transfer to one of Ashland's public schools where resources are available to accommodate a broader range of needs.

#### **The Admissions Process for Transfer Students Grades 2-8 includes the following steps:**

- an introductory meeting between interested parents and the Head of School
- a visit by the child to the class; ideally this is a two-day visit so the child can experience the range of specialty classes and the specialty teachers can observe the child.
- as needed, an assessment of the applicant by the class teacher or our remedial teacher

- a meeting between the parents and class teacher where the parents describe their child and the teacher presents a picture of the class
- filling out an application and a \$50 Application Fee

Following completion of these steps, the Head of School will notify the family of the faculty's decision. The decision is made by the class teacher in conjunction with the Head of School, with input from the specialty teachers who have observed the child as well. Upon acceptance, parents come to the office to pay the enrollment fee and go over the paperwork with the Office Manager.

## **PART IX: MONEY MATTERS**

### **TUITION**

#### **Tuition Options**

We offer three options to help you most comfortably cover tuition depending on your family's financial situation: Annual payment (due July 1), Semi-Annual payments (due July 1 and January 1), and Monthly payments (due the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month beginning July 1 and ending June 1).

#### **Late Fees**

A \$15.00 fee is charged for any monthly tuition payment late beyond 10 days.

#### **Early Withdrawal from School**

A 30-day written notice must be received for any early withdrawal of students. Families are liable for tuition during the final 30 days, even if their child is not receiving instruction in the class. Families withdrawing between July 1 and the start of school in September are liable for one month's tuition.

#### **Tuition Assistance**

Tuition assistance is available to all families who qualify. As do many private schools, we rely on an outside service to assess a family's eligibility for aid. Families apply online by submitting their tax returns to the SSS, the School and Student Services for Financial Aid, an independent service affiliated with the National Association of Independent Schools. The SSS analyzes parent financial information and emails the school to let us know whether the family qualifies. The amount awarded varies according to the sum set aside for tuition assistance by the Board for that year (the size of the pot), the number of qualified applicants, and the amount of time a student has been at the school. Children who have been enrolled the longest receive the most aid, new children the least. Siblings are also given additional consideration. Families must submit their applications to the SSS by April 15. The Tuition Assistance Committee meets the first week in May. Award decisions are communicated in writing by May 15. A family with outstanding tuition will not be considered for assistance for the following year. Tuition payments must be up-to date for the current year.

#### **Financial Emergencies**

Should any family's financial situation drastically change in the course of the school year due to a medical crisis, accident, job loss or other circumstance, the family may ask for a review of the terms of their tuition by addressing a letter to the Head of School and Finance Committee. The Committee will review such cases and make a recommendation to the Board for consideration. Such requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Help is subject to availability of funds.

## **CONTRIBUTING TO THE SCHOOL'S FUNDRAISING**

As with all private schools, we need to fundraise in order to cover the difference between tuition and the real cost of our programs. Tuition does not actually fully cover the cost of a child's Siskiyou School education. Each year we set out to raise about \$1000 per student, about 12% of the budget. We count on every parent to help bridge the gap, both by making a direct monetary contribution into Annual

Giving and also by contributing time to help organize events which raise money from the larger community.

Helping with fundraising is a responsibility of every Siskiyou School parent. Over time parents realize it's a win-win. Rather than having tuition raised by \$1000, parents are given the opportunity to give at a level that works for them and then to claim that contribution as a tax deductible charitable gift. When everybody does their part, the system allows us to keep tuition low yet maintain our high quality of programming.

The launching of the Annual Giving Drive is announced each fall by letter. The appeal letter is sent to parents, grandparents, alumni, relatives, and friends of the school. The letter includes a "little white envelope" in which people are asked to send their contributions. Each year we have achieved 97%- 100% participation from our parent community. The incredibly rapid growth and formation of the school is directly due to the confidence in and support of the school as expressed through Annual Giving. Annual Giving is the opportunity for every family to recognize that their gift matters and that every contribution helps. Some, of course, can give more than others, but everybody can give something, and, together, we have reached our goal every year. Successful fundraising is vital to the health of the school.

In addition to making a donation into Annual Giving parents are asked to help host and organize fundraising events such as WinterFaire and the Auction. The Director of Community Development oversees those events and rallies parent help! Thank you in advance for whatever time you can give.

### **THE SCRIP PROGRAM**

Another way to help with fundraising is to buy groceries through SCRIP! Scrip is a way for parents to make a contribution to the school without having to spend an extra cent from their own pockets! Five cents on every dollar spent on groceries at certain stores comes back as a contribution to the school. We calculated that if every Siskiyou School family spent just \$300.00 on food a month using scrip, the school would get back over \$25,000 with no one having felt any pinch! The potential is huge. Enrolling in SCRIP, developing the habit of stopping by the office each week to buy scrip cards for use at the COOP or Shop 'n Kart is a MAJOR, painless way that parents can support the school all through the year. Please check in with the office about this program.

### **FUNDRAISING FOR THE 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE CLASS TRIP**

As per the guidelines laid out by the Board, in light of the need to balance class fundraising with all-school fundraising, the only class allowed to fundraise for its own needs in a given year is the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. In other words, there is only one class per year fundraising and that class is always the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. In that one year the class must raise all the money it needs for its trip. Each class in recent years has reached its goal within the allotted time.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip usually costs between \$800-\$1300 per child, depending on the destination and program. The destination is decided upon by the class teacher after receiving input from the parents. Money is raised through three venues: (1) individual student fundraising, (2) parent contribution and (3) class fundraisers.

**Student Contribution** In the early spring of their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, the teacher introduces the idea of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to his/her students and explains how the fundraising will occur. A goal is set for each child (\$300-\$400) and 12-15 months designated to raise it. Charts go up and the effort begins!

**Parent Contribution** Parents are asked to contribute \$500 for their child's 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip in addition to helping with the general class fundraising. Some parents choose to add \$50 dollars to each month's tuition during the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, others pay in quarterly increments or all at once. Enough lead time is given so planning is possible. A family that is unable to pay speaks privately to the class teacher and the teacher "takes it from there".

**Class Fundraisers** At an 8<sup>th</sup> grade class meeting devoted to the class trip, the teacher shares with parents fundraising information gathered from previous classes and a schedule of fundraising events is mapped out, with parents taking responsibility for helping with particular events. The first fundraiser is held in late May of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year. It is traditionally a car wash. Some classes choose to organize events in the summer as well. Traditional 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip fundraising venues include weekly Pizza Day (which has raised as much as \$4000), a booth at WinterFaire, and an all-school yard sale. Through this collective fundraising effort on the part of parents and students of the class in which both have such an immediate and direct and tangible stake, the children come to see that seemingly impossible dreams can be realized with effort and optimism and follow-through.

## **PART X: PARENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL LIFE**

We don't require a certain number of volunteer hours per family per year nor do we have a formal parent association at the Siskiyou School. However, day after day, parents find hundreds of ways, big and small, individually or in small groups, to make the Siskiyou School a better, more caring, conscious, and beautiful place. Everyone has something to bring. We encourage you to find a way that feels true to you to make a contribution. In keeping with the "do what you love in service of the school" approach to parent participation, parents have chosen different venues, including:

- Teaching Middle School Friday classes in their fields of expertise – sculpture, pottery, cooking, creative writing, rock climbing, etc.
- Creating a cross country team
- Making sets for school plays
- Making curtains for classrooms
- Weeding the garden beds
- Pruning the trees
- Doing carpentry projects
- Bringing in flowers to beautify the hall and classrooms
- Decorating the performance hall for school assemblies
- Making food for families in our community during their hard times
- Bringing in lunches or surprise treats for the teachers
- Helping with reading groups
- Helping in handwork classes
- Helping with WinterFaire and other festivals
- Doing the heavy lifting and hauling on school work days
- Maintaining our computers
- Driving on school field trips
- Lending us musical instruments
- Providing food for school functions
- Organizing an all-school fun-raiser such as a parent dance or talent show
- Showing up to help with setup and cleanup every time the request is put out
- Calling up on weekends and saying, *Need any help with anything?*
- And last but not least, serving on the Board

A volunteer form is enclosed with the enrollment packet, and Katie LaCroix, our Director of Community Development, is the one to talk to if you are looking for ways to jump in! Also, the office and class teachers send out emails asking for help as it is needed. Stay tuned and the opportunities will arise. It does indeed take a village and we are deeply grateful for - and dependent on - the support!

## **PART XI: TEACHER APPRECIATION**

Parents often ask what they can do for their children's teachers. They feel their child(ren)'s love for them and see the impact that the teachers are having on their children's lives. Your small contributions



to making day-in, day-out life more manageable for the teachers filters down to all the children in the school. The following are suggestions for what is most helpful in supporting the faculty:

**Faculty Meeting Meals** Faculty meetings usually begin with teachers having a bite to eat. Parents often offer to bring food for those meetings. That is a very welcome gift! Check with Aurilia if you would like to provide food for a faculty meeting. This year those meetings will be on Thursday afternoons. Our faculty circle includes about 20 teachers. Thank you!

### **The Teacher Gift Fund in December**

The Teacher Gift Fund originated in 2006 at the request of parents who wanted to be sure that they were supporting their teachers in a way that was truly helpful to them. It has proven incredibly meaningful. It works like this: Right after Thanksgiving a basket is set up with a card for every teacher in the school and a larger envelope which is labeled Teacher Gift Fund. A letter goes out to the parent community saying the basket has been set up and encouraging every parent to stop in for a few minutes any day before Winter Break (three weeks span) to sign the card of every one of their child(ren)'s teachers and to make a contribution into the Teacher Gift Fund envelope. People give at whatever level feels comfortable. Who gives how much remains anonymous. The day before Winter Break the money is cashed. The total is divided up among *all* the teachers proportionally based on the amount of time they spend with the children, with all class teachers receiving exactly the same amount, all full time specialty teachers receiving a little less but an equal amount, and so on down. Every teacher is recognized and it is fair. On the day Winter Break begins, all teachers find an envelope in their mailboxes with this monetary gift and a card or many cards from parents. The timing could not be better, and the gift so, so appreciated. Teachers treasure the words from parents and the money is a much-welcomed help.

### **End-of-Year Gifts**

Many parents and children are also moved to give something to their teachers in June. For those that do, we ask that that parents and children who want to give, do so individually, not as part of a class effort. We have received feedback that when one parent announces, "*We are doing this, or let's everybody chip in!*", then other families can feel pressured. That is why it is left for families who want make a gift at that time to find the way that feels comfortable to them. That changes when 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation comes around: the class of parents usually collaborates on a class gift to the teacher.

May it hereby be stated that, without question, the biggest joy for teachers is having wonderful children to teach and a school they are confident is here to stay and that supports them in this work that they love. For all the ways parents give, THANK YOU!

## **PART XII. THE PROTOCOL FOR CONCERNS**

### **(Revised & Approved in 2010, updated 2015 with new leadership model)**

Bringing mutual needs and concerns to light and having open conversations about them with one another is vital to the health and strength of our school community. The Faculty, Board, and Administration are committed to doing their part to foster better understanding and good communication. The Protocol for Concerns tells parents and teachers what to do when they have a concern. It is one of the school's foundational documents. The first Protocol for Concerns was adopted in the fall of 2006 as the school was in its forming; the Protocol was revised in 2010 and the version below approved by faculty and Board in December 2010 and updated October of 2015 to reflect the new roles Head of School and Pedagogical Director. In our new Leadership Model, the Head of School holds the whole, and works closely with the Pedagogical Director. They have the shared responsibility of supporting both parents and teachers with concerns that arise.

The Protocol provides a roadmap for three possible scenarios: parents with concerns related to a teacher, parents with concerns related to the Head of School and/or Pedagogical Director, and teachers with concerns about parents. Each scenario offers several steps to the concerned party. We encourage anyone with a concern to trust the process and engage in it.

## **Procedure for a parent to follow with a concern related to a teacher**

### **Step One: Go to the teacher.**

Tell the teacher directly what is not working for you and what you need from him or her. Communicating directly may be difficult, but it is a necessary first step. If speaking is hard, you may choose to put your concern in writing first and then have that first meeting. These meetings are used as needed when questions arise between regularly scheduled conferences. Ideally, the teacher and parent(s) come to a mutually agreed upon solution and work together at home and in the classroom to support the child.

### **Step Two: Go to the Head of School.**

If you are not satisfied after your meeting(s) with the teacher, please share your concern with the Head of School. There are times when the Head of School will work with the Pedagogical Director and/or other Faculty members to help find the right next step. The roles of both the Head of School, as well as the Pedagogical Director, are to support the teacher and parent(s) to find what will best support the child. There may be times when talking to the Head of School and/or the Pedagogical Director and getting more information about the school and curriculum will be enough. If not, there will be further conversations with both the teacher and parent(s) to find an acceptable solution. The teacher and parent(s) then work together towards implementing that solution. The Faculty, Pedagogical Director and Head of School are committed to working with all teachers to ensure their success in the classroom.

### **Step Three: Go to the teacher again, with support.**

If we all agree that another conversation with the teacher is needed, we will set up a meeting at which she/he will also be present. In some cases, a solution may be best helped by bringing in a Facilitator and/or additional support. Parent(s) may bring an additional support person to the meeting if they feel this would be beneficial to them. In the case of a meeting with four or more people, a formal prep meeting will be held prior between parent, Head of School, and Facilitator, where goals and intentions for the meeting will be clarified. Following the meeting, the Head of School will do a write-up, summarizing where the matter stands and noting decisions made. The report will be distributed to all involved parties.

### **Step Four: Go to the Board President.**

If you have engaged in the process outlined above, and you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may request a review by the Board President. The Board President will hear your concern and engage in additional fact-finding and consultation. In some cases, another attempt to reconcile differences with a formal mediation may be suggested. In this case, teacher and parent(s) must agree to the mediation, and the cost will be shared by both parties. In other cases, the issue may not be resolvable; however, if the parent and teacher relationship is intact, then they can agree to disagree. If this is the case, then to move forward and support the child, there will need to be guidelines set for further interaction, so the issue is not continually resurfacing. In rare cases, an agreement may not be able to be reached, and a family will need to decide if the school and teacher are able to meet their needs or if they would be better served at a different school.

## **Procedure for a parent to follow with a concern related to the Head of School**

### **Step One: Go to the Head of School.**

Bring your concern directly to the Head of School. Tell her/him directly what your concern is, and what you need from her/him. Communicating directly may be difficult, but it is a necessary first step. If speaking is hard, you may choose to put your concern in writing first, and then have that first meeting. The matter may be resolved at this initial meeting.

### **Step Two: Go to the Board President.**

If you are not satisfied with your meeting(s) with the Head of School, please share your concern with the Board President. The Head of School answers to the Board, and the Board President is the official contact person on the Board for concerns from parents about the Head of School. The Board President will communicate with and involve other Board members as he/she feels necessary. The Board President will hear your concerns, and engage in additional fact-finding and consultation. The Board President or another representative of the Board will facilitate a meeting between the Head of School and parent(s). Parent(s) may bring an additional support person to the meeting if they feel this would be beneficial to them. In some cases a formal mediation may be suggested. In that case, the Head of School and parent(s) must agree to the mediation and the cost will be shared by both parties. Our hope is that a mutually agreeable solution can be reached through this process. However, if a resolution cannot be found, then all parties must consider how to move forward based on what is in the best interest of the child, the family and the school.

## **Procedure for a teacher to follow with a concern related to a parent**

### **Step One: Go to the parent.**

Tell the parent(s) directly what is not working for you, and what you need from him/her. Clearly state what you need from the parent(s) for more effective communication and a better partnership. Ideally, the teacher and parent(s) come to a mutually agreed upon solution and work together at home and in the classroom to support the child.

### **Step Two: Go to the Head of School.**

If the teacher experiences no change in the relationship or concerning behavior, he/she should discuss this with the Head of School. The Head of School may also ask the Pedagogical Director to be part of the conversation/solution. They will meet with the teacher and parent(s) together to try to resolve the problem. If needed, the Board President can also be available to find solutions. The parent(s) may bring a support person to this meeting(s) if they feel this would be helpful to them. In some cases a formal mediation may be considered. In this case, both parties must agree to the mediation and the cost will be shared between the school and the parent(s). In rare cases, an agreement may not be able to be reached, and a family may be asked to leave the school. This decision will be made by the Faculty, including the Pedagogical Director with input from the Head of School and Board President. If this decision is reached, the family will be notified formally by letter, but all attempts will be made to give the parent(s) this information in person.

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**Thank you** for taking the time to familiarize yourself with our Parent Handbook. Your understanding of our program and policies makes our work a lot easier. Please bring questions, comments, and suggestions to our Head of School. Each year our community grows and changes, and the Board and Faculty revisit our mission and goals to ensure that we are staying present to our ever-changing community and needs.

**BLESSINGS ON OUR SCHOOL!**