



August 2018

Dear High School Parents & Guardians,

We hope that you have been enjoying a summer pace and finding time for family, friends and fun. I joined over 400 Waldorf teachers and administrators at the AWSNA conference in Washington D.C in June to participate in focus group sessions, hear keynote speakers and experience artistic workshops around the theme of *Social Justice: Exploring Place, Race, Class and Gender in Waldorf Education*. I was particularly inspired by my workshop on incorporating social justice curriculum into math and history classes.

We look forward to welcoming both new and returning families for the 2018-2019 academic year. With plans continuing for our new Center for Athletics & Community, we are preparing ourselves—and want to prepare you—for a year of transition. We do not know all the details of how construction will impact campus and student life, but we do know it will require flexibility from all of us!

This will be the year to take advantage of public transportation. Once we start construction, you will not be able to pull over on West Portal Ave after 15th street or pull into our parking lot. Our official drop-off and loading zone will be on 19th Avenue and Sloat in front of the Scottish Rite Masonic center. If you are driving, this may mean slightly changing your route to school in the morning. There will be no on campus parking for students or faculty/staff during construction.

We also anticipate a revised off-campus lunch policy for students. Once we see how construction is impacting us, we will be touch with details. Seniors will still offer lunch for sale on Mondays, and all grades will stay on campus for this day. We just took down the fence between the 460 West Portal house next door and will begin using this additional space next year, inside for offices and outside for student life.

Faculty Updates

As you know, Nick Wong and Caroline Alba will not be returning to teaching next year and are off on a new adventure with a move to the North Bay. We celebrate their long and full Waldorf teaching careers and are grateful for the many years that they spent at the high school. We are pleased to introduce **Tal Honig** as our new Chemistry teacher. Tal is a recent graduate of the Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training, and we first met her when she did her practicum training with Dr. Carini. She holds a BS in Physics and Chemistry from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel, where she was born, and an MS in Chemistry from the Weizmann Institute of Science. Her PhD work, also at the Weizmann Institute, was in the Department of Physical Chemistry, focusing on kinetic processes in red blood cells. While still in Israel, she taught science and math at an Israeli-Arab high school.

We are also pleased to welcome **Gil Griffin** to the Humanities department. He holds a BA in History, African and Asian emphasis, from Brown University and MS in Journalism from Columbia University School of Journalism. After a distinguished, full-time journalism career, he has been teaching journalism, writing and humanities at the graduate, undergraduate and high school levels. He recently published his first book, *Jumping At the Chance*, about the first American-born-and-bred athlete ever to play professional Australian Rules Football.

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Gil is a sports enthusiastic, a world traveler, a rescue level scuba diver and also speaks Spanish and Tagalog. He will be settling into San Francisco this month, after a move from Southern California. Gil will teach two cultural studies main lesson blocks, 9th and 10th grade humanities, and join the 9th grade as a class sponsor. We are excited to welcome his passion and expertise to our community.

At the end of last year, we thanked Lauren Rudsten for her many years of excellent guidance and outreach, and wished her well in her retirement. Many of you and the students have already met our new College Counselor, **Diana Wuerthner**, who was on campus for the last month of school mentoring with Lauren. Diana holds a BA and MA in US History from San Francisco State University and a Masters of Library and Information Science from San Jose State University, where her primary academic focus was legal and constitutional history. She is already a dedicated member of the school community as faculty, member of the Multicultural Council and a Waldorf parent of two (7th grade and nursery). She had a busy summer of campus visits and conferences, including the Western Association of College Admissions fair in Monterey, the AWSNA conference in D.C., and the Harvard Summer Institute on College Admissions program in Boston.

This year, our Earth Science blocks will be taught by guest teacher, **Farida Baxamusa**. Farida recently moved to the Bay Area from San Diego, where she completed an MS in Geological Studies from UCSD. She also holds an MS in Geology from St. Xavier's college in Mumbai, India. Farida worked as a research and teaching assistant at Scripps Institute of Oceanography in the field of paleomagnetism.

Charlie Wu will teach an 11th grade Algebra II class and the 12th grade Precalculus class. Charlie was raised in San Francisco, and attended Lowell High School before obtaining a BS in Chemical Engineering from Columbia University. He will be tutoring at Alexander Tutoring and teaching math for us while working towards a software/data engineering position in the future.

Enclosed in this mailing, you will find the calendar, weekly schedule and main lesson block rotation, as well as a general overview of each document. All this information (and more!) can also be found by logging onto the parent portal (MySFWS) on our website.

SFWHS 2017- 2018 Overview Calendar

The days marked in purple on this calendar are holidays (no school), green are community engagement days (no school but organized community work), and blue are required school days with an alternative schedule or event. Main Lesson start and end dates are marked in green and red lines respectively. **Please get in the habit of referring to the online version of this calendar** during the year for the most up to date information, as changes do occur!

Main Lesson Block Rotation 2017-2018

Main lesson, from 8:15am-10am every morning, is a period of focused, intensive study and is one of the foundations of Waldorf education. There are 9 blocks for every grade each year—4 humanities, 4 science and 1 math. This document gives you an overview of the main lesson block schedule. Between every two blocks, we have

one day of no classes, which is used as a grading day for teachers and a community service day for students. Blocks usually begin on Monday and end on a Friday but because of events, holidays and an effort to keep the number of days in each block as even as possible, there are several mid-week block transitions. **We highly recommend that you mark these block start and end dates on a calendar**, just as we work with students to record them on their school planners at the beginning of school. This will help you to anticipate teacher and work load transitions and give you a framework for regularly checking in with your teen.

SFWHS Weekly Class Schedule

The rest of the day after main lessons is divided into different periods each day. Just as we are committed to establishing a healthy rhythm in our lessons, we maintain a healthy daily and weekly rhythm for our students. Year long track classes (humanities, math, language) meet 3 times a week and art, music and PE meet 2 times a week. Students have a 15 minute break every day from 10:00-10:15 and ample lunch periods, which are breathing out and social time. Lunches are also opportunities for clubs to meet, and those meeting schedules will be established in the beginning of the year after our “club sign up” day. Teachers are often available and working with students at lunches, both inside and outside the classroom. Please note that Tuesday ends with a “class meeting/advisor meeting” time. **Your student may be dismissed anytime between 2:45-3:15 on Tuesdays**, depending on the amount of class business for the day or time spent checking in with teachers.

A Word About Communication

We use email for most communication from the administration and faculty, including for evaluations/grades, teacher letters of concern (TLCs), and general weekly news. Each week parents and students will receive the Weekly Bulletin from the office. If you are not receiving emails on a weekly basis, please notify the office so that we can help resolve the problem! Reading the Weekly Bulletin is an important part of engagement in the school community and the best way to be informed of meetings, fun community news, events and general announcements. And please do not hesitate to just pick up the phone and call us if you have a question. The front desk (415-431-2736) can always direct your question to the right place.

Attendance

Attendance and participation are a critical component of student success at our high school. While we recognize that extenuating circumstances can arise, when a student is tardy or absent it impacts the learning experience not only of that student but also of the entire class. It is difficult to teach a class when the student constellation changes every day. On regular school days, classes begin at 8:15am Student should arrive on campus by 8:05am. **Please help us and your student by scheduling appointments after school hours or during one of our many vacations or school breaks.**

Once again, please be aware of those “blue” days on the calendar, which are important parts of our curriculum and where attendance is required. These include: Walkathon, Winter Concert and Project Week, as well as class trips. In addition, junior families play a supporting role for graduation and are asked to attend the class of 2019 graduation ceremony on June 8th, so please plan accordingly.

High School Welcome BBQ

All students, siblings, friends and family are invited to kick off the year with faculty and staff at the **High School Welcome BBQ on Saturday, August 18 from 1:00-3:00pm on campus at the high school.** This is a fun and informal gathering; stop by for a quick bite or stay and visit all afternoon. This event is sponsored by the Parent Council Committee.

High School Orientation Week: Monday, August 20 – Friday, August 24

9th Grade: Orientation Week (intro main lessons, service work, Friday field trip)

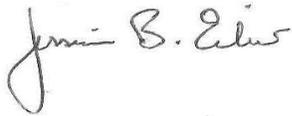
10th Grade: Art Week (forge, clay, bookbinding, poetry)

11th Grade: Astronomy Trip (Mt. Lassen)

12th Grade: Senior Seminar (Symptomatology, guest visitors, college applications)

School begins at 9am on Monday, August 20, where we will officially welcome our incoming 9th graders, with our Convocation Assembly. The first day of regular main lesson and classes is Monday, August 27. **You will receive separate class emails with more details about Orientation Week later this week.**

Please let us know you if have any questions or concerns. On behalf of the entire faculty and staff, we wish you and your student a joyful and inspiring continuation of the summer!



Jessica Eicher
High School Chair

Encl: 2018-2019 Calendar
Weekly Schedule & Main Lesson Block Rotation
Parent Engagement