

Upper Grades Handbook



Grades Six, Seven & Eight

2009-2010

ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS

All classes start promptly at 8:30am every school day. The doors open at 8:10am. We recommend that you arrive at 8:20am in order to be ready to begin at 8:30am sharp.

Parents are required to notify the school office on the same day you will be absent from school. **If the school does not receive a call or note, this constitutes an unexcused absence.**

The school is officially open to receive children at 8:10am. We request that students not arrive earlier than 8:10am.

Morning Greeting

Traditionally, the eighth graders open car doors, greet parents and help the younger children enter the school. It is a great way to show upper grade leadership in the school and to help everyone by keeping traffic moving and starting their day in a friendly way.

Absences

In a Waldorf school, each lesson block is a carefully designed, complete unit of study. Given the breadth of the curriculum, even a few days unattended in class can adversely affect your education. A rhythm is disrupted, and missed work cannot always be completed.

Planned Absences

A **written** request for an absence must be submitted to your class teacher in a timely manner.

Medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours whenever possible.

Excused Absences

- Illness. A doctor's note is required for extended illnesses.
- Medical or dental appointments, if prior notice is given to the class teacher.
- Planned absence that has been requested in writing and **pre-approved**.

Unexcused Absences

Missing a class or school day without being excused or having an approved reason (whether the absence is student- or parent-initiated) is an unexcused absence. **Three unexcused absences are grounds for suspension or dismissal.**

Excessive absences, even if excused, can be grounds for suspension or dismissal. Work missed during absences must be made up by the student in consultation with the class teacher. **This is especially important in the upper grades.**

Tardies

Unless accompanied by a parent or teacher's note, tardiness at any lesson is recorded. Three unexcused tardies will result in a Discipline Slip.

CARE OF SUPPLIES AND SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Personal supplies provided by the teachers must be kept at hand and in good working order at all times. If you lose or damage any item given out by the school, such as colored pencils, pens, compasses, books or eurthymy shoes, you will be asked to pay a **supply replacement fee**. If the item is available at local stores, you may be asked to replace it yourself ASAP.

Every student is responsible for the care and appropriate use of tools, books and all the materials used in the various classes and for the care and respect of the school environment and outdoor grounds.

Conscious misuse of or damage to any of the above is grounds for suspension.

TEACHER, STUDENT AND PEER RELATIONS

The hallmark of good relationships between all the members of our school community is the ability to listen to and communicate clearly with each other with respect, courtesy and awareness of each one's responsibilities.

Your teachers have a set of regulations to abide by concerning the way they speak or act with you and they are held responsible for your safety. They also work by a set of expectations and are held responsible for your good performance in school. They have their own Faculty Handbook.

On your part, you are asked to work by a set of expectations which include:

- Turn homework in on time at every class, unless you have a written excuse from home
- Be at class on time and ready to work with no need to be excused to use the bathroom or take a drink
- Remain at your seat during class, unless you are asked or given permission to leave
- Do not to eat, drink or chew gum during class

In your relationship with teachers and your peers, you are expected to:

- Respect others' property and working space: there should be no taking others' belongings without permission, and no invasion of someone else's space unless invited.
- Speak clearly and politely
- Refrain from any kind of touch that may be unwelcome, including strong pats on shoulders and friendly bumps
- Refrain from swearing or rudeness
- Refrain from calling out during class
- Pay attention to the lesson at hand
- Respond to instructions and cooperate with the teacher's requests

DRESS CODE

Warm and Dry

Wear clothing appropriate to the unique climate of our city. In cold weather, both a jacket and a lighter sweater or shirt are needed to maintain proper warmth outside or in the classroom. For both warmth and modesty, shirts and tops need to cover the midriff, i.e. chest to abdomen.

Neat and Clean

School dress is not the same as weekend or casual attire. Clothes should not be oversized or excessively tight-fitting. Hair must be worn out of the eyes. Clean clothes and hair and maintaining body hygiene are basic principles.

Pants must rise to moderate (and modest) waist level, and they may not drag on the floor or be unhemmed. Please purchase school clothes accordingly. Piercing must be confined to simple earrings at the most. Haircuts must be traditional and not “statements” involving headshaving or mixed and unusual lengths. Hair coloring is out. If anyone is uncertain about something, please ask your class teacher.

Modest and Functional

Students need to dress for participation in a wide range of school activities. In the upper grades skirts are acceptable but cannot be too short, tight, or slitted. Tank tops with thin straps or off-the-shoulder styles are not functional. Bra straps must be modestly concealed. Shoes should have non-slip soles and should be sturdy enough for vigorous outside play. Clothing or accessories that provide distractions in the classroom or become unsafe during activities are not acceptable.

Further Recommendations and Restrictions

All clothing that may be taken off during the day should be labeled with your name.

Unacceptable forms of attire include:

- Advertising or slogans
- Large lettering (Waldorf sweatshirts are the one exception) or numbers
- Large brand names or insignias
- Cartoons on clothing
- Large pictures, photographs, or caricatures
- Day-glow or vibrant juxtaposed colors
- Sports attire
- Undershirts alone
- Tank tops with spaghetti straps (thinner than 2")
- Make-up, perfume, dyed hair
- Long earrings and excessive or gaudy jewelry, chains
- Overly long or baggy pants
- Bare midriffs
- Nail polish on fingers or toes

Consequences

In the upper grades, any infractions will result in a Discipline Slip. Note: The upper school teachers will clarify any “gray area” in dress code through specific case-by-case decisions.

CELL PHONE & OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

While recognizing the necessity of cell phones as a communication tool, the school must draw some limits to prevent interruptions and intrusions into our daily routine.

Students may not use cell phones or other personal electronic devices on campus, nor may they use them off-campus during school hours such as at the park or on field trips. If a student carries a cell phone in his/her belongings, it must remain turned off and tucked away until after school.

Cell phones that ring or are improperly used during school hours will be confiscated.

For student use of cell phones and personal electronic devices purposes, the campus extends to the sidewalk in front of the school. Students may ask permission from faculty or staff on dismissal duty to use their cell phone on campus for special circumstances.

The above guidelines also extend to after school sports teams walking to the gym together.

UPPER GRADES STUDY HALL

Study Hall will be held from 1:15 to 2:00 on Thursdays. At least one subject teacher will be present at the study hall. The goals of the study hall are to help students prioritize their activities, complete their work, and give them time and supervision on campus so they can be successful.

- Thursday Study Hall is for Grades 6 & 7. Grade 8 Study Hall will be arranged by teachers and students at a mutually agreeable time.
- Before recommending study hall for a particular student, the subject teacher will speak with the class teacher and the parents.
- When it is decided that study hall is an appropriate recommendation for a student, the teacher requiring the study hall will inform the student and the parent, as well as the athletic director.
- If the student does not complete an assigned study hall, and the work is still not complete by the date required, the subject teacher will contact the parent, and in consultation with the athletic director possibly make a recommendation that athletics participation be suspended until assignments are completed.

Each subject teacher will staff the study hall on a rotating basis; the teacher assigning a student to study hall should also be available to supervise on that day.

UPPER GRADES DISCIPLINE POLICY

Discipline Slips and Detention

If you receive a Discipline Slip, it must be signed by your parent and returned to the class teacher the **next** school day. Should you receive three (3) slips, you will be expected to report for Detention on the Friday of the week that you received your third slip.

Detention will be held from 3:30 to 5:00pm every Friday.

If you are scheduled for Detention due to having received three slips, you are responsible for finding the detention room and arriving on time. Be prepared to remain until 5:00pm. Only an excused absence from school on the Detention day will serve as an excuse from Detention, and you will be expected to appear the following week. If you do not come to a scheduled Detention, you will be given two more Detentions. When you accumulate three Detentions, teachers and parents will have to meet to decide whether a disciplinary suspension should be the next step.

Do not ask for special consideration if you must serve a Detention, no matter what activity, lesson or appointment needs to be cancelled. Sacrifices probably need to be made only once before you realize how critical your cooperation in class and with homework really is.

We sincerely hope that Detention need not be resorted to too often. These are the same expectations for classroom behavior that you are already familiar with.

In Short:

- Three slips = Detention on Friday.
- Parents must sign all slips so they will know when a Detention is due.
- No one will be excused from a scheduled Detention.
- Three Detentions will necessitate a meeting to discuss disciplinary suspension.

Suspension and Expulsion

Parents are informed immediately upon serious behavior problems or incidents. A student may be suspended from the school if a serious problem arises. Any student suspended during the school day must be picked up by the parents as soon as possible. Causes for suspension may include:

- Chronic tardiness
- Chronic absenteeism
- Vandalism
- Leaving the school grounds without permission
- Disrespectful or disruptive behavior
- Foul language
- Substance abuse
- Fighting
- Bullying or abusive behavior

You may be expelled from school if any of the above behaviors continue. In the event of a single severe infraction, expulsion will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Weapons Policy: A student found with a weapon at school will be automatically suspended for one day. A second violation: The student is expelled.

MOVEMENT EDUCATION EQUIPMENT NEEDS AND GUIDELINES

For a comfortable movement education experience, you need the following:

Plain t-shirt and gym shorts of any simple style and color. No denim shorts or “slackers” please. T-shirts should be long enough to tuck in, and even longer to cover the “bottom” if you are wearing bicycle shorts.

Sweatshirt and sweatpants. These are very necessary for our very cool and windy days. Again, plain colors and no logos, please.

Athletic shoes and socks. These can be running shoes or cross trainers and must have laces (an extra pair of laces would be good, too). As we will be running on the city streets and sidewalks, properly built athletic shoes are very important!

Appropriate underwear. Girls, please consider a good sports bra, and boys should consider if you need a jock support. Undergarments made specifically for physical activity will make a big difference in your comfort and enthusiasm during active movement.

Long hair on boys and girls that fall into the face will need to be held off the face with a hair band, hair clip, tie, scrunchie, bobby pins, etc.

Please also note:

Students must be dressed and ready at the beginning of class time.

Jewelry must be removed before class. No watches, necklaces, long earrings, sharp rings, etc during class for everyone’s safety.

All Students: On the first day of movement class, you should bring your gym clothing.

Getting excused from movement classes: If you are recovering from an illness or injury, or just not feeling well, you must obtain a written note from your parent in order to be excused from gym class. You may also request a light day of activity, if needed. Otherwise, you are all expected to participate fully in each class.

For more serious illnesses or conditions, please let your movement teacher know about them! Perhaps a talk with your parents is in order. A phone call from your parent to the teacher via the school office or a note to your teacher from your parent is sufficient. Your teacher will be happy to confer with pediatricians, orthopedists, and/or chiropractors whenever appropriate.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Students are expected to bring and properly stow their instruments on days that they have orchestra classes or private lessons. Instruments must be taken home at night. Exceptions to this policy must be arranged with the music teacher. Failure to bring an instrument to orchestra class may result in a discipline slip in grades 6-8.

Thank you all for your cooperation!

THE UPPER GRADES HANDBOOK

Beginning in sixth grade, the students are considered capable of a degree of independence and understanding that enables them to take full responsibility in their commitment to the school and its workings.

As in many adult communities, the members are asked to consciously endorse the rules that underlie a harmonious life together and to agree to a way of remediation should these rules be broken.

Most of the guidelines in the Student Handbook have been common practice for you since your first coming to San Francisco Waldorf School, when teachers and parents took responsibility for you to learn and follow them.

Now you are asked to share this responsibility in full as a sign of your very own desire and commitment to be a fruitful member of this school community.

The booklet's guidelines are divided into the following sections:

- Attendance and Promptness
- Care of Supplies and School Environment
- Student-Teacher and Peer Relations
- Dress Code
- Cell Phone Etiquette
- Upper Grades Discipline Policy
- Physical Movement Equipment Needs and Guidelines
- Musical Instruments

Read carefully through the booklet and discuss with your parents and teachers any points for clarification. Then sign on the space provided below to indicate your commitment to these guidelines.

Enjoy the upper grades!

Student _____ **Date** _____

Parent _____ **Date** _____

This signed copy shall remain in the classroom after review by parents and students.

This handbook is available online for reference at <http://www.sfwaldorf.org/news/>