



COMMUNICATION HANDBOOK

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DWS Vision, Mission and Values Statement

Our Identity

The spiritual insights of Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy guide our understanding of human development in all aspects of our school curriculum and in how we work with one another. We are committed to inclusivity and strive to build a strong academic, artistic and social foundation in which each student cultivates a capacity for independent thinking, compassionate feeling, and responsible action, so that each may enter into life in full freedom.

Our Vision, Mission, and Values

Our Vision - to awaken and nurture the full capacities in every human being so that each may enter into life in full freedom.

Our Mission – to teach the whole child through a living and integrated curriculum to awaken their ability to become an independent-thinking, compassionate, and resilient human being empowered to do good in the world.

Our Values – At the Davis Waldorf School, we teach to the whole child in order to cultivate the values of resilience, relationship, and reverence.

- **Resilience:** We seek to develop imagination, integrity and courage in every child so that they may develop the confidence to overcome challenges and live in freedom.
- **Relationship:** We support the building of relationships with the self, others, and the natural world. We commit to being an inclusive, welcoming school that honors diversity in all its manifestations, both in the classroom and in the whole world community.
- **Reverence:** We revere the connection between ourselves and the natural world and we commit to caring for others and the environment.

Davis Waldorf School Code of Conduct

We are committed to maintaining an environment in which all students and adults are treated with dignity and respect. To that end, communication guidelines facilitate the smooth functioning of the school and assist parents/guardians, students, faculty and staff members to work successfully together. The guidelines complement the regular, informal communication that already takes place between members of the school community.

Whether on campus or participating in a school event off campus, community members may not engage in criminal acts, hostility, use of profanity, conduct which is offensive or unwelcome, physical violence, taunts, threats, intimidation, verbal harassment or any other forms of malicious or hurtful behavior, racial or sexual harassment, the use of insults relating to race, religion, sex or gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation or any other characteristic that is contained in the definition of hate crimes according to state and federal law. Students may participate in sex-segregated school programs, activities and facilities including athletic teams consistent with their gender identity regardless of the gender listed on school records. For the purpose of this Code of Conduct, "facilities" include bathrooms and sleeping accommodations on field trips.

Davis Waldorf School Non-Discrimination Philosophy

The Davis Waldorf School believes that no person should be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination in any educational program or activity available in the School on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, age, marital or familial status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic under federal, state, or local law, including that which is contained in the definition of hate crimes set forth in Section 422.55 of the California State Penal Code. State law requires that all students shall be permitted to participate in sex-segregated school activities and programs, including athletic teams and use facilities consistent with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the student's records. (Education Code 221.5) For the purposes of this policy, "facilities" includes restrooms and sleeping facilities for school activities (field trips), etc.

Davis Waldorf School further believes that individuals with disabilities are entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to the School's services, privileges, and/or advantages, etc., subject to the conditions and limitations established by law, or state and federal regulation.

Section I: Directing Communication

Please contact the Class Teacher directly regarding any concerns about a child's experience in the classroom. If the matter is not resolved, please communicate this to your child's teacher. If the concern remains unresolved after you have spoken with the teacher, the next step is to confer with the Director of Pedagogy. If the situation is still unresolved, the final step is to contact the DWS Director.

Contact information and areas of responsibility:

Contact the Director at director@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Curriculum standards in Preschool and Kindergarten
- Hiring of new teachers
- Pedagogical policies, student assessment and support in the Early Childhood program
- Parent education
- Facilitating communication around unresolved concerns including helping to frame concerns, bringing concerns directly to the other party and activation of the Trust Group
- Management of human resources and policies
- Concerns or questions regarding the administrative staff
- Campus security, health, and safety programs (e.g. fire drills)
- Junebug Aftercare concerns (early childhood program)

Contact the Director of Pedagogy at pedagogy@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Curriculum standards in 1st through 8th grade
- Teacher support in 1st through 8th grade
- Teacher evaluations, mentoring and professional development
- Pedagogical policies, student assessment and support in the grades program
- Sunflower Aftercare concerns (grades program)
- Summer garden camp (grades program)
- After school electives
- Facilitating communication around unresolved concerns including helping to frame concerns, bringing concerns directly to the other party and activation of the Student Support Group

Contact the Director of Community Development at development@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Fundraising and Community Development
- School Events and Festivals
- Parent Council
- Marketing publications and School Website

Contact the Business Manager at business@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Financial or legal policies and procedures
- Budget development and budget management
- DWS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Contact the Office Coordinator* at office@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Absences, tardies
- Drop-In Aftercare
- Vacation Care
- School Calendar and scheduling

**The Office Coordinator acts as primary receptionist for the front office, which includes serving as the main point of contact for visitors, parents/guardians, students, telephone calls, mail, and email. The Office Coordinator can also direct you to the appropriate staff member if you are unsure who to go to with a question.*

Contact the Systems Coordinator at systems@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Tech support for Blackbaud
- Questions regarding school website updates
- Class Community pages
- Help accessing your child's End of Year Report
- Questions regarding Google Drive or Email

Contact the Admissions and Marketing Coordinator at admissions@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- School enrollment statistics
- Enrollment processes
- Social media
- Newsletters and Dates and Details

Contact the Enrollment Department at enrollment@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Enrollment queries and enrollment deadlines
- School tours

Contact the Bookkeeper at bookkeeper@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Tuition
- Aftercare billing/payments
- Accounts receivable and payable

Contact the Registrar at registrar@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Student records (including immunization records)
- Communicable illness notifications
- Site maintenance
- Field trips and Volunteering

Contact the Board Chair at boardchair@daviswaldorf.org regarding:

- Board Committees (see Governance and School Committees section of the DWS website)

For questions about the Sunflower Aftercare (Grades 1 – 8) and Summer programs, contact the Sunflower Aftercare Program Coordinator at sunflower@daviswaldorf.org or the Director of Pedagogy at pedagogy@daviswaldorf.org.

For questions about the June Bug Aftercare (Preschool and Kindergarten), Vacation and Summer programs for Early Childhood students, contact the June Bug Aftercare Program Coordinator at junebug@daviswaldorf.org.

Section 2: General Communication Pathways and Guidelines

We value meaningful relationships to create a supportive and engaging environment for our students, families, teachers, staff and board. Trust, compassion, cooperation, and respect for everyone in our community is vitally important.

A. Class Parents

Each class has one or more Class Parents who support the class teacher and provide a communication link between the parents/guardians and the teacher. In collaboration with the class teacher, Class Parent(s) may disseminate information through phone calls, emails, text, and written notes; delegate jobs to other parents/guardians; coordinate class events; and share, receive and distribute information from and with the larger school community. **If a parent in the class wishes to send an email message to the parent body of the class, they should do this through the Class Parent and/or Teacher.**

B. Parent Council

Any parent/guardian who has a student at the school is invited to participate in the Parent Council. Parent Council serves to enhance communication between parents/guardians within each of the classes in the school community and with the Faculty and Administration. Parent Council considers parent initiatives, holds the community life of the school, and supports volunteerism and fundraising efforts. The Parent Council also supports education and enrichment opportunities.

C. School Website

The school's website is <http://www.daviswaldorf.org>. The DWS Parent Handbook, this DWS Communication Policy, other policy documents, as well as information about the curriculum, admissions, community life, school newsletters and the school calendar are available on our website.

D. Online Class Communication

Teachers will communicate regularly via email and/or on the class group page on Blackbaud. Please read your emails and check your class share sites at least weekly.

E. School Directory and Solicitation for Business

All enrolled families, board members and employees may access the school directory through the Blackbaud portal. It is intended for use for school and community events and communication only. The directory or school email lists may not be used for business solicitation or shared with any outside groups or people. Solicitation for business is not allowed in any form on campus.

F. Email Etiquette

Email communication should be respectful at all times. Email is not the appropriate medium for conveying concerns and is appropriate only for arranging meetings and for informational communication. Please see Section 3D for more information about email etiquette.

G. Cell Phone Etiquette

Please limit cell phone use on the school grounds to the breezeway between the main office and the MPR, inside vehicles in the parking lot and the front parking circle adjacent to Sycamore Lane. Please be aware that parking at pick up and drop off times is in high demand, so be mindful of cell phone use in your vehicle at these times if you are using a parking space.

H. School-wide Communication: Monthly Updates and Newsletters

NEWSLETTERS and Dates & Details

Important Dates & Details as well as a longer Newsletter will be emailed with important community updates, school news, and articles written by the Director, office staff, students, and faculty about classroom life and school events. Parents and others are welcome to submit articles to be considered for inclusion. Newsletters and other community updates are also available in the Community section on our website (www.daviswaldorf.org).

These digital newsletters include important and timely information that may not be delivered through any other method. Please ensure that the office has your most current email address. Parents and vendors who offer items of interest to the school community can advertise in the newsletter. Please contact the Development Director at development@daviswaldorf.org for submission details and deadlines.

Community members have a responsibility to read in a timely manner all communications from the school including class notes and emails, the monthly school Newsletter, the weekly Dates and Details, school policies, etc.

The school is committed to keeping emails to a minimum, and therefore the weekly Dates and Details and the monthly Newsletter were created.

It is vital that everyone read the Dates and Details and the Newsletter thoroughly. They include important and timely information that may not be delivered through any other method. Please ensure that the office has your most current email address.

I. Communication with the Media

The DWS Director and the Director of Community Development are the only School representatives authorized to discuss matters related to the School with the media. Parents/guardians, faculty, and staff members may never divulge any information regarding the

School, its faculty or staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, students, programs, policies, or procedures to the media without prior formal authorization from the DWS Director. Only those who have received specific authorization from the DWS Director are permitted to respond to media inquiries. If a faculty, staff member, or parent/guardian is contacted by a reporter, they must not release any information, no matter how insignificant it may seem. Media personnel must be immediately directed to contact the DWS Director, who will determine the appropriate action.

J. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential for students, families and all employees in all areas of school communications. All employees are responsible for upholding the confidentiality statement as described in the Employee Handbook.

The confidential business affairs of the School should not be discussed with persons outside the organization unless authorized and required during the normal course of business. This includes not revealing confidential information to any other parent/guardian, faculty or staff member who does not have a legitimate need to know the information.

Confidential records concerning students, parents/guardians and staff members are private and disclosure to unauthorized persons could be harmful or against the law. Information concerning the activities or operations of the School's students, especially academic, medical and financial records, is confidential and must be treated as such.

Personal information students and families provide to the school shall be used solely for school purposes. The information is protected and will not be used to target advertising to students or families.

Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information is a violation of the School's policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for an employee. A parent/guardian may be required to have limited access to the school campus or to withdraw their family from the school.

K. Communication with the Board of Directors

Parents/guardians, faculty and staff members are welcome to attend all Board meetings except for closed sessions. Meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month starting at 6:30 pm virtually via Zoom. Attendees are invited to share any questions, ideas or issues in the section of the meeting allocated to "community share". This portion is usually held at the beginning of the Board meeting.

Parents/guardians or faculty and staff members may also communicate in writing directly to the Board of Directors through the Board President. These letters may be submitted via email to boardchair@daviswaldorf.org or as a hard copy to the office, Attention: Board Chair. Receipt of correspondence will be acknowledged within 24 hours. If the matter is urgent, please state this in your correspondence and the information will be shared with the Board within three school days of receipt. Non-urgent matters will be addressed during the community share portion of the next

regular meeting of the Board. The President will follow up with the parent/guardian, faculty or staff member in a timely manner.

Strictly informational inquiries related to board policies and procedures, publicly available financial information, or legal policies and procedures can be directed to the Board Secretary via email to boardsecretary@daviswaldorf.org. The Board Secretary will respond to the informational inquiry within three school days.

Section 3: Situation-Specific Guidelines

A. Communication between Teachers and Students

In the classroom and throughout all school activities, we expect that the communication from the teacher to the student is clear and loving with definite and well-understood boundaries. Teachers exercise authority in the classroom in different ways as students journey through the school. The three approaches to authority – imitation, guidance, and respect for expertise – provide the context for communication in the classroom or school. Teachers, as role models for the students, should always strive to show respect, care and responsibility in their communications and interactions with students, parents/guardians, and with each other. If a teacher does not follow these guidelines or adhere to the DWS Code of Conduct, it will result in disciplinary action.

Teachers expect students to respect others, the school, and themselves, and to reflect this respect in their actions, manner, and speech. Should disrespectful communication occur or breach the DWS Code of Conduct, the parents/guardians will be notified. If concerns persist, the teacher will consult the Student Support Group (see Appendix A). If the issue persists, it may result in disciplinary action, up to and including probation, suspension or expulsion of the student.

Social Media Communication

Teachers and employees are prohibited from “friending” or interacting with current students via social media and posting or sharing any pictures of students without parental consent. Teachers may post pictures of students on a class share site or on the DWS Facebook page. As part of the enrollment contract, parents/guardians sign a photo release waiver. If you would like to withdraw your consent, please contact the registrar to edit your contract.

B. Communication between DWS Parents/Guardians and Students

Students and teachers are expected to respect themselves and others, and to reflect this respect in their actions, manner, and speech. So too should all members of our community model this behavior.

If disrespectful communication occurs from a student toward an adult, then the adult should clearly and kindly clarify that they expect the student to communicate respectfully. If appropriate, the adult could also consult the student’s teacher and/or parent/guardian. If the issue persists, the teacher will refer the matter to the Student Support Group (see Appendix A). If the issue

continues to persist, it may result in disciplinary action, up to and including probation, suspension or expulsion of the student.

Should disrespectful communication occur from an adult toward a student, this should be reported to the DWS Director, who will bring the issue to the appropriate individual(s) or group. See Appendix A for more information about the Student Support Group. If the matter is not resolved, it may result in disciplinary action, up to and including requiring the adult to have limited access to the school campus or to withdraw their family from the school.

Social Media Communication

Parents/guardians should not post or share pictures, videos, or any other representation of students who are not their own children on social media without consent from the other student's parents/guardians.

C. Communication between DWS Students

Davis Waldorf School is committed to promoting a social environment in which working, playing, and learning take place in ways that foster inclusiveness. Each student is expected to respect their peers and to reflect this respect in their actions, manner, and speech. We recognize that social conflict is an integral part of human growth and development that must be guided rather than avoided. As a school, we strive to help students learn how to resolve conflicts. With this goal in mind, DWS has adopted the 'Social Inclusion Approach'.

Social Inclusion

The Social Inclusion Approach is based upon the training faculty and staff have received from Kim John Payne, wherein we strive to strengthen the student's capacity for empathy, compassion, and perspective-taking. Much of the work is preventative in nature. When conflict does occur, a "toolbox" of exercises and ideas offers structures to guide students through conflict. This approach is held by the Student Support Group, a faculty group responsible for supporting students and their families with academic, social, and discipline issues. More information about the Student Support Group is available in Appendix A.

Normal Peer Disagreements, Aggression, and Bullying

Bullying is a term that is used in many different ways, and not always accurately. Conflict happens in the course of human interactions and learning to navigate conflict is an important social skill. We use the following guidelines to identify and address whether a situation constitutes peer to peer conflict, social aggression, or bullying, and address it appropriately.

1. Peer to Peer Conflict: in the course of normal child development there will be disagreements and even arguments over different topics. The conflict does not include the intent to harm and arises out of the situation at hand. It is not pre-planned.
2. Social Aggression: aggressive behavior without pre-planning, e.g., telling the other children to put down or tease a child because of how the child looks or is dressed, or pulling a chair out from under a child when the child is sitting down.

3. **Bullying:** involves planning and complex thought, and always includes premeditation with the intent to cause emotional or physical harm. Bullying is deliberate, persistent, targeted, has an unequal power component, and happens over time.

Can toddlers bully? According to Dr. Heather Wittenerg, child psychologist, very young children are incapable of bullying. A very young child does not have the cognitive capability to be intentionally cruel or to abuse a power differential. The ability to discern right from wrong, or to systematically humiliate a peer, is not possible until the child is older.

Acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility that are based on any protected class outlined in the DWS Non-Discrimination Policy, including sex, gender identity, or gender expression, regardless of whether they are sexual in nature, are prohibited by state and federal law.

Faculty and staff will promptly respond to any observed or reported incidents of aggression, bullying, or other breach of the DWS Code of Conduct involving DWS students during school hours or during school sanctioned activities such as field trips or Aftercare. School staff who witness aggression or bullying shall immediately intervene to stop the incident. For severe or repeated incidents, the staff member will complete an incident report and notify both the teacher and parents/guardians.

A student who continues to engage in social aggression or bullying despite the efforts of the class teacher and parents/guardians will be brought under the care of the Student Support Group, who will work specifically with the teacher, parents/guardians and the student to effect positive change. Parent and teacher attendance at Support Circle meetings is mandatory (see Appendix A).

As a part of this process, a student may be given a probationary period to effect positive change. If improvements are not realized during the time set, it may be determined that the student is not being best served in this educational setting and the suspension and/or dismissal policy implemented.

The teacher and/or the Student Support Group may also recommend involving mental health counselors. Child Protective Services (CPS) and/or law enforcement may also be involved at any point in this process as needed.

If a parent/guardian feels their child is being bullied, they can engage the Student Support Group via the class teacher or the Director. For more information about the Student Support Group, please see Appendix A.

Social Media and Cyberbullying

At the Davis Waldorf School we strongly discourage the use of social media by students. However, if a student does use social media, they should communicate respectfully. We recommend that students do not post their address or phone number, and do not post about or

share pictures of their peers without their consent. For more information about Cyberbullying, see Appendix B.

D. Communication between Teachers and Parents/Guardians

Teachers and parents/guardians are asked to be role models for healthy, respectful communication and to follow the DWS Code of Conduct.

Regular parent meetings, annual parent-teacher conferences, and visits with the teacher establish trust and confidence as well as maintain the communication so vital to the social fabric of DWS. Each year and prior to the first day of school, teachers will notify parents of their communication guidelines regarding email, phone, texting, face-to-face conversations and hours of availability.

In general teachers are focused on their class, student supervision and lesson preparation first thing in the morning. Conversations or parent/guardian questions that require more than a brief “yes” or “no” should be saved until after school or handled by appointment.

In the case of joint custody agreements, all written communication from teachers to parents/guardians regarding their child will be directed to both parents/guardians.

Parent Meetings

Parent meetings are vital links to the student’s classroom experience. Each class teacher schedules parent meetings throughout the year; the frequency and format of the meetings will vary depending on the grade, averaging four meetings per year. At parent meetings, teachers may cover the grade’s curriculum and schedule of main lesson blocks, discuss class expectations and student development, plan for class activities, offer a discussion on Waldorf principles, suggest activities for home that relate to the student’s activities in class, etc.

Parent meetings provide parents/guardians an opportunity to learn what is happening in the class, discuss developmental stages, share parenting experiences, prepare for field trips and special events, and plan for their children’s mutual learning. The parents/guardians get to know one another through participating in class social events, the planning of class and school activities, and the social relationships among the students. For these reasons, at least one parent/guardian is strongly encouraged to attend every parent meeting.

Parent Teacher Conferences

These conferences are held in November to discuss the academic and social progress of each student. The class teacher will discuss the student’s progress and provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and ask questions. Each teacher is required to offer a parent teacher conference. Ideally this conference will be held in person; however, it may be conducted over the phone, by video conference, if an in-person meeting is not possible. To facilitate the meetings, school is closed M-W of Thanksgiving week. Teachers provide a range of daytime, evening and weekend options for conferences.

End-of-Year Reports

The student's class teacher prepares a detailed report describing the student's academic and social progress over the course of the year. Reports are generally available by the end of July and are added to Blackbaud for parents/guardians to access. This report is the official transcript of the student's Waldorf education. If a parent/guardian would like to add to, or disagree with, anything in the report, they have 30 days to submit their written comments to the office for inclusion in the student's cumulative student records.

Parent/Teacher Meetings and Support Circle Meetings

In addition to the above-listed formal communications, there may be additional times when parents/guardians and teachers need to meet. Requests for meetings from either party should include a range of available times and a short statement of the topic of concern.

As needed, Support Circle Meetings are called by the teacher and/or the parents/guardians to aid a student in the academic, social or discipline realms. Support Circle Meetings are facilitated by the Student Support Group. For more information, see Appendix A.

Text Messaging

Teachers have varying preferences regarding the use of text messages, which they will individually communicate to their parent body.

Text communication should be respectful at all times. Texting is not the appropriate medium for conveying sensitive issues and, in these cases, should be used only to arrange a meeting to discuss the issue/s.

Group Texts

Group texts are for simple, short, and to-the-point communications, such as letting the parent body know what time a class is leaving a field trip location to start back to school. The teacher or the Class Parent will initiate a group text. Group texts should be respectful of everyone at all times. It is not the appropriate medium for conversation or for discussing sensitive or personal issues.

Email Etiquette

DWS policy for teachers is that they check their email daily and respond within 24 hours, except on weekends or holidays. Email is used regularly by teachers to convey important information to parents/guardians. To facilitate consistent communication, parents/guardians should regularly check their email and be responsive.

Email communication should be respectful at all times. Email is not the appropriate medium for conveying sensitive issues and, in these cases, should be used only to arrange a meeting to discuss the issue/s.

DON'T

- I. Don't use email to bring criticism, as it is often more damaging than helpful.

2. Don't send out a group email to air dissatisfaction with something under any circumstances.
3. Don't put something in a message that you do not want everybody to read; emails are easily forwarded to other readers.
4. Don't respond quickly when angry. An email can be composed and saved as a draft. Think the email over and re-read it before pushing the "send" button.
5. Don't forward any email that contains offensive remarks or sensitive information.

DO

1. Do use email to set up meetings.
2. Be mindful of the tone of the email. Without the presence of voice intonation or body language, emails can easily be misunderstood.
3. Parents should run emails intended for the parent body of the class past the teacher or Class Parent before sending. As each class progresses through the grades and a cohesive relationship forms, the class may collectively agree that they are comfortable with direct communication to the entire parent body.

E. Communication between DWS Parents/Guardians

While on campus or at any school event off campus, community members must adhere to the DWS Code of Conduct (see beginning of this document). We request that all adults in the community employ the communication guidelines outlined below in Part 4 when speaking to each other and use respectful inquiry, face-to-face conversations with the appropriate person, and proper email etiquette.

Should an infringement of the DWS Code of Conduct occur, parents/guardians will be referred to the Trust Group to understand the full consequences of their actions and will be given the opportunity to redress any harm done. If the issue persists, the parent/guardian may be required to have limited access to the school campus and/or employees, be required to step off committees, or to withdraw their family from the school.

Section 4: Communication Guidelines and Conflict Resolution

At DWS, it is our desire to foster an effective communication process between all members of the DWS community. Should an issue arise, it is required that both parties meet in person, potentially with a communication facilitator, if needed, to achieve a resolution. The following steps outline the process we ask all adult community members to follow when working through a conflict.

1. First bring the question/issue directly to the other person in a timely manner.

Many problems can be averted by speaking directly to the other person before concerns grow out of proportion. For the overall health of our school and success of our programs, please bring issues immediately to the person involved rather than process it with others. The other person should be given the opportunity to share the reasons behind their actions.

If help is needed approaching the person directly or framing the question/issue, please speak with your class teacher, the Director of Pedagogy, or School Director with the intention that they help articulate the concern in a fruitful manner.

Example 1. A parent/guardian may have a question for a teacher about how the curriculum is being delivered or how their teacher is working with their students.

Example 2. A staff member may have a question about something a colleague is doing.

2. Bring sensitive questions or concerns in a face-to-face conversation.

Body language and voice intonation are important for accurate understanding of the other's intentions. If a face-to-face meeting is not easily achievable, video chatting or a phone call are the next best thing. If, at any time during the phone conversation, either party feels the call has taken a negative tone, they may respectfully state that the conversation must be postponed until both parties can meet face-to-face and end the call.

3. Please use the method of “respectful inquiry” and principles of nonviolent communication.

Bring a concern as a question rather than an accusation or judgment. This approach is important because no one likes to be accused of unfair actions before all the facts are brought forth. In addition, when students report an incident, they may only be reporting those facts that were important to them or what they perceived as the truth without knowing the whole story.

Note to parents/guardians: if a student reports anything that is of concern, please contact their teacher as soon as possible.

Example 1. Instead of saying, “I never know what is going on with the curriculum. We heard the Bible is being taught in 3rd grade, I thought this wasn’t a religious school!” Rephrase to: “I am curious as to why the Bible is being taught at school? Is this a standard part of the curriculum? I have some personal issues with this and so anything you can do to help me understand the reasoning behind this would be appreciated.”

Example 2. Rather than saying, “Why is she doing that?” Rephrase to: “When I see her doing that, I am concerned that she is not following school policies. I need clarity about what is going on. Could you come with me to meet with her to clarify the situation? Maybe she is unaware of our policy.”

Example 3: Rather than saying, “My daughter is miserable because your child is bullying her.” Rephrase to: “When I see my daughter is unhappy and she tells me about some hurtful things that are happening on the playground, I feel worried. I need clarity about what is going on. Would you share with me what is happening?”

4. Next Steps Usually, going directly to the other person is all that is needed, but if the above process has been utilized and the conflict remains unresolved, please communicate to the other person that the issue still needs resolution for you. The next step is to contact the DWS Director of Pedagogy or School Director to request that the Director of Pedagogy or another appropriate member of the faculty, such as a mentor, serve as a Communication Facilitator. This facilitator will help bring the continued concern to the other person in a face-to-face meeting that aims to resolve the outstanding issue(s). When a meeting is requested, both parties must supply at least three alternative times to meet, including weekend and evening times, and the meeting must be attended within 2 weeks from the requested meeting date. Attendance at the meeting is mandatory.

5. Unresolved concerns: The Trust Group DWS is committed to seeking resolution of conflict. If step #4 has still not addressed the concerns, the next step is to request a meeting with the DWS Director, who will set up a Trust Group meeting.

A Trust Group meeting uses a modified “Common Concern” format, is led by a facilitator and lasts approximately one hour. Each individual chooses a support person from the Trust Group and works with that person to present and resolve their concerns during the facilitated meeting. When a meeting is requested, both parties must supply at least three alternative times to meet, including weekday, weekend and evening times, and the meeting must be attended within 2 weeks from the requested time.

Refusal to attend the Trust Group meeting may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for an employee.

Refusal to engage in this conflict resolution process or a Trust Group meeting may result in the parent/guardian having limited access to the school campus/employees, being required to step off committees and/or to withdraw their family from the school.

APPENDIX A

DWS Student Support Group

Roles, Tools and Processes

The Student Support Group (SSG) is made up of a group of DWS teachers and staff committed to working together with teachers and families to support the children from preschool – 8th grade to be as successful as they can be. The Student Support Group works in the realms of academics, social-emotional wellness, and discipline, working chiefly through the Support Circle process. As needed, the SSG can help connect students in need of support services with support specialists or service providers. SSG may also assist teachers with whole-class, small group, or individual social wellness work, and will be called in to support when a child is dealing with serious or chronic behavioral issues.

The **Support Circle** is the cornerstone in our process of “building a village” around the child. Either teachers or parents can call for a Support Circle for a child. The SSG facilitates conversations between the parents and the teacher to create a plan to build on the child’s successes and address their challenges.

For each Support Circle, the parents, teacher, and two members of SSG attend, one to facilitate and the other to take notes. Both teacher and parents will share their observations of the child’s successes and challenges at home and at school, and together we will create a plan for support that will likely include both a school and a home component. Notes will be shared and plans will be made for a follow-up meeting as needed.

Other tasks of the SSG include working with teachers in supporting new child interviews, enrollment, and re-enrollment; tracking modified education plans created by the child’s teacher; helping to create a temporarily modified schedule for a student; and supporting teachers and families with the probation and dismissal process when necessary.

If you have any questions about or would like to request the help of the Student Support Group, contact your child’s teacher or the Chair of SSG at ssg@daviswaldorf.org.

SSG Works in Three Realms:

A. Academic/Remedial Realm:

If, due to classroom behavior, parental concerns, or results from the teacher screenings and reviews, a student is identified as needing extra help in the therapeutic, remedial or academic realms, the Student Support Group can help in the following ways:

- Initiate an informal Child Observation or request a formal Child Observation (with parent permission, the full faculty observes the child with warmth and provides feedback)
- Hold Support Circle Meetings (detailed above)
- Maintain a list of providers in a wide variety of areas in both the therapeutic and academic realms, and help link the identified student with an appropriate support service provider
- With parent/guardian agreement and financial support, connect the student with in-house tutoring, Therapeutic Eurythmy and/or Extra Lesson sessions, when available
- Review IEP or ISP services provided by the school district for students and prospective students at DWS and offer recommendations and support to the student's teacher or prospective teacher
- Discuss with the parents/guardians, in the context of a Support Circle meeting, the possibility that a student would be better served in a different setting where trained personnel can help with therapeutic/remedial needs

B. Social Realm:

Conflicts are a normal part of life and offer opportunities to learn about each other and ourselves. How we handle conflict affects our relationships with each other and ourselves and the feelings of trust and safety within our school.

At our school we use the Social Inclusion Approach. This approach helps support and maintain a healthy and safe environment for students and adults at DWS.

- The Social Inclusion Approach includes a process of intervention and mediation for issues of teasing and bullying, based on a "justice without blame" premise.
- By eliminating blame from the process, an environment of openness is created.
- This approach encourages students to trust that problems can be genuinely resolved, and also require accountability.
- Naturally, interventions and mediations will differ according to grade level.

C. Discipline/Guidance Realm:

Discipline/Guidance is the third realm in which the Student Support Group operates. As with the other two realms, the main goal is to support students and their families when there is difficulty. Key themes of this realm include:

- There is no such thing as a disobedient student... only a disoriented one. When students “act out” they are looking to us to set calm, warm and firm boundaries to help them orient themselves.
- Restorative discipline seeks to hold a student accountable without blame or shame. Students can take part in “making good” if they are not stigmatized and feel they need to defend themselves against blame or shame.
- Students can change their behavior according to the environment if there is a clear and consistent expectation from all adults. Inappropriate behavior can be left behind at the school gates when a faculty and administration are very clear and steadfast about what behavior they all expect to displace it.
- Discipline is not punishment; rather, it is guidance in community expectations. Each time discipline is kindly, warmly, and firmly brought to the child, the values of the community are clarified and strengthened. A faculty member or administrator helps to strengthen the identity of the whole community when bringing discipline. The adult is not “being mean” but “being clear” about what the school stands for.

Probation Policy

Working from a place of spiritual insight and following the previous work of the Student Support Group, if positive changes to a serious or chronic behavioral issue are not made, probation may be necessary and the following steps will be taken.

1. A plan will be developed which includes an agreed-upon timeline for the transformation and examples of situations that would warrant probation. This list of examples cannot cover all possibilities, of course.
2. Parameters of communication between parents and teacher of the child's progress will be set and will include the interval and format (e.g., weekly progress report with the caveat that the teacher will call before then if something necessitates immediate attention, including if the child is sent home that day).
3. The student may or may not be put on probation, depending on the severity of the issue(s), whether or not this is the first time the Student Support Group and parents have met about the issue, and the level of parent cooperation and support in creating positive change. If the student is not put on probation at this time and the undesirable behavior is not mitigated using the plan, and additional undesirable behavior occurs such that the child's teacher(s) is not able to appropriately serve the child and/or the child's class, the plan will be immediately amended so that the student is put on formal probation.
4. Probation requirements will vary in accordance with the behavior in question, the age of the child, the cooperation of the parents, and the outlines of the change plan. Clear statements of expected outcomes if positive changes are not made, including possible dismissal, will be documented for all parties. Subject and Aftercare Teachers who teach the student must be informed of the plan.

5. The probationary period may be extended if some progress has been made and the class teacher advocates for this. If the end of the probationary time approaches and needed improvements have not been realized despite these adjustments, it may be determined that the student is not being best served in this educational setting and the dismissal policy implemented.

Suspension And Dismissal Process

When a situation calls for immediate action, or when the teacher, parents, and Student Support Group recognize that the child's needs go beyond what the school can provide, we follow the dismissal process.

The dismissal process can occur over the course of many months, or, for a serious behavioral incident, immediate suspension and/or dismissal may be implemented.

The teacher, the Director of Pedagogy, and the School Director are the decision-making body for student dismissal.

In the case of serious and egregious behavior, e.g., destroying property; seriously harming or threatening another student, teacher, or oneself; an uncontrollable outburst, etc., and per the teacher's discretion, the student may be immediately suspended for up to a week while the decision making body determines next steps. The teacher immediately calls a meeting with the Director of Pedagogy and solicits input from the School Director. The teacher, Director of Pedagogy, and School Director are the decision-making body and will decide upon further action steps to take, including dismissing the student from the school. The Director will meet with the parents within 36 hours to explain the group's decision and outline steps to be taken, which may include a probationary period or dismissal. The steps to take for student probation are listed above.

In non-emergency cases, the teacher has more time for contemplation, child observation, and self-study. Drawing upon their training and experience and that of their colleagues and mentors, the class teacher also calls on help from the spiritual world. They work with the child's angel and with the child's parents, communicating with them and inviting them to warmly observe and contemplate the child as well. The teacher consults their mentor and other colleagues who may have insights to offer. The teacher, possibly together with their mentor, meets with the parents to outline the challenges and explores possible interventions/modifications at home and at school. The teacher may also choose to refer the child to the Student Support Group and call for a Support Circle before speaking with the parents.

The teacher is expected to work with the Student Support Group and the parents to create a [plan](#) of action. This plan could contain a component the teacher would be responsible for, such as modifications or accommodations, and a component the parents would provide, such as an assessment, tutoring, or therapies such as eurythmy, Extra Lesson, occupational therapy, etc. Goals

will be identified and timelines may be set, depending upon the situation. Clear statements of expected outcomes if positive changes are not made, including possible dismissal, should be expressed and documented for the parents, and the School Director should be informed.

If the teacher, in conjunction with SSG, finds there is insufficient progress towards goals, they will meet with the School Director to apprise them of the situation.

At the point the decision has been made to release a student, the teacher will inform the faculty during the next scheduled full faculty meeting. Upon making the decision to dismiss the student, the Director will inform the parents of the school's decision. Plans will be made with the parents for releasing the student from the class in a socially and emotionally healthy way. Full faculty, including Subject and Aftercare Teachers, will be informed.

APPENDIX B

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a violation of the DWS Code of Conduct and may also violate the law.

Cyberbullying includes the transmission of harassing communications, direct threats, or other harmful texts, sounds, or images on the internet, social media, or other technology using a telephone, computer, or any wireless or other communication device. Cyberbullying also includes breaking into another person's electronic account and/or assuming that person's identity in order to damage that person's or another person's reputation.

Examples of cyberbullying include but are not limited to harassing, denigrating, impersonating, outing, tricking, excluding, threatening, sharing images without permission, video shaming, doxxing, and cyberstalking.

Always be kind. Don't send texts, emails, or post comments with the intent of scaring, hurting, or intimidating someone else.

Engaging in cyberbullying behaviors, or any online activities intended to physically, emotionally, or mentally harm another person, will result in severe disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion. In some cases, cyberbullying is a crime. Remember that online activities are monitored and retained by others.

Should cyberbullying occur, individuals with information about the activity are encouraged to save and print any electronic or digital messages sent to them that they feel constitute cyberbullying and to notify their teacher, the DWS Director, and law enforcement if indicated so that the matter may be investigated.

If the student is using a social networking site or service that has terms of use that prohibit posting of harmful material, the teacher and/or the DWS Director also may file a complaint with the internet site or service to have the material removed.

Personal Safety

If you see a message, comment, image, or anything else online that raises concerns for your or someone else's personal safety, bring it to the attention of the DWS Director immediately.