



THE GARLAND SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK 2012-2013



PO Box 2426, West Brattleboro, VT 05303
802.254.6470 / garlandchild@aol.com
www.thegarlandschool.com



THE GARLAND SCHOOL

*Dear Parents and Friends,
We are very pleased to welcome you and your child to The Garland School. This handbook gives some basic information to get you started, and to help prepare your family for this transition. If you have additional questions about our program or your child's needs, please feel free get in touch with your child's teacher. We look forward to our time together.*

Yours in warmth and joyful anticipation,

The Early Childhood Faculty and Staff

<i>Willow Nilsen</i>	<i>(Director, Kindergarten Teacher)</i>	<i>603-313-7964</i>
<i>Alexandra Keep</i>	<i>(Nursery Teacher)</i>	<i>413.695.1347</i>
<i>Ian Proctor</i>	<i>(Cook and Assistant Teacher)</i>	<i>802-380-3807</i>
<i>Annie Woodward</i>	<i>(Aftercare/Assistant Teacher)</i>	<i>720-935-9982</i>
<i>Stephanie Keep</i>	<i>(Administrator)</i>	<i>802.254.4711</i>

Our School

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to nurture the innate development of the young child within our nature-based preschool. Using the guidance of Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf Education, Biodynamic Gardening, and Anthroposophy, we emphasize free play within a rhythmic structure to provide a sense of purpose, predictability, and peace. As a developing community, we work to engage our hearts, hands, and minds in meaningful work. We are a non-profit, non-denominational organization. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sex, income, marital status, or sexual orientation.

Faculty

The Faculty of the school consists of a Kindergarten teacher, Nursery teacher, Cook/Teacher Assistant, Teacher Assistant, plus a part-time administrator and administrative assistant. The faculty meets Thursday afternoons to study the educational works of Rudolf Steiner and others, to discuss the children and their progress through the curriculum as well as upcoming festivals or other particular calendar events. A part of each meeting is also given over to administrative work. All full-time and part-time teachers belong to the College of Teachers who take part in specific administrative functions of the school. The whole faculty develops and implements policies in areas of concern/need/interest. In this way all teachers play an active part in running the school. Specific areas of concern are as follows:

1. Pedagogical - works on issues concerning the curriculum, festivals, faculty development and study
2. Building and Safety - oversees the use and appearance of our facilities and ensures that school safety policies are being followed
3. Community Relations - arranges for and oversees enrollment outreach activities like open houses, publications like this handbook, faculty professional days, parent-teacher relations and workshops on Waldorf education.

Waldorf Education

Rudolf Steiner, an Austrian born philosopher and natural scientist (1864-1924), founded the first Waldorf School in Germany in 1919. His intention was to found a school movement to renew the art of education so that modern children could develop the full range of their capacities and become free, self-reliant individuals capable of contributing fresh insights and cultural initiatives to the world. A school is itself a cultural initiative. Steiner organized the first Waldorf School with people who believed, as he did, teaching should be free from interference by the state. Steiner and his supporters considered this right to be a governing principle for any school. Therefore, the Garland School is an independent, faculty-run school that is supported by a Board of Directors.

Early Childhood Program Overview

The Nursery and Kindergarten provide a time of quiet and joyful transition from early childhood to grade school. In a warm, home-like atmosphere, the child's inherent abilities can unfold with an education of painting, storytelling, music, poetry, handcrafts, walks, gardening, baking, and free play. Waldorf education consciously builds a strong foundation during these years for later intellectual growth, but avoids the actual teaching of academic subjects in early childhood. We seek to nurture healthy and eager children who are prepared for their journey of academic and artistic learning through their grade school years. At the Garland School we believe that the experience of rich, imaginative play in early childhood guides children toward becoming free, creative thinkers and decision makers through the remainder of their lives. The Waldorf early childhood curriculum guides the young child through these avenues:

- The teachers are role models who engage in wholesome activities and work. Through **IMITATION**, children develop gross and fine motor skills, a sound basis for self-confidence, and trust in the world.
- A sense of **WONDER** is cultivated through activities in nature and the celebration of seasonal festivals.
- **IMAGINATION** in play, dramatization, and pictorial artistic work is developed as the first step of a cognitive process that is furthered through the academic work of the grade school.
- Daily, weekly and yearly **RHYTHMS** are cultivated in the Early Childhood classrooms. Rhythm gives children security by allowing them to know what is coming next each day. Within the morning, there is a rhythm of activities that balances structured and unstructured time. This rhythm is only interrupted by special birthday celebration days. The children know the days of the week as baking day, painting day, soup-making day, millet day and puppet show day. Seasonal festivals mark the rhythm of the year.

Play Areas

The Garland School recognizes the importance of having a cohesive set of playground guidelines. The developmental differences between Nursery and Kindergarten children guide some of the distinctions. In the Waldorf Early Childhood curriculum, play provides the young children with a safe and acceptable arena in which to explore their relationship to the surrounding world with all its dragons, trolls and wonders. Children need to imagine themselves in situations where they must exhibit mighty strength, perform great deeds and battle untold dangers. This imaginary play allows them to work through their own fears and to learn from



their peers. Imaginary play also allows children to model the healthy images provided by adults in our work, in circle time, and ideally, in the world to which they are exposed. We sometimes see the unhealthy images also being worked through in aggressive play or pushing acceptable

boundaries. When the process of creative free play is available to children they are greatly assisted in their development.

Activities that support our curriculum include:

- Free or imaginative play, including dressing up, playing house, constructing play structures, role playing, making believe, etc. with natural materials. One of the premises of the Waldorf approach is that child's play is the most important part of the morning. It is their work. Through play, they learn about sharing, risk taking, and resolving conflict. They also develop language skills, problem solving abilities.
- Outdoor play contributes to the child's overall health and development. In today's busy world, children have fewer opportunities to move around outside. Children are transported everywhere, so there are fewer opportunities to move their bodies and take "risks". Children this age like physical and social challenges, according to their ability. Succeeding at challenges helps build their self-confidence and self-esteem. Children need to be aware of space and their bodies in space. Later, this ability will help them succeed with classroom behavior and academics. Children in the Early Childhood program spend a large part of each day outside unless the weather is very inclement. If a child is dressed properly, he or she can play outside in all kinds of weather.
- Sewing, soft crafts
- Drawing and painting in watercolor
- Modeling in beeswax
- Singing games and finger plays
- Baking
- Story time and puppet shows
- Clean up and snack
- Gardening



Birthdays

Birthdays are very special celebrations in the Early Childhood classrooms. Your teacher will provide more detail information as the time gets closer to your child's birthday.

School Festivals

The seasonal festivals that are celebrated are on the school calendar. Parents are invited to many of the festivals, while others will be just for the children. You will receive more information on festivals from your child's teacher.



Practical Matters: School Day

Arriving Each Day

The morning starts promptly at 8:30 a.m. and the teachers are ready to accept the children in the play yard at this time. Please be sure your child arrives on time each morning. If your child is late, it is more difficult for him/her to enter into the group in the best possible way. When you bring your child to school please say your final goodbye by 8:45. We will be aware of receiving each child to ease the transition. It is easier for the children to have fewer adults in their space as they start their day at school, so morning arrival time is not a good time to speak at length with the teacher. The teachers are always willing to arrange another time to talk.

Dismissal

The Early Childhood morning program ends at 12:30 and our extended day ends at 3:30. The children will be dismissed in the play yard. If different pick-up or carpool arrangements are made, it is important that we be informed. Please inform the teacher directly. Please be on time for 12:30pm pick-up, as the teachers will soon focus on the full-day children as they ready for naptime.

Late Pick-Up Policy

Our late pick-up policy is as follows: The first five minutes are free of charge after the regularly scheduled pick-up times of 12:30, 3:30 or 5:00. Every minute after the initial five minutes of lateness there will be a one dollar charge for **each additional minute of lateness**. The time will be noted on our late pickup checklist and families will be billed accordingly. We understand that lateness happens from time to time but for the consideration of the teachers, please adhere to the pick-up times.

Sunrise (Before Care) and Sunset (After Care) Programs

Care for your child is available before and after school as part of our Sunrise and Sunset programs. The Sunrise program is based on community need and can provide care from 7:30 a.m. until the beginning of school at 8:30 and the Sunset program provides care from 3:30 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Registration is required for regular attendance in these programs. For rates please refer to the Before and After care policy included in the Enrollment packet.



Snacks and Lunches

Food is one of the best ways we have to direct the health, behavior and moods of our young children. Accordingly, the Garland School serves healthy, organic snacks and lunch each day, as healthy food is part of the curriculum itself. Lunch and Snack are shared at our table with a blessing and good table manners. A sample of the weekly menu can be viewed in the classroom. **Please notify your child's teacher as soon as possible of any food allergies.**

Nap and Rest Time

Children are invited to nap and rest at 1:00 pm. We provide bedding, bed and pillow. If your child has a special animal or friend, you may send it along for naptime.

Diapering

Diaper changes are a nice, quiet time between child and teacher. It allows for uninterrupted one to one time. The child often looks forward to his or her diaper changing experience each day for this reason. It makes it easy and fun for the teacher as well if these items are available. Please check your child's diaper and wipe supply periodically so that you may replace items when necessary. If your child is in diapers please bring in your preferred brand of the following items:

- One package of diapers, labeled with child's name. If cloth diapers are used, please bring in enough diapers to last the school week.
- A box or package of wipes labeled with your child's name on the outside of the box or package. If cloth wipes are used please bring in enough for the school week.
- A tube of diaper cream, labeled with your child's name, to be left at school and be used if needed.



Clothing and Supplies

We spend a good deal of time outdoors. **CLEARLY LABEL ALL** outerwear and extra clothes garments with your child's initials (even hats, socks, and underwear). An indelible marker is perfect for the job. We provide clothes bag for extra clothes for you to bring in the first day of school.

- We require an indoor pair of shoes. Indoor shoes help mark the outside/inside transition; keep mud out, and toes safe and warm. These can be any simple, soft-soled shoes (no media images or flashing lights). Make sure they are not slippery on the bottom, comfy and are easy for your child to change into. No ties on indoor shoes, please. Shoes that fall off inhibit the child's movement as well as compromise their safety. For this reason no flip flops, clogs, dress shoes or backless shoes please.
- Please send a **labeled change of seasonably appropriate clothing. Bags are provided by the school to store the items. We ask that each bag contains: indoor shoes, 2 pairs of pants, 2 underwear, 2 pairs of socks, 2 shirts and a sweater (when seasonably appropriate.)**
- No media themes on clothing please. What the child wears will influence his/her mood and play. They need simple, practical clothing that does not interfere with climbing and running.
- Rain boots, jacket and rain pants are essential and must be brought each day during seasons it rains as mud is an irresistible play medium. During the rainy months please add into your child's clothes bag an extra pair of rain pants plus an extra raincoat.
- Cold weather requirements include waterproof snow pants, snow boots, scarf, hat and mittens. Added extras in their clothes bag for this time of year should include an extra pair of mittens and extra hat.



When the weather is cold we ask that each child come to school with 3 layers on the top and two layers on the bottom. It is better to have several layers that can come off rather than not enough. **MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE CHILDREN NEED TO BE WARM.** If the young child's body is working too hard to stay warm then it is difficult for him or her to enjoy outside playtime. Since

we start the day outside please have your child dressed appropriately at drop off. We appreciate your cooperation on this topic.

Thank you in advance!

Practical Matters: Community

Parent Involvement

Parent participation in the life of the school takes many different forms and is essential to the school's success. Parent involvement often begins through participation in parent pot-lucks, book studies, and in direct support of classroom activities. Parents also take an active role in supporting the school through committees such as: fundraising, development, finance, buildings and grounds, and the newsletter.



Parent Meetings

The Early Childhood has three to four parent meetings during the school year. These are noted on the school calendar provided. These are important evenings for sharing of information and learning more about the curriculum. Specific topics and activities are chosen for each evening. Examples include rhythm, creative play, nutrition, the festivals, media and painting. Attendance is strongly encouraged as it directly regards the young child.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences are scheduled twice a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The dates are on the school calendar. A sign-up sheet will be posted before the week of conferences.

Illness

The best and really only place where your child can be properly nursed through an illness is at home. Classrooms are busy, sometimes noisy places and not the right environment for a sick child. If your child has a fever of 90°, deep cough, rash, diarrhea or any infectious condition, please call the school office before 8:30am and do not send him or her back to school until the child has been symptom free for 24 hours. If your child becomes sick at school, you will be contacted through the information you provided on the Emergency Contact sheet. Emergency information sheets are completed when you register. It is important that you keep the sheet up to date by calling the office with any changes.

Absence

Please call the office before 8:30am if, for any reason, your child is unable to attend school.

School Cancellations

The Garland school follows the Windham South East Supervisory Union (WSESU) school closures for inclement weather. If the school is closed due to inclement weather, an announcement can be heard on local radio stations or by checking the WSESU website, www.wssu.k12.vt.us An email confirming the closing will be sent no later than 7:30 a.m

Your Child's Transition to School

Separation Anxiety

As the children begin the school year, and possibly the new experience of school, some may experience difficulty with separating from parents at arrival time. Here are some suggestions:

1. Demonstrate trust in the teacher and in the decision you have made on your child's behalf. Parents may inadvertently give their children a double message. The teacher says everything is fine and safe while the parent may be supporting the child's apprehension and fear by staying too long at school. While the child is seeking comfort and feeling anxious about the parent's inevitable departure, s/he is not free to have her experience of school, playmates, and activities. Until the child receives a positive message from both parent and teacher, the child can remain confused, and the adjustment period can be prolonged. Show your child that you have confidence in his ability to be part of this new experience.
2. Make partings brief. Each child will approach goodbyes in a different way. Some seem to handle the situation fairly well, some show signs of distress and settle down shortly, and others are extremely upset with parting. Separation anxiety is actually a positive sign of the child's love for the parent and her feelings of attachment. It can vary with the child's age, ability to deal with change in general, and with stresses in life outside of school. In any case, this shift from home to school cannot occur fully without this parting. During the period of transition and adjustment, the parent may want to acknowledge and accept the child's feelings. The sadness at "losing" the parent is very real, and she should be allowed to admit these feelings. At the same time, it is important for the teacher and parent to remain positive about the situation. Show understanding and support for the child's feelings, assure her that you will return, and leave her with a hug and a confident smile. Prolonging the parting prolongs the adjustment and the accompanying crying or tantrums.

Transition to School

One of the effects of acclimating to a higher volume of peer (or social) interactions may be a social exhaustion. Parents and teachers working in concert can do much to remedy this situation. Children may need more quiet time in their afternoons at home, etc. If a child is complaining about school or struggling with transitions, parents are encouraged to speak with their child's teacher. Some children have a more difficult time with transitions. Adjusting to thirteen new playmates can be challenging for even the most outgoing young child. Many children at some point during each school year will say they do not like school or that they do not want to go to school. It is not unusual for children to express complaints about school after school breaks and during the middle of the long winter season. A discussion between parent and teacher can often provide insight into the child's experience for both parent and teacher. The Garland School appreciates parent perspectives in this area.

Behavior Challenges

Positive encouragement is always the best path in response to behavior challenges with young children. In general the Waldorf Early Childhood teacher provides guidance by modeling appropriate behavior with the children and with other adults. Positive redirection and storytelling often work in areas where modeling does not. Much of the communication between teacher and student happens publicly, in front of the other children, so they all receive the same message. In cases of "bullying", the teacher protects while working with *all* the students involved. Sometimes children just need to be held in the rocking chair for a bit of rest until they are "not tired anymore and can find their soft and gentle hands." Biting is a special challenge, as it can be seen in the younger child, and yet distressing to peers and parents. Whenever there is a child harmed we must write an incident report. With repeated biting, we will have to work together to devise an intervention that keeps other children safe. If biting is ongoing, having a parent shadow their child for the day, able to intervene and also observe the situations that are most likely to lead to biting, may be necessary. The teacher and parents may also team up to create consistency between home and school. If you have any concern about a behavior issue at school please bring it to your teacher's attention as soon as you are able so that we can resolve the issue in a timely and supportive manner.

Media

We strongly recommend that families work towards eliminating Television, videos, and computer time as much as possible in your home. We are aware that it can be hard to change, and we are happy to assist you with ideas in limiting media in your home. Children who watch television tend to have difficulty entering into imaginative play. Their play mimics TV characters, movements, and scenarios instead of arising out of the child's own creative forces. There is much research available on the detriments of media to young children. Please ask us if you would like more information or book suggestions on this topic.

Toys

Please have your child keep his or her own toys at home. This will avoid heartbreak over lost or damaged toys. Also we prefer to have children use the classroom toys that reflect our philosophy of using simple, natural materials to encourage and stimulate imaginative play. Toys that accidentally come to school will be left in your child's canvas bag. The exception to this is that parents may bring a single soft toy for rest time. The toy will remain in the rest room for the school day.

We look forward to working with your family this year!



