

family
handbook



*Waldorf-inspired K-8 education promoting the
growth of the whole child: head, heart and hands.*



winterberry
charter school



4802 Bryn Mawr Ct. Anchorage, AK 99508
asdk12.org/winterberry (907) 742-0139



MISSION

Grow the innate potential of each child.

*"Receive the children in reverence;
educate them in love and
send them forth in freedom."*

– Rudolf Steiner

Winterberry is a tuition-free, Waldorf-inspired, K-8 charter school – a fully public school, part of the Anchorage School District (ASD) and all staff are ASD employees.

Winterberry operates under a charter approved by the State of Alaska as well as the Anchorage School District, and must be renewed every ten years.

The last renewal occurred in 2018.

CONTACT INFO

School Address: 4802 Bryn Mawr Ct. Anchorage, AK 99508

Website: asdk12.org/winterberry

Front Office: Colleen Morris

(907) 742-0139 • morris_colleen@asdk12.org

Principal: Julie Pepe-Phelps

cell (907) 274-3898 • pepe_julie@asdk12.org

Staff: All Winterberry staff have the same e-mail configuration

lastname_firstname@asdk12.org

DAILY SCHEDULE

Arrival: Students are invited to arrive 8-8:15 am.

Teachers receive students at 8:15 am.

Thursday Early Release: Students are released at 12:30 pm to accommodate a staff meeting for collaborative planning, training and professional development, 1:30-4 pm.

Grades 1-8

8:15 am to 3:15 pm: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

8:15 am to 12:30 pm: Thursday

Kindergarten

8:15 am to 12:30 pm: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

8:15 am to 12:30 pm: Thursday

Winterberry Hybrid Program

11 am to 3 pm: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

(optional: 8:15-11 am, family-led main lessons in classroom)

8:15 am to 12:30 pm: Thursday

(Schedule can change with each school year.)

CALENDAR

Winterberry follows Anchorage School District's yearly calendar and occasionally diverges from ASD's calendar to accommodate a school-specific need. Parent-teacher conferences usually occur the same week as ASD's, but may happen on different weekdays. Winterberry's regularly updated calendar can be viewed online on the school's official website: asdk12.org/winterberry

CONTENTS

Family Handbook updated August, 2021

Warm Winterberry Welcome	1
School Governance	2
The Whole Child	5
Parent Involvement	10
Communication	14
Child Study	20
Discipline	20
The Waldorf Curriculum	23
Specialty Classes	28
Winterberry Hybrid Program	30
Special Education	31
Extracurricular Activities	32
Eighth Grade Trip	33
Seasonal Celebrations: Festivals and Seasonal Events	35
Student Achievement and Assessment	39
Reporting Student Progress: Assessment Methods and Tools	40
Daily Transportation	42
Day to Day	44
Health and Safety	47
Resources	49

WARM WINTERBERRY WELCOME

The faculty and staff of Winterberry Charter School welcome you and your children. Your sincere involvement in your student's education is key to deepening and enriching their experience. This handbook provides practical information and clarifies our school's protocols, organization, policies and procedures.

We invite you to grow your personal connection to the school as we journey together inspired by the educational pedagogy of Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf education.

Winterberry is committed to teaching the whole child in partnership with parents, teachers, administrators and students. If you have any questions, please call our front office (907) 742-0139.

Our Focus

- Build capacities (academic, social-emotional and will).
- Follow natural child development phases, including emotional, physical and cognitive dimensions.
- Encourage self awareness and social competence.
- Develop healthy relationships and strong communication practice.
- View school as a learning community.

We prepare our students to:

- Know themselves and navigate confidently in a social environment.
- Be flexible and resilient, remain curious and adaptable.
- Recognize the value in all persons and in the natural world.
- Treat themselves and others with respect and kindness.
- Move physically, with strength, coordination and confidence.
- Use their minds in imaginative, innovative and creative ways.
- Solve problems and explain their process.

Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.

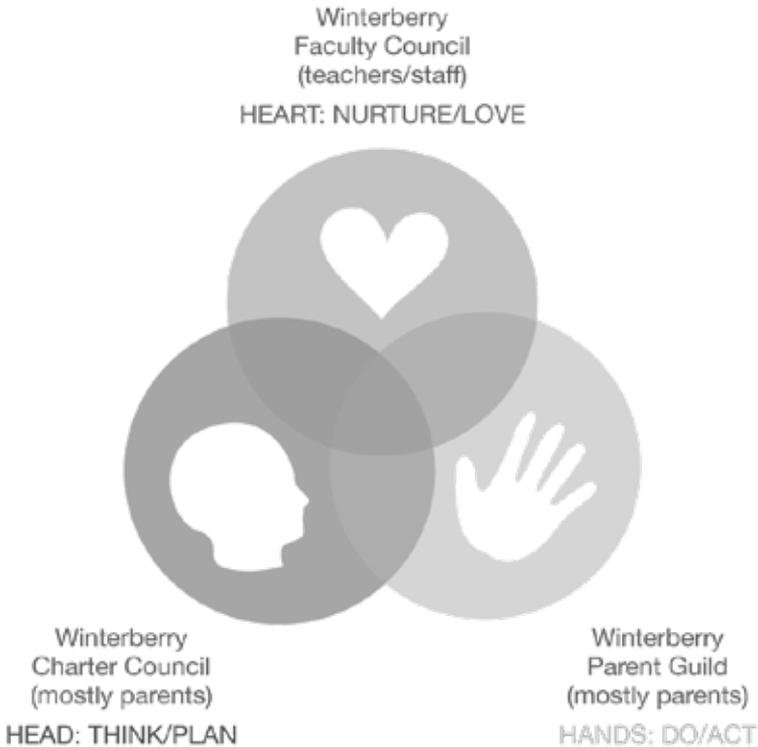
– Rudolf Steiner

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The successful functioning of Winterberry depends on the cooperative efforts of three vital groups: the Winterberry Charter Council (WCC), Winterberry Faculty Council (WFC) and the Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG).

Decision Making, Consensus Model

Winterberry strives to honor a three-body decision making process, when appropriate. The Winterberry Faculty Council, the Winterberry Parent Guild and the Winterberry Charter Council seek consensus through a robust review of major schoolwide issues. Each group has a voice in the process.



Winterberry Charter Council (WCC)

People: Winterberry is governed by an Academic Policy Committee known as the Winterberry Charter Council (WCC), consisting of up to 13 members (up to 10 parents, up to two staff members, and a community member).

A voting liaison member attends the Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG) to offer a report and share important information linking the two parent-run bodies.

Purpose: This Academic Policy Committee employs and manages a Principal/Administrator who, in turn, manages the faculty/staff and the day-to-day operations of the school. The Principal/Administrator meets with the WCC chair regularly and reports at the monthly meetings.

Meetings: 6 pm, third Thursdays, at school and/or via remote conference. Everyone in the school community is encouraged to attend as often as possible. Agendas are posted online and in the school foyer in advance of the meetings. Past minutes are available on the ASD website.

Winterberry Faculty Council (WFC)

People: Consists of the school's teachers, classroom support and administrative staff. Attendance of these weekly meetings are part of each staff member's workload.

Purpose: Collectively, the WFC is responsible for pedagogical issues and decisions. Faculty apply their expertise to schoolwide issues and help ensure that Winterberry's decision-making process truly supports Waldorf-inspired education. The WFC also leads many of the school festivals to ensure that these events meet their educational purposes.

Meetings: 1:30-4 pm, every Thursday at school and/or via remote conference. Open to all staff and occasionally to guests with prior arrangement. In consideration of student privacy, staff meetings are internal. Any staff member can bring items to these meetings. To request attendance, contact the Principal or the current Faculty Chair.

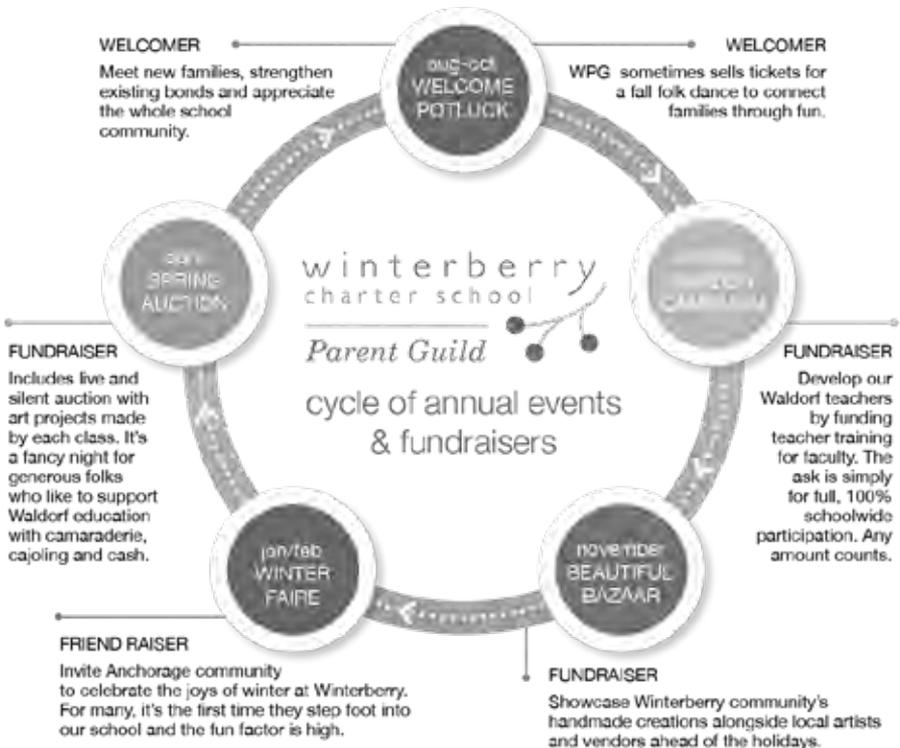
Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG)

People: The Guild consists of parents/family members of students – one class representative per class, one faculty member and six officers. Each primary representative is supported by an alternate, who fills in, attend meetings and vote in the absence of the primary rep. A voting liaison member attends the WCC to offer a report and share important information linking the two parent-run bodies.

Purpose: Support the school and its teachers for the betterment of our students. The Guild shapes the culture of the school, conducts fundraisers and volunteers to support the school’s programs. The WPG is a separate, not-for-profit incorporated 501c3 entity that coordinates activities with the WCC and the Faculty Council to complement the school’s mission.

Meetings: 6 pm, first Thursdays, at school and/or via remote conference. Everyone in the school community is encouraged to attend as often as desired.

winterberryparentguild.org



THE WHOLE CHILD

As a community of faculty, staff, parents, families and students, we are all committed to promoting safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments.

10 Needs for a Healthy Childhood and Educational Experience

Proper Nutrition: A good, hot, nutritious breakfast every day before school. Breakfast, snack, and lunch should contain lots of protein, and limit sugar and food additives.

Adequate Sleep: Consider 8 pm bedtime on school nights. Most young children needs 10-12 hours of sleep per night.

Minimal Media: Minimize screen time and media influence. Maximize direct, real-life experiences in the physical world. Unstructured playtime is more valuable for a young child's developing brain than electronic media.

Quiet Time: Provide some daily quiet time without the stimulus of noise. Give your child the gift of silence.

Outside Time: Spend some time in nature every day. Experience the weather, pay attention to the seasons, moon, stars, and sky.

Chores at Home: Assign some age-appropriate responsibilities for taking care of the home, pets and yard.

Appropriate Gear: Keep your child warm and dry while at school, with special attention to feet, hands and heads.

Reverence: All spiritual traditions offer practices that help develop the reverence for life that supports home, school, and community relationships. If need be, create your own.

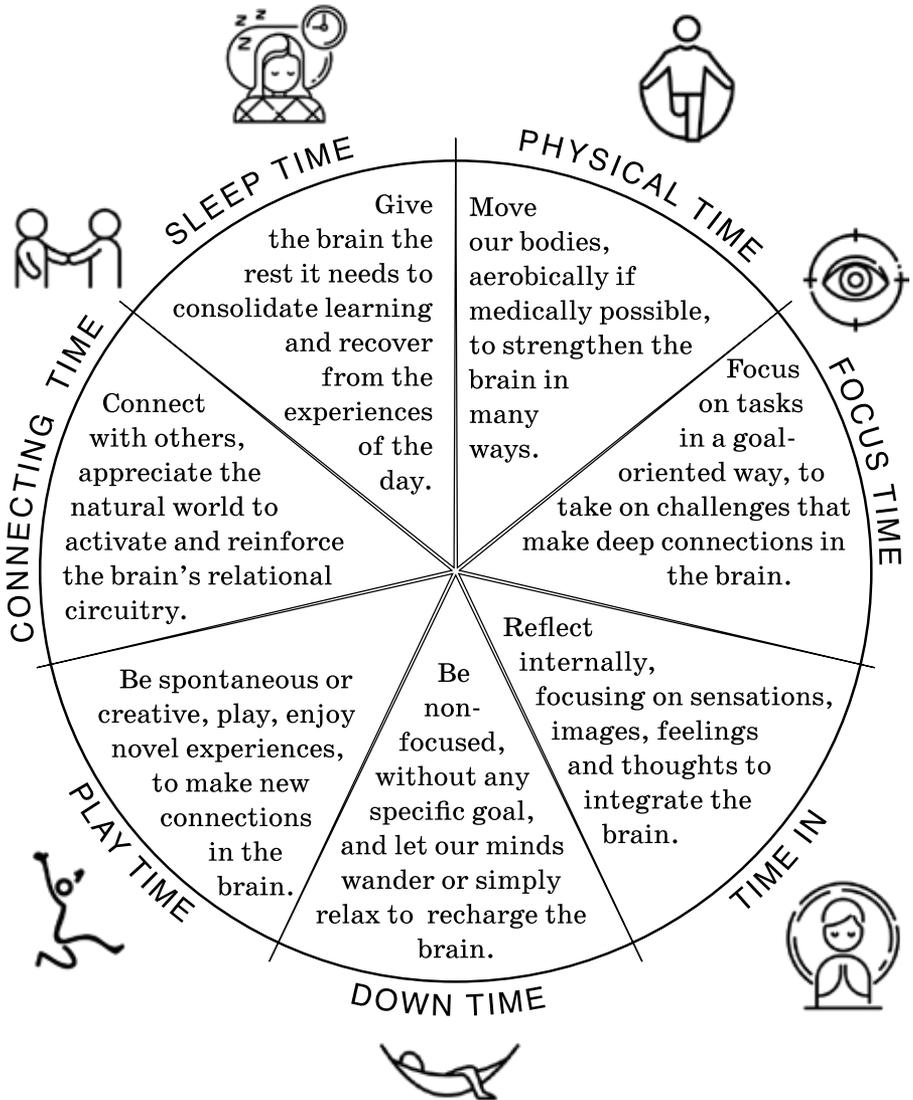
Supported Education: Help develop healthy homework habits, participate in school activities, and communicate honestly about your concerns with your child's teachers.

Supported Class Community: Get to school on time. Plan vacations during breaks. Support class agreements. Children need shared values and alignment among their adult role models.

(based on guidelines by Victoria Temple, Spiral Arts)

Healthy Mind Platter

Similar to food guidelines designed to keep our bodies healthy, Dr. Dan Siegel's Healthy Mind Platter is a great reminder of the simple things adults and children need each day to stay mentally healthy. These seven daily essential activities optimize brain matter and create well-being.



Proper Nutrition

Children need nutritious food with enough vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, protein and fat to fuel their school day. When preparing food for your student's school day, store your snacks and lunch in reusable lunchboxes, bags and containers free of media designs or advertising. Consult the Mayo Clinic (Nutrition for Kids: Guidelines for a Healthy Diet) to learn more about the nutritional ratios and servings for children at different stages of physical development.

Provide Nutrient-dense Foods

Protein: Choose seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans, peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds.

Fruits: Encourage fresh fruits before processed canned, dried or frozen fruits.

Vegetables: Prepare a variety of vegetables, including dark green, red and orange, beans and peas, starchy and others.

Grains: Choose whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, quinoa, barley, brown or wild rice. Limit refined grains such as white bread, pasta and rice.

Dairy: Provide milk, yogurt, cheese or fortified soy beverages.

Fats: olives, nuts, avocado, vegetable oils, seafood-based essential fatty acids.

Limit Additives

Added sugars: Naturally occurring sugars, such as those in fruit and milk, are not added sugars. Examples of added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, honey and others. Avoid soda, juice and sports drinks. Avoid candy, fruit rolls, gummies, sweetened yogurt, cookies/desserts. (Birthday celebrations are an exception when children may share small desserts with classmates.)

Added salt: Most children in the U.S. have too much sodium in their daily diets. Encourage snacking on fruits and vegetables instead of processed foods.

Adequate Sleep

Generally, children learn best during the first part of the day. This is why we teach “Main Lesson” in the morning before recess and lunch. To support this rhythm, make healthy sleep a family priority and determine a bedtime and a routine that allows children to wake with ease and arrive at school on time.

Most grade-school children need 10-12 hours of sleep per night. And teens require more sleep, not less. Be physically active during the day and create a home environment with safe, simple, quiet bedrooms for sleep, not play. Turn off all screens at least an hour before bedtime to prevent sleep disruption and take time to wind down and give children the rest they need.

Minimal Media

It’s important for us to make time each day to engage in physical activity, connect with others, spend time in nature, focus deeply on tasks, savor down time, reflect internally, play and sleep. We’ve heard from parents who find that reducing the influence of media allows families to develop a keener interest in one another, enliven their communication, and deepen their connection to the world around them.

Winterberry is dedicated to maximizing each child’s capacity for creative imagination, independent thinking, healthy emotional development and meaningful relationships with the natural world and others around them. Childhood is an especially important time to learn all of this, and it’s learned primarily through imitation.

Our Waldorf-inspired education is rich with stories, images and play that honors the natural timelines of the developing child. Teachers believe students learn best to use screen-based electronic media after they’ve developed this strong foundation of experience. Media can then serve to supplement, not substitute, the richness of direct experience and imagination.

To ensure that this specialized education functions, we ask school families to consider limiting media and screen-based activities on school nights. This way, we can all learn together in the wholesome, holistic, Waldorf-inspired school you’ve chosen for your child.

Simplicity Parenting

Based on the work of family counselor and researcher Kim John Payne, “Simplicity Parenting” offers a guide to simplify four realms at home to reduce stress and foster connection, creativity, and relaxation. These four realms for simplifying are:

Environment: De-clutter excess stuff at home.

Rhythm: Increase predictability by introducing rhythmic moments for connection and calm.

Scheduling: Soothing schedules brings moments for “being” into all the “doing.”

Unplugging: Reduce the influence of adult concerns, media and consumerism on children and families to increase resilience, social and emotional intelligence.

Parents who simplify homes and schedules, introduce more predictable rhythms and filter out adult concerns which children are not yet able to cope with. They find that their children are calmer and happier, do better socially and emotionally, are more focused at school and find it easier to comply. These parents also find they have a clearer picture of their own values, and are more united with each other in their parenting and have more time and energy for connection, relaxation and fun.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Volunteer and Pay Supply Fee

Winterberry functions smoothly when dedicated school families volunteer their time, energy, presence, effort and services.

20 Hours: We ask each parent to give 20 hours of time/per student each year to the school.

Annual Supply Fee: \$100 per student is needed to cover the cost of high-quality supplies necessary for Waldorf-inspired learning.

Please pay promptly at the start of school through the ASD website.

Parents have many opportunities to support their children's individual classes and the school as a whole. Tune in to volunteer opportunities and class material "wish lists" and teacher requests. All forms of volunteer hours count towards the number requested by the school.

Help teacher prep: Take home materials, prepare, organize and return them promptly to teachers for class activities. Chaperone field trips. Assist in the classroom. Contribute to work parties. Recruit and volunteer during festivals or fundraisers.

Serve as a member of the Winterberry Parent Guild, the Winterberry Charter Council. (See page 3-4 for details.)

Serve as a Classroom Coordinator

Serving a class as the Classroom Coordinator is a rewarding way to achieve volunteer hours while building relationships with families in your child's class. If interested, talk to your child's classroom teacher. Duties include:

Create a Directory: Collect contact information to serve as a resource for families to coordinate in-school efforts as well as play dates and other after-school activities.

Recruit Volunteers: Call on folks to fill a specific need. Maintain a sign-up sheets/communication to fill classroom needs.

Work at Schoolwide Events: Ensure volunteers are ready and informed of duties, and classrooms/event spaces are transformed, staffed, cleaned and returned to their normal states.

Support Schoolwide Fundraising

Winterberry's dedicated teachers devote much of their summers to multi-year professional development and Waldorf training. Contributions to annual fundraisers ensure that they're ready to provide the high-quality education students depend on every day.

All teachers must be fully trained and certified to teach in the State of Alaska. Additionally, Winterberry teachers need specialized Waldorf training to offer the "head, heart, hands," whole-person education that allows children to flourish. It's an education steeped in beauty and the natural world, reverence and storytelling, play and wonder that allows for the gentle unfolding of each child and feeds an inherent love of learning.

The Winterberry Parent Guild coordinates two main annual fundraising efforts to fund teacher training, and fund other schoolwide or classroom needs.

October: Annual Giving Campaign: GARDEN – Give Annually, Reap Dreams, Educate, Nurture

This is the only fundraiser for which volunteer time, materials or skills are not required. The ask is simply for full, 100% community participation, which can help our school receive grants. Any amount counts. Most families offer recurring contributions of \$10-20 per student, per month. Many also make a one-time donation every year anywhere between \$15-\$5,000. GARDEN lasts the full month of October.

January/February: Winter Faire

This "friendraiser" event invites Anchorage community to celebrate the joys of winter at Winterberry. For many, it's the first time they step foot into our school and the fun factor is high. Classes and the Parent Guild coordinate jump rope making, live music, puppet plays, games, craft corners, silk dyeing, story telling, journal making. Some entire classrooms are decorated to reveal magical fairy realms and gnome homes. A classroom cafe serves food and drinks to fortify friends for a full day of festivities. Volunteers sell baked treats and tickets, manage coat check, game rooms and traffic flow. It's an "all hands on deck" event that warms the wintry soul.

April: Head, Heart and Hands Auction

The annual springtime Head, Heart and Hands auction often raises the most funds. Parents, teachers, staff and students all participate by gathering donations from local businesses in the form of merchandise or gift certificates. Enticing items, experiences and coveted class-created art is sold via live auction. More items are sold through on-site silent auctions. Volunteers organize ambiance, food menu, setup, procurement, web-based auction management, copious event support details and cleanup. It's a good night for babysitters and a great night for generous folks who like to support Waldorf education with camaraderie cajoling and cash.

Grade 5-8: Eighth Grade Trip

In Grade 5, classes begin fundraising for their Eighth Grade Trip. Every student is encouraged to participate with their class. Fundraising ideas should be discussed with and approved by the class teacher to ensure they reflect the values of Winterberry and don't replicate other fundraising efforts. The trip is funded in the following order:

- Fund the classroom teacher and necessary chaperones.

- Provide travel scholarships to families who need and qualify for assistance.

- Fund additional activities on the student trip or offset individual family costs.

Class Accounts

Each class from Grade 5 through Grade 8 has a parent class treasurer. The class's teacher and the treasurer are responsible for all incoming and outgoing funds. The account balance will be noted at parent meetings. The class teacher and treasurer will report the results of class fundraising events, through newsletters and email to families in a timely manner. The Winterberry Parent Guild holds class funds in its account.

(For more info about the Eighth Grade Trip, see page 33.)

Ongoing: Fundraisers

Give while you shop to earn money for our school.

“Winterberry Parent Guild” is enrolled in these participating corporate services.

Pick.Click.Give

This program allows Alaskans to donate a portion of the Permanent Fund Dividend to Winterberry Parent Guild when applying for the PFD online Jan. 1 to March 31. Adjust pledges online through August 31.

pfd.alaska.gov.pickclickgive.org

Fred Meyer Community Rewards

This program makes fundraising easy by donating to local organizations based on the shopping you do every day. Link your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Winterberry Parent Guild, and use it when you shop.

fredmeyer.com/communityrewards

Box Tops for Education

This redemption program shares a portion of General Mills product sales with participating schools. Download an app and scan receipts, or email receipts from online purchases, or collect and submit cardboard box tops at Winterberry’s front office

boxtops4education.com

COMMUNICATION

Nonviolent Communication

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is a method of communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg often referred to as compassionate communication. It's a process of connecting compassionately and powerfully with ourselves and others from the heart.

This process involves four components: observation, feeling, needs and requests. When we fully realize that all actions, helpful or hurtful, are expressions of common essential needs, we see the humanity in every person at every moment – which is the foundation of compassion.

Disagreement may arise in any community. Such differences are an inevitable consequence of human interaction. In a majority of these situations, the people involved can resolve the issue through direct personal communication.

In our school community, complete resolution without lingering negative feelings is important for maintaining healthy relationships between the adults in our community and to ensure that adults are modeling non-violent interactions for our children.

Winterberry strives to practice nonviolent communication and conflict resolution to perpetuate a climate of collegiality and mutual trust. We aim to resolve differences in a direct, timely, objective and respectful manner that honors the dignity of everyone involved.

*"Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing,
and right-doing, there is a field.
I will meet you there."*

– Rumi

How You Can Use the NVC Process



Clearly expressing
how **I am**
without blaming
or criticizing

Empathically receiving
how **you are**
without hearing
blame or criticism

OBSERVATIONS

1. What I observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to my well-being:

“When I (see, hear) . . . ”

1. What you observe (*see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations*) that does or does not contribute to your well-being:

“When you see/hear . . . ”

(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)

FEELINGS

2. How I feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what I observe:

“I feel . . . ”

2. How you feel (*emotion or sensation rather than thought*) in relation to what you observe:

“You feel . . . ”

NEEDS

3. What I need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes my feelings:

“. . . because I need/value . . . ”

3. What you need or value (*rather than a preference, or a specific action*) that causes your feelings:

“. . . because you need/value . . . ”

Clearly requesting that
which would enrich **my**
life without demanding

Empathically receiving that
which would enrich **your** life
without hearing any demand

REQUESTS

4. The concrete actions I would like taken:

“Would you be willing to . . . ?”

4. The concrete actions you would like taken:

“Would you like . . . ?”

(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)



© Marshal B. Rosenberg
CNVC.org
nonviolentcommunication.com

Parent-Teacher Communication

Winterberry teachers value open and honest communications of needs, concerns, opinions, suggestions, questions, and comments from parents. Parents and teachers maintain a special partnership for the care and development of each child, and strong and healthy communication is critical.

Parents are the “eyes and ears” at home, just as the teachers are the “eyes and ears” at school. Teachers encourage parents to ask clarifying questions about anything from changes they see in their children to specific curriculum questions.

It is our goal to support each child in his or her individual journey through the grades, and the parent-teacher relationship is a critical part of this endeavor.

Winterberry parents are encouraged to share insights, questions and goals regarding their child’s development with teachers and staff members. Parents and teachers are requested to observe the confidentiality of these communications, and to maintain a habit of direct communication with those directly involved.

In the early morning the teachers have their attention on the children and are focused on the work of the day. It is very difficult to stop and have conversations with parents in the morning. This is also true at dismissal time.

Parents who need to speak with teachers can email, leave a message for them at the front desk, or quickly request a meeting at the beginning or end of the day. Of course, there are always exceptions, such as the need to communicate unexpected occurrences.

Throughout the year, teachers send email with information about upcoming events, supply needs, and newsletters, or to changes to dates or times of field trips. It is important to provide an email that you will check often for important information and updates.

Parent Communication Policy (adopted in 2018)

A family's journey through the years of their child's education will be filled with happiness, wonder, and excitement. It can also be filled with misunderstanding and various degrees of conflict.

We should understand these are all natural occurrences in life and the intent of this communication policy is to provide guidelines that promote a healthy form of communication between teacher, student, and parent so a positive collaborative relationship may continue between all parties involved throughout the years.

Working together, we can create a healthy communication process that promotes understanding, trust and successful problem solving.

Direct Communication: If you have a question about how the curriculum is being delivered or how your child's teacher is working with their students, **FIRST** bring your question directly to your child's teacher. They will be able to share with you the reasons behind their actions. If you feel that there are other aspects of the issue that your child's teacher should consider or be aware of, they will be open to hearing and considering this information.

Timely Communication: Many problems can be averted by speaking directly to the teacher before concerns loom out of proportion. For the overall health of our school and success of our programs, we ask that you bring issues immediately to the teacher rather than process it with others.

In-Person Presence: If possible, sensitive questions or concerns should be brought in-person. Body language and voice intonation are crucial for accurate understanding of intentions. If an in-person meeting is not easily achievable, a video conference or phone call would be the next best option. At any time, if either person feels that the conversation take a negative turn, please request a pause until the conversation can happen more directly, in person or otherwise. The follow-up meeting should occur at the earliest opportunity, realizing that it's healthier to resolve issues at the earliest chance.

Written Messages: When dispersing or clarifying information, email, texts and written messages can serve as a helpful record of communication. When bringing forward nuanced concerns or criticism, consider a phone call, video conference or in-person meeting. Nuanced conversations full of feeling benefit from the wider context of presence, voice intonation and body language. Please use emails or written messages mainly to impart instructional information or to request a phone call or personal meeting.

Group Messages: If you are tempted to originate a group email to air dissatisfaction with something, we ask that you send it to the teacher first. Group missives seldom yield the desired result and can be destructive at many levels. Even if you have an informational group email, we request that it first be sent to the class teacher, who will then see that it is distributed to the class parent body.

Respectful Inquiry: When bringing a concern to your child's teacher, please use the method of "respectful inquiry" by framing your asking open questions combined with attentive listening, rather than accusation or judgment. (Example: "My child said he got in trouble today for kicking a classmate, when it was someone else who kicked her. I wonder if you could shed some light on this for me?" Rather than, "I want to know why you got mad at my child today for kicking a classmate when it was another person who kicked her!") This approach is important for two reasons: No one likes to be accused of unfair actions before all the facts are discussed. And often, the child reporting the incident may only be reporting those facts that were personally important and perceived as truth without knowing the whole story. If your child reports anything concerning, please contact your child's teacher as soon as you are able.

Facilitated Meeting: If you have followed the above process and still feel your child's teacher has not heard you or you are unsatisfied with the response or actions, an additional meeting, to include other Winterberry faculty can be arranged. Other faculty members can assist in facilitating productive communication or provide new insights and solutions. Similarly, if your child's teacher feels that a facilitated meeting may be helpful, the teacher may request that additional faculty attend a meeting to help resolve ongoing concerns.

Administrator Meeting: If in the very rare case you feel that a facilitated meeting has still not addressed your concerns, please ask the facilitator to bring your concerns to the school Administrator. The Administrator will then take the necessary steps to address the issue. This will most assuredly include a meeting with you to hear what issues are still ongoing for you.

Class Parent Meetings

One of the unique opportunities of a Winterberry parent is the chance to attend three annual parent gatherings (one in the fall, one in the winter, one in the spring). At these gatherings, parents learn about child development, Waldorf curriculum and have a chance to meet, share refreshments, and build bonds of support that last through this school journey together. Parents get to experience some of the activities the children do during the school day as well.

It is of greatest importance to teachers that at least one adult from each family be present at each of the three parent meetings. Parent presence is a gift to the child, the class, and the school as you build our community and attend to this important time in your child's life.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled two times each year. These conferences are held to discuss the development and well-being of each child.

The teacher will present the child's work, current functioning within the classroom, and an evaluation, in addition to providing an opportunity to exchange ideas and questions. Additional conferences may be requested by the parent or teacher.

The heart of the Waldorf method is that education is an art – it must speak to the child's experience. To educate the whole child, his heart and his will must be reached, as well as the mind.

– Rudolf Steiner

CHILD STUDY

When Rudolf Steiner founded the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919, he instituted the “child study” as an essential element in the life of the school.

On a regular basis, the faculty members choose a child in the school and, with the permission of the parents, the faculty engage in a process of observation, discussion and recommendations.

Child study looks deeply at a child with the understanding that education begins with relationship, and an essential feature of relationships is clear observation.

In this process a teacher turns to his or her colleagues for valuable suggestions and collaboration. An essential feature of this art is that it takes place in a community of teachers and is enriched by the observations of the whole group.

The process of child study is flexible, but typically follows a two or three-week rhythm, depending on the nature of the child and the questions they elicit.

DISCIPLINE

The principal and the school’s staff have implemented a school-wide behavior plan that maintains Winterberry’s positive climate and culture while effectively addressing student behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment. This plan rests on the following assumptions:

Grow the Good: We seek to find what is best in a child, situation, or place and grow that, rather than simply “problem solve,” which focuses our energies on what is not working, rather than growing and expanding what is good or what is working. There is always something that is already working!

Envision the Best: We strive to hold a positive image of the child who is in need of guidance in our minds during the period that we are focusing on helping the child (days, weeks, months).

Relate: We strive to connect before we correct.

Offer Positive Options: We strive to state what we want in the positive, rather than the negative, and to be clear and direct. (“Please walk in the hall,” rather than, “Don’t run in the hall.”)

The Principal's Role

The Principal is responsible for the final decision regarding discipline. Some behaviors are considered automatic office referrals and could possibly result in suspension. We follow ASD guidelines for disciplinary action.

Automatic referrals include: intentional injury to another person, fighting, harassment and/or bullying of others, verbally abusive or offensive language, possessing weapons or replicas of weapons, alcohol, drugs and/or not reporting these possessions or other dangerous situations.

Behaviors that require an Office Referral will be entered into the child's district record as an incident and will be reported to the parents in the appropriate manner.

Possible Plans to Address Behavior Violations

Time Out: Students take a break in a designated spot within the room away from peers and are typically asked to debrief the incident and propose alternative choices for the future before returning.

Step 1: Student is asked to reflect on their actions in a designated chair located within the classroom.

Step 2: Student is asked to reflect on their actions located in a buddy room or the front office.

Call Home: The administrator, teacher, or the student will call home to describe the situation to parents. The parent and the administrator or teacher would decide upon an appropriate course of action for the day.

Conference: A meeting of concerned adults may be requested, either by the school or by the family. A plan for addressing the behavior can be agreed upon.

Suspension: In rare instances, if the behavior fall under specific ASD guidelines, or if it is deemed serious enough by the administrator, a suspension from the school or classroom may be imposed.

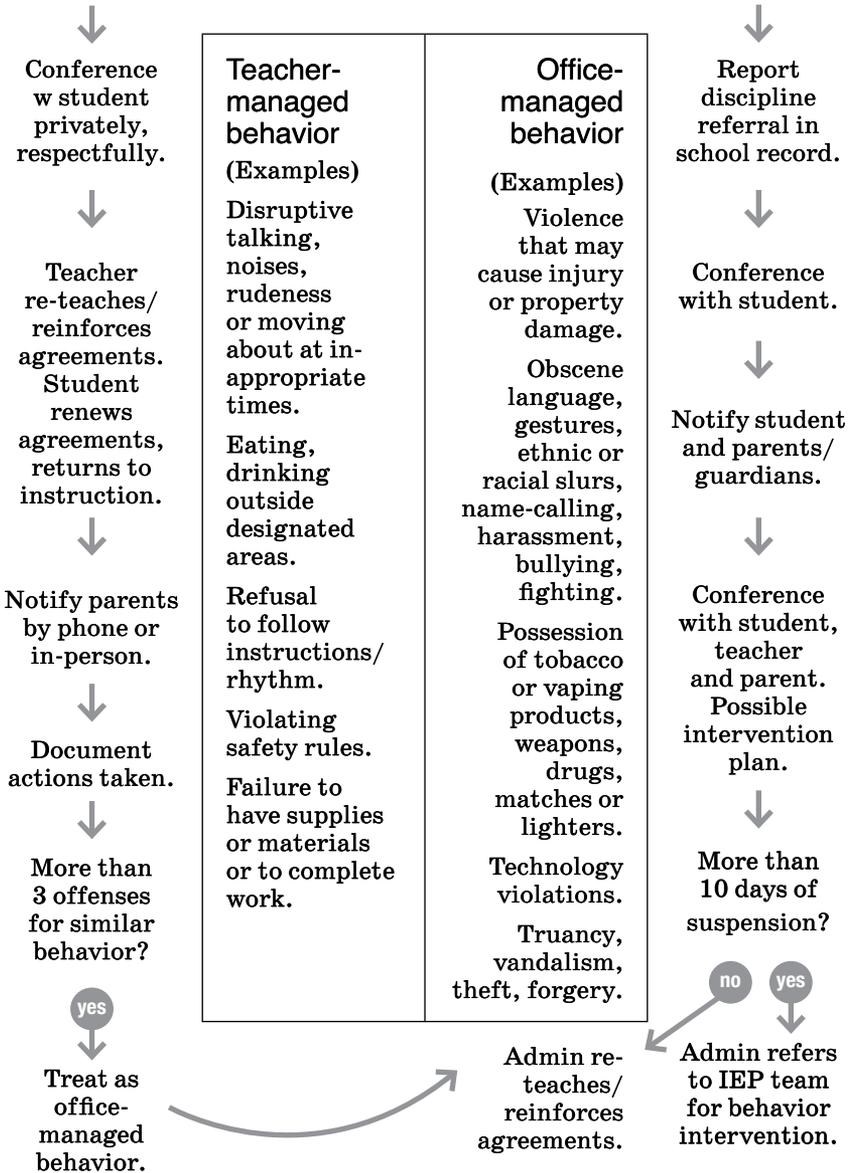
In School: Student spends half or full day in another teacher's class with work to complete.

Out of School: Student is not allowed on school grounds. Missed work may be made up based on an agreement between teacher, student, and parent.

How is Behavior Managed at Winterberry?

By a Teacher in Class

By Staff in the Office



We are aware that this process may not work for all students.
For some students, staff and parents will develop alternate

THE WALDORF CURRICULUM

Winterberry follows a Waldorf curriculum aligned with the Common Core State Standards adopted by the Anchorage School District. Please explore the Waldorf curriculum developed by Rudolf Steiner before your child begins at Winterberry. For more information, please contact your child's teacher, visit our website, consult our charter document, or inquire at the front office.

Teacher Development

Professional development is a priority for all certified teachers at Winterberry Charter School. A Waldorf teacher typically remains with the same class from Grades 1-8. In this way, the teacher is more familiar with each child's development, needs, and learning style. The children, feeling secure in this long-term relationship, are more comfortable in their learning environment.

It is the school's goal that once a teacher joins Winterberry, they begin to actively pursue a Waldorf teaching certificate that includes both foundational and curriculum content for their teaching area or upcoming grade level. The faculty are very fortunate to be strongly supported with funds raised annually by the Winterberry Parent Guild.

Since 2005, Winterberry's teachers have sought professional development, specialty training, Waldorf certification or master's degrees during their summer breaks. These credentials have been earned mainly through Antioch University, Rudolf Steiner College, Sunbridge Institute, Sebastopol Independent Charter School, as well as through professional conferences of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, and more.

As such, Winterberry's professional staff consists of a rare bounty of widely educated teachers with advanced expertise who cultivate rich classroom experiences every day.

*We should not learn to teach out of any book
other than the one lying open before us and
consisting of the children themselves.*

– Rudolf Steiner

Kindergarten

The kindergarten program is based on the conviction that the most important activity for strengthening and nurturing the young child is imitating what is meaningful and true in life.

Winterberry's kindergarten provides a warm, homelike atmosphere and an opportunity for children to learn through imitation and play. Play is a child's real work and way of learning.

The daily and weekly rhythms are carefully planned to offer a soothing, predictable pattern young children can rely on. They learn, for example, that Monday brings painting activities, Wednesday we bake bread. The daily rhythm balances fairy tales and stories, regular creative activities, sharing of tasks, and group play and outdoor exploration.

Kindergarten is the time for the child to live in his/her imagination. Children become very engaged, for instance, in creating houses from cloth, performing puppet shows and plays and building with wood. It is also the time to develop social skills with playmates and teachers. Children learn to listen, to share, to help and to respect each other.

Circle time provides time for singing games, verses and poems, nature stories, drama and beautiful seasonal songs, also play a part in the kindergarten experience. All are learned through imitation. Through the rhythm of word, music and movement, we work toward the integration of the whole being of the child, right down to fingers and toes.

Grade 1

Fairy tales, folk tales and nature stories, pictorial and phonetic introduction to letters and numerals; form drawing; reading approached through writing; qualities of numbers; introduction of the four processes (add, subtract, multiply, divide) in arithmetic and beginning multiplication tables (2, 5, 10's). Science exploration through the lens of observation/nature walks. Movement and games, handwork beginning with learning to knit. Introduction to world language and culture. Singing and beginning pentatonic flute.

Grade 2

Legends and animal fables, reading and writing. Arithmetic, times tables, place value, carrying and borrowing. Elements of grammar and cursive writing. Science exploration through the lens of observation/nature walks. Movement and games, more advanced handwork knitting projects. Continued exploration with world language and culture. Singing and pentatonic flute.

Homework in Grades K-2

Students in grades K-2 will do not have homework in the traditional sense. Instead, all Winterberry families are encouraged families to

Play, tell stories, relate and enjoy nature together.

Read together daily.

Enjoy healthy meals together whenever possible.

This “homework” builds strong family connections and foundations for happy, healthy children.

Grade 3

Study of practical life: farming, housing, clothing, reading, spelling, writing, composition, grammar, punctuation and parts of speech. Cursive writing practice. Hebrew stories. Alaska Native culture. More complexity in the four math processes; weights, measure, and money. Science exploration through the lens of observation/nature walks, gardening, movement and games, introduction to spinning wool and crochet. Continued exploration with world language and culture. Music class with singing and pentatonic flute as well as beginning recorder.

Grade 4

Norse mythology and sagas. Composition and letter writing. Local and state history, Alaska Native culture, local geography and map making. Study of the animal kingdom. Fractions. Seward SeaLife Center overnight field trip, science exploration through the lens of observation/nature walks, animal habitats, movement and games (including Native Youth Olympics: Alaska Native Games). Handwork projects include three-dimensional design and hand-sewn animals and cross-stitch. Continued exploration with world language and culture. Music class with choral singing and recorder.

Grade 5

Greek myths, ancient civilizations through Greek times. North American geography. Composition, grammar, spelling and reading. Arithmetic. Continued work with fractions and intro decimals. Botany. Greek letters and languages. Science exploration through the lens of observation/nature walks, botany study, movement and games (Pentathlon with local Waldorf schools), Handwork projects, including knitting socks, continued exploration of world language and culture. Music class with choral singing and recorder.

Grade 6

Roman and medieval history. European and South American geography. Mineralogy, physics (acoustics, electricity, magnetism, optics and heat). Composition, grammar, spelling, biographies. Business math, percents, and further work with fractions, decimals, long division, and long multiplication. Geometric drawing with instruments. Botany, astronomy and intro to Greek and Latin roots. Kachemak Bay Trip (in Grade 6 or 7). Science exploration through the lens of phenomenology. Movement and games. Handwork projects, continued exploration with world language. Music class with choral singing, musical notation and recorder. Arthurian legends, Knighting Ceremony honors threshold of adolescence.

Grade 7

Voyages of discovery. The Renaissance. Geography of Africa. Physics (mechanics), physiology, human growth and development (internal systems: cardiovascular, respiratory, digestive, nervous, lymphatic, and reproductive), astronomy and inorganic chemistry. Composition, grammar, spelling, literature. Arithmetic. Kachemak Bay Trip (if not in Grade 6), science exploration through the lens of phenomenology, nature walks. Movement and games. Handwork projects, continued exploration with world language. Music class with choral singing, musical notation and recorder.

Grade 8

Literature (short story, letters, dramatic contrast in Shakespearean drama), composition, grammar and spelling. Arithmetic (review of solids and measurement), algebra, grammar, world economic geography, American history. Physics (hydraulics), organic chemistry, physiology (musculature and skeletal system), meteorology. Eighth grade trip. Circus, science exploration through the lens of phenomenology, nature walks. Movement and games. Handwork projects, sewing. Continued exploration with world language. Music class with choral singing, musical notation and recorder.

Homework in Grades 3-8

Beginning in Grade 3, projects related to the curriculum are assigned to the children and class. These projects are designed to inspire the students and build their passion and desire to connect with the lessons. Grades 3-8 students have meaningful homework appropriate to their developmental stages and abilities. Students need parents to help create healthy homework habits. Read with your child for at least 20 minutes a day.



SPECIALTY CLASSES

Subject classes include world language, movement/physical education/games, music/singing/flutes/recorders, handwork. Most of these subjects are taught by specialty teachers who work closely with the class teacher so children experience it as an integrated whole with one lesson or activity enhancing another.

Additionally classroom teachers offer integrated specialty lessons including watercolor painting, clay and beeswax modeling, form drawing, folk dancing and woodworking.

World Language

The study of World Language begins in Kindergarten. Through their strong powers of imitation, children develop a good ear and feeling for language by repeating poems, singing songs and playing games characteristic of the culture from which the language comes. Reading and writing begins in Grade 3, along with a more systematic study of syntax and grammar.

Handwork

Handwork in the Waldorf curriculum provides the opportunity to “ensoul” our surroundings with items made with conscious thought and care. Handwork brings a balancing element between intellectual activities and activities that draw more upon the will. When we engage in the act of making things ourselves, we discover the struggle and joy. Rhythmic repetition such as knitting and crocheting offer subtle intellectual and moral benefits from the proper training of the hands. “A task worth doing is worth doing well.”

Flexible, agile fingers in childhood lead to mobile, creative thinking in adult life and enhance the faculty of judgment. Hand-eye coordination is essential for balance and harmony. Care and respect for materials is also the focus.

Movement

In the younger grades, imaginative play and active noncompetitive games are a central part of the program. Students learn to work with one another as a part of a team bringing their individual gifts to the class. The lower grades participate in chase games, cooperative games, simple dancing and many imagination-based play activities.

In Grade 4, students participate in the Native Youth Olympic games with our neighboring Waldorf school challenging each other with traditional skill and strength-building activities.

At the end of Grade 5, students compete in a Greek Pentathlon along with three other Waldorf schools. This culmination highlights their studies of ancient civilizations. Students recreate the original Greek Games competing in javelin, discus, running, long jump, and wrestling. In the upper grades, they continue to play cooperative games as well as team-based sports.

Grade 8 closes their year with a circus performance incorporating skills they practiced for years: juggling, tumbling and unicycling.

Eurythmy

Eurythmy is the art of movement that attempts to make visible the tone and feeling of music and speech. Eurythmy lessons follow the themes of the curriculum, exploring rhyme, meter, story, and geometric forms. Winterberry provide this enriching activity by sharing a traveling eurythmy teacher with Anchorage Waldorf School and Birchtree Charter School in Palmer.

Music

Music is an integral part of the Waldorf curriculum. It touches and nourishes the soul, enriching the child's inner life. Music class is taught two or three times each week. Students begin singing pentatonic songs in Kindergarten.

Formal music classes begin in Grade 3 – transitioning from a pentatonic scale to a firmly rooted diatonic scale. Students learn to sing as a chorus and play in a recorder ensemble as they travel through the grades. As a choir, they begin with a single vocal line, then transfer to singing rounds, which leads to part-singing in the upper grades. Students perform at assemblies, festivals, and concerts throughout the year.

WINTERBERRY HYBRID PROGRAM

The Winterberry Hybrid Program (WHP) is a blended school option for parents who wish to have more flexibility and involvement with their child's education. Students and families have the option of attending class with multi-age peers led by the Hybrid teacher. Students then continue grade-level specific learning at home delivered by their parent-teacher.

The program serves students in grades K-8. Parents teach their children at home using their choice of a professionally crafted curriculum rooted in Waldorf methods. Winterberry's experienced Hybrid Program teacher offers close support.

The Hybrid Program also offers a variety of parent classes to train and enhance the curriculum delivery by parents. In addition to providing parents with a supported, Waldorf-inspired curriculum and supplies, the program offers the opportunity for families to participate in a variety of daily classes and activities held at the school and taught or led by Winterberry's teachers. These include: outside seasonal circle time, outdoor playtime, a weekly watercolor painting class, guided drawing, storytelling with beeswax molding, and weekly classes with specialty teachers in music, handwork, movement and World Language and weekly field trips.

The program offers instruments and high-quality art supplies to help parents successfully deliver the program to their children.

Community-building and parent collaboration are other core components of this program. There are many weekly opportunities for parents and students to interact, get to know one another, to build relationships, offer support, and PLAY!



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Winterberry functions as a “public school within the Anchorage School District.” As such, the school adheres to the federal and state law put forth for special education by providing a Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment, as well as Disability and Related Services. Services are determined by the team based on testing and creation of the Individual Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plan. The plan will be implemented in various school locations choosing the least restrictive environment for the student first.

The Special Education teacher and/or related service providers collaborate with the classroom teacher and parent or guardian to form a team to ensure modification or differentiation of instruction and assessment in meeting a student’s needs.

Special education services are available to all students attending alternative, optional and charter schools of the district.

However, when a special education student is considered for a position in one of these schools, it is critical that a review of the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) be conducted to determine whether the district is able to provide a free appropriate public education for the student in the new school setting.

Student Support Team

Parents or teachers concerned with a student’s progress, may bring their concerns formally to a Student Support Team meeting. The Coordinator documents all concerns at this time and the team will develop a specific plan of interventions to be implemented to give the student needed supports.

After a minimum of eight weeks, the team will reconvene to review documented progress or continued areas of concern. At that time, the team may decide to continue interventions, try new interventions, or request this student be looked at for a possible Special Education referral. Special Education referrals need to be able to document all interventions and their level of effectiveness.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Sports

Winterberry students in grades six through eight participate in cross country running and cross country skiing and track and field. As an Anchorage School District student attending a charter school, your child may also try out for additional sports at your neighborhood middle school. To participate in sports:

- Submit a current Sports Physical form and Middle School Activity Participation form.
- Pay an activity fee or apply for a fee waiver through ASD's online Parent Connection portal: parentconnect.asdk12.org.

Student Council

Winterberry students in grades six through eight are able to participate in student council. Student council is a student-based civic organization to help promote school spirit and leadership among students. Students participating in all levels of the council will maintain a high standard of personal conduct and serve as thoughtful examples of behavior through their words and actions. All council members will be expected to participate in approved activities, which will serve to enhance the quality of both the physical and behavior environment of the school.

The purpose of student council is to:

- Practice good citizenship.
- Promote harmonious relations throughout the school.
- Provide a forum for student expression.
- Plan special events or projects.

Student council will be involved in community-minded projects:

- School beautification; cleaning, shoveling, sweeping, etc.
- Community service; food drives, recycling projects, etc.
- Newsletter submissions, dances, spirit/community-building events.

Battle of the Books: Grades 5-8

This statewide reading motivation and comprehension program is sponsored by the Alaska Association of School Librarians. The program aims to encourage and recognize students who enjoy reading, broaden reading interests, increase reading comprehension, and promote academic excellence.

EIGHTH GRADE TRIP

The Eighth Grade Trip is a culminating experience in which students bring closure to their years together as classmates, gain a sense of confidence from encounters with new environments and new challenges, and deepen understanding of their studies.

Each class is unique and no two class trips are the same. These guidelines present general principles and possibilities. Waldorf founder Rudolf Steiner viewed child development in various stages. According to Steiner, children ages 13-14 are in the second stage of childhood, marked by a need for independence, an interest in the world, a search for world truth, a deep interest in one's own place in the world, and the ability to genuinely transcend individual needs to work as a group.

Destination

The teacher, administrator and students begin discussing trip destination at the beginning of Grade 8. Parents are included in the process after initial discussions identify two or three possible destinations. We suggest that parents enter the conversation at the first Grade 7 parent meeting. The final decision considers parent input and budget. Together the teacher and administrator decide on a destination with parent input.

Chaperones

The Grade 8 students venture forth on this trip independently. Students' family members do not chaperone this trip, for several reasons. This is a capstone for the students' journey at Winterberry, allowing for a transformation for the individual student and for the class. Parents are provided the opportunity to let go and allow their students to travel independently.

Cost/Budget

The estimated cost of the Eighth Grade Trip is between \$2,000-\$3,000 per person (students, teacher, chaperone, administrator). This cost varies by trip. However, we ask parents to budget \$3,000 for their child to attend. If the trip costs less, adjustments will be made.

A rewarding and valuable trip such as this requires the support of many adults, including a school administrator, the class teacher, and as many adult (non-parent) chaperones as it takes to reach the required ration of one adult per five students. The WCC sets aside \$3,000 per year to cover the administrator's trip. Additionally, the WPG designates \$3,000 to cover the cost of one chaperone. The costs relating to the participation of the class teacher and necessary chaperones will be covered by the class participants through fundraising efforts, additional cost to individual families, or the choice of a more affordable itinerary.

(For more info about fundraising for the trip, see page 12.)

Payment Schedule and Refunds

Parents make payments towards their student's trip beginning in the fall of the student's eighth grade year. Generally, this will mean seven payments of about \$400, from September through March. If the trip costs less than \$3,000, or if extra funds are raised, final payments may be reduced or eliminated.

This ensures down payments for reservations and other up-front costs can be met efficiently and helps families budget for the trip.

Once funds have been used to pay vendors, family contributions are no longer refundable. The class teacher will communicate with families in a clear and timely manner about the exact date after which no refunds will be available.

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance will be need-based and developed to meet the individual. Two models are based on the needs of the group and the class community's preference. The financial assistance request must be submitted by the end of the first semester.

- **Model 1:** After paying for chaperones and teachers, the fundraising is split evenly between all students, with a request that willing families donate their portion of the funds to scholarships.
- **Model 2:** After paying for chaperones and teachers, the money goes to scholarships, which will be determined based on conversations between teacher, administrator and family. Any excess monies will be split between all other students evenly OR used to enhance the trip.

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS: FESTIVALS AND SEASONAL EVENTS

The human spirit finds its expression in seasonal festivals celebrated through story and artistic activities. Students from a wide range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds attend Winterberry and differences are honored. Our Waldorf-inspired curriculum provide many opportunities to share many world cultures, through nature stories in the younger grades, to the Hebrew, Native Alaskan, Norse Myths, Indian, Egyptian, African, Roman and Greek mythologies.

We strive to bring a universal nature to our celebrations of festivals through their connection with the rhythms of the earth and cosmos. Ceremonies and rituals associated with the seasons reveal the deeper significance of many everyday occurrences.

The rhythms of the year, though honored in each class in different ways, help provide a common foundation for the children. In preparation for the festivals, the teachers consider the mood of the season in the celebration.

The nature of the festival is universal and teachers allow students absorb their beauty and significance quietly into their hearts. Children love preparing for the festivals by decorating the room, baking special treats, learning special songs and more. Nature stories and tales bring deeper significance of the season to the children in a pictorial way.

August/September: Welcome Picnic

The Winterberry Parent Guild (WPG) hosts a back-to-school potluck at the beginning of each school year. This is a time for families to meet and get to know one another and for all to celebrate the start of a new school year. Families bring food to share. Participants minimize environmental impact by bringing their own dishes, cups and utensils.

September: Festival of Courage

As the growing season comes to a close, we gather the fruits of the harvest and seek community to summon courage before we enter winter. The Festival of Courage is a special schoolwide event during which we celebrate, with gratitude, the bountiful harvest, relish in the glorious golden colors of Autumn and gather up our will forces that will support us through the darkness of winter.

November: Lantern Walk

As we enter an arctic winter, we create a reverent space for the children to face the darkness with the warmth and beauty of the light they carry in their lanterns. In the glow of excitement, students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 design and create their class's lantern style for the year. Our music teacher and class teachers practice the many beautiful songs belonging to this festival.

A dedicated volunteer group arranges and lights a path of hundreds of luminaries along a trail in the neighboring forest. Children gather with their class teachers to walk the trail, singing their way through the beauty of the snowy woods.

Once all classes have had their turn, families are invited to walk the path. We request that the only human voices along the trail are lifted in song. Walking the trail in silence is another way to appreciate the luminaries.

Students in Grades 6-8 are welcomed to attend with their families as respectful observers and assistants. These classes may be involved with set up, clean up, luminary creation, etc.



December: Festival of Light, Grade 2

The ancient people were very much aware of the diminishing daylight and feared the cold and hunger the accompanied the sun's decline. Humans yearned for a friendly spirit to intercede, restoring light to the earth on the longest night of the year.

Over many centuries, this spirit of light became personified in St. Lucia, the Queen of Light, who originally brought food to the hungry lighting her way with a crown of candles.

Today, St. Lucia's Day is celebrated Dec. 13 most commonly celebrated in Sweden. According to tradition, families are awakened by Lucia (a name meaning light). Usually this is the eldest daughter who winds through a dimly lit home singing the old Sicilian song, "Santa Lucia" to wake the sleepers. Dressed in white and wearing a crown of lit candles, she presents saffron buns and Christmas cookies to her family.

Winter: All-school Winter Assembly

We come together as a whole community in December for our Winter Assembly to celebrate what we have been learning. The classes, Grades 1-8 have an opportunity to showcase for one another and for their families the learning activities that they have been practicing in school. The offerings include parts of their morning circles, songs, flute pieces, rod work, or verses that they have been working on. Students and their families get to preview things to look forward to, through the grades, as well as enjoy remembering the familiar activities of the younger grades.

Our faculty and staff also perform songs that we have been practicing together in our weekly staff meetings. Some years even our board members from WPG and WCC joined in the performance.

Winter: Spiral Walk, Kindergarten, Grade 1, Hybrid

In the winter season of long dark nights, many festivals of light are celebrated around the world. In its beautiful simplicity, the peaceful celebration of the walking a spiral of stars serves a visual representation of the return of light as the days grow longer. This practice allows us to observe and contemplate in quietude, offering a picture of simple beauty and mindful space. For the child it is a journey full of wonder.

During this winter festival, each child is invited to walk into a spiral of evergreen boughs, carrying an unlit candle. Arriving at the center, the child lights a candle burning bright, and carries the light out of the spiral. The child places the lit candle on a star along the path. After all have completed their journey in and out of the spiral, we have a beautiful garden of light.

The spiral of evergreens is a reminder of the earth's steadfast green life, prevalent even in the cold of winter. We spiral inward, seeking the birth of light in the surrounding darkness, and we spiral outward, carrying our light into the world.

Grade 5 and Grade 6 students lend additional beauty to this special event by playing the recorder and singing as the younger children walk the spiral.

May: Mayfest Celebration

At Winterberry, we celebrate the arrival of spring with an schoolwide gathering on or near the last day of school. May Day is an ancient festival honoring the changing of the season to spring. The tree of life was part of this ritual. Our festival's tree of life is the maypole, bedecked with ribbons and flowers.

Children make crowns of flowers, with the help of many adults and upper-grade students. Each class dances around the maypole or offers another specially rehearsed song or dance to the whole school community.

Seasonal Holidays

Individual teachers determine the best way for classes to celebrate additional holidays like Halloween or Valentine's Day.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

Winterberry's curriculum is aligned with the curriculum standards of the Anchorage School District and the state of Alaska, but it differs in its implementation and timing.

While this includes the mastery of academic skills and knowledge needed for career or college success, this set of cognitive, academic attainments is part of a much more comprehensive educational goal that explicitly includes and fosters the emotional, physical, social, ecological, and ethical development of each student.

The goal of Winterberry's Waldorf-inspired education is to support the development of the whole child – head, heart and hands.

In addition to academic instruction, Winterberry prioritizes activities that allow the growing child to explore multiple aspects of the human condition. This includes fostering character development, healthy physical growth, social consciousness, relationships, imagination and creativity, environmental awareness, and the capacity to make informed decisions and to act upon them responsibly.

In Waldorf education, these are considered essential aptitudes for twenty-first century learners – for success in college, careers,

There are three ways in which a teacher can motivate a child to learn: fear, ambition or love. In Waldorf/Steiner education we dispense on the whole with the first two and attempt to awaken in the students a feeling of love for the subject at hand. Only this can in turn awaken in the students an interest for the subject itself and not merely the wish to gain good grades or personal advantages.

– Rudolf Steiner

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS: ASSESSMENT METHODS AND TOOLS

Along with state and district-required assessments, Winterberry focuses on monitoring and documenting individual progress through a range of assessments used formatively to assist students in their learning.

Observation/Portfolio (Main Lesson Book) Assessment

Formative and summative methods are used to review a student's work in Main Lesson books. Work in progress reflects a student's ongoing process, and pages are not considered complete until rendered with best efforts. Main Lesson books reflect many aspects and reveal a student's qualities with great sophistication.

Students Showcase

Many opportunities exist for students to showcase and celebrate their work and achievements. These include end-of-block celebrations, assemblies, class plays and other performances, individual and group projects and presentations.

Block Assessments in Grades 6-8

Major content areas (Math, Science, History, and Language) are taught in three- or four-week blocks, and in the upper grades these blocks often culminate with written tests, projects, presentations, or other evidence of individual learning.

Quarterly and Annual Reports

Winterberry class and specialty teachers prepare reports for each student at the end of each quarter that reflects their growth and development for that quarter. At the end of the year, teachers prepare a comprehensive end-of-year report to share information about each student.

State and District Required Testing

Winterberry has and will continue to participate in State and District required assessments and surveys. When possible, Winterberry will request waivers to administer standardized tests using paper copies rather than using a computer. When computer testing does occur at Winterberry, students will be given an opportunity to practice using a computer and keyboard ahead of the testing date.

Grade 1 Readiness Assessment

The kindergarten teacher/s will provide ongoing observational assessment of each kindergarten child throughout the school year and will communicate regularly, both informally and formally, student progress. These assessments will help determine if the student is ready to move from Kindergarten to Grade 1. These assessments will look at:

- Fine and gross motor skill development
- Visual, tactile and auditory development
- Speech and communication development
- Language and cognitive development
- Social and emotional integration and development
- Other aspects of early childhood development

When practical and possible, new students will be assessed prior to being placed in Kindergarten, Grade 1 or Grade 2.

Grade 2 Assessment

The Grade 2 teacher will provide ongoing observational assessment of students throughout the year and communicate student progress regularly, formally and informally.

These assessments will look at:

- Integration of upper and lower senses (auditory and visual integrated with gross motor)
- Fine and gross motor skills development
- Bodily coordination, such as crossing midlines
- Rhythmic abilities that provide evidence of coordination of two or more senses at a time
- Hand, foot, and eye coordination
- Development of proprioceptive and vestibular skills (balance, spatial and temporal orientation)

Based on the findings, the class teacher has the opportunity to incorporate targeted physical-spatial exercises into regular teaching to support the development of all learners.

End of the Year Evaluation

This evaluation is prepared by the class teacher and describes each child's academic and social progress over the course of the year. This is the official transcript of the child's education.

DAILY TRANSPORTATION

Morning Drop Off

Children may arrive to Winterberry as early as 8 am for class start at 8:15 am. Please follow the guidelines for curbside drop off. Alternatively, park and walk your student to their drop-off spot where they will be supervised by Winterberry staff until dismissed to classrooms at 8:15 am. Please bring young children to the bathroom before coming into the classroom, especially during the first month of school.

Once students greet their teacher at the door, they will enter the classroom, store their gear and lunches, and get ready for the start of their day. All students must be in their seats by 8:30 am. This is when the teacher begins the greeting with verse and song to signal the start of the Main Lesson or Specialty Class.

If you arrive later than 8:30 am, please sign your child in at the office and a staff member will escort young children to their classrooms. We encourage prompt arrival so your child will experience this very important ritual in a relaxed way without interrupting other students.

Unless prior arrangements have been made, an adult must accompany Kindergarten students to and from class during arrival and pick up.

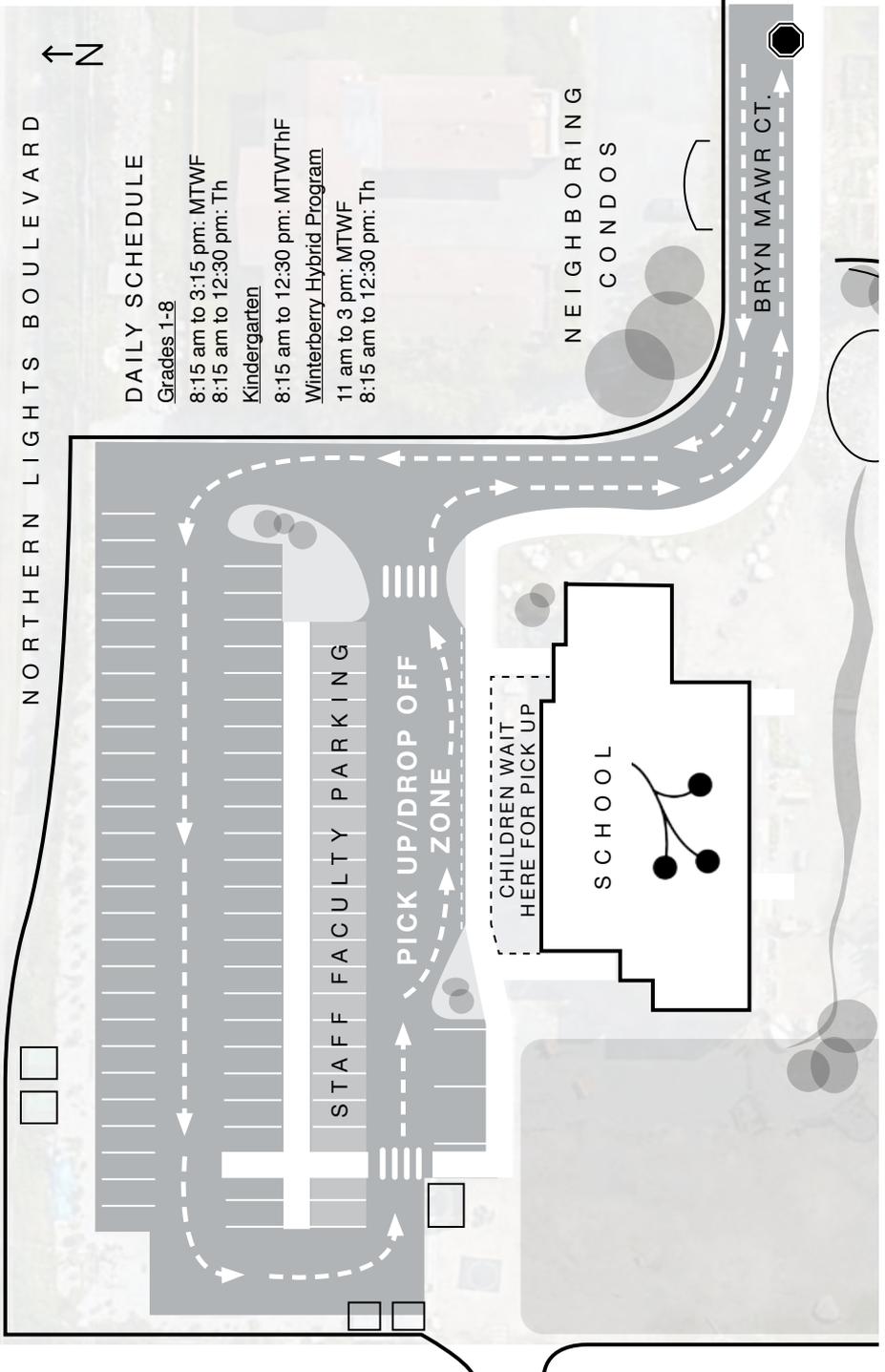
Afternoon Pick Up

Afternoon pick up happens 3:15-3:30 pm every day except Thursdays, when pick up happens 12:30-12:45 pm. Thursdays are half days to accommodate weekly Winterberry Staff meetings from 1:30-4 pm.

In the afternoon, please follow the guidelines for curbside pick up. Alternatively, park and walk to your child's class pick-up area. Upon reuniting with a parent, the child may shake the teacher's hand to say goodbye for the day. Teachers release children only to their parents or to pre-authorized caretakers with paperwork at the front office.

Drop off and pick up are very busy times for teachers. While it's an excellent time for teachers and parents to shake hands or connect quickly, it's not the best time for in-depth one-on-one conversations or questions. Teachers are available for more focused and lengthy conversations by appointment.

Winterberry Traffic Flow Map



Traffic and Parking Procedure

The Winterberry community holds an honored agreement with the condo associations and our neighbors to:

- Do not use a cell phone any time your car is moving through the school zone (\$500 municipal fine).
- Do not park in condo parking spaces at any time.
- Stop at the STOP signs.
- Drive 5 miles per hour.

Airport Style

We operate using an airport-style drop off and pick up. Families travel in one direction pulling up to the curb in front of the school. Please follow the directions of the crossing guard staff, as safety is our highest priority.

During drop off, drivers pull all the way forward and students exit their cars curbside. Alternatively, drivers park their cars and parents and students together walk to the curb. Cross only at the two crosswalks. During pick up, drivers pull all the way forward and staff call students forward and help them enter the car curbside.

Make sure you have car seats, seat belts and follow the guidelines for weight and height before allowing students to ride in the front seat. The use of the back seat for children under age 13 is a recommendation from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and automobile manufacturers.

DAY TO DAY

Dress Code

The purpose of our dress code is to improve the learning environment by reducing distractions and ensuring students are wearing appropriate and functional clothing.

Our dress code also aligns with our values by encouraging respect for our school setting, discouraging mass marketing to children, embracing the natural beauty of the human being, and encouraging healthy physical movement in any kind of weather.

Thank you for dressing children in clothes that are free of large distracting commercial logos and characters or words.

Students not abiding by dress code guidelines will be asked to change. Teachers and administration have final discretion regarding unique dress or adornment issues. This dress code is subject to change.

Words and Images

- K-5: Students may wear clothing with stripes, patterns, and solids. Please no words or large images.
- Grade 6-8: Students may wear clothing featuring words and images if they are not negative, violent, potentially scary for young children. Clothing must be free of inappropriate words, free from overt brand names and logos, and unrelated to video games and media. Class teachers have final discretion.

Daily Gear

Please label all items with student name. Students spend time outside every day. They need:

- Indoor shoes that are safe, comfortable, light, and stay on their feet during movement activities.
- Outdoor shoes appropriate for the day's weather.
- During winter, clothing should be warm enough for outdoor activities.

School provides most items your child will need for their daily classwork. Besides clothing, outdoor gear and lunch, they will be provided with all necessary school supplies. Ensure your child brings only what is needed to be successful during the school day. Other items should remain safe at home. Consult your class teacher before allowing your child to bring items to school.

Cell Phones

We ask that students not bring cell phones to school. There's a phone at the front desk for students to use. Messages for students can be left at the front desk: (907) 742-0139. Adults, please use cell phones only briefly if necessary on campus, away from students, in the vestibule/enclosed entry areas of the school or parent hospitality room near the front office.

Lost and Found

The lost and found is located under the stairwell near the southeast entry to the play yard near the chicken coop. Please label or mark all gear and clothing items for easy identification.

Absences

When you know your child will be absent, notify your child's class teacher and the front office by email.

The Anchorage School District absence policy: absences are counted as unexcused unless a parent contacts the front office to excuse their child's absence within three days of that absence.

Any child who reaches six unexcused absences will be marked as "at risk" in the district's attendance system. If a child reaches 10 unexcused absences, the school principal will contact the family for a meeting. The district has deemed these five circumstances as reasons an absence can be excused:

- Legitimate illness
- Death or serious illness in child's immediate family
- Participation in a school event
- Attendance at a religious event
- Extenuating circumstances (must be approved by school principal)

Missing school days severely impacts students' learning, sense of rhythm, and comfort within the classroom community. Waldorf students learn through stories told and presented by their teacher and captured in their own Main Lesson books.

A students' learning depends upon hearing these stories presented in different ways in keeping with daily and weekly rhythms. Students experience story-related activities and are included in the socially rich environment of the classroom.

It is very difficult to recreate missed days of school so daily attendance is clearly crucial. Families are strongly encouraged to schedule vacations during school holidays.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

When to Keep Your Child Home from School

Keeping sick children home resting with an attuned caregiver when too tired and/or too uncomfortable to function at school. If we suspect a child is ill at school we comfort, soothe and notify a parent/guardian to take their student home. Children with a fever of 100 degrees F or higher will be sent home.

- **Fever** – A fever is a warning that the body is fighting an infection that could easily spread to others. A child with a temperature of 100.4 F should not be sent to school; your child should stay home until they are fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications like Tylenol.
- **Colds** – Colds are more difficult to assess. A slightly runny nose and occasional dry cough is not enough to keep your child home. However, if your child's nose runs constantly and/or the cough is frequent and wet, or your child is experiencing nausea or is too tired and uncomfortable to function at school it would be best to keep the child home for a day or two.
- **Cough** – If your child has a severe cough, rapid and/or difficulty breathing, wheezing, or the cough is accompanied by a sore throat or not feeling well, the child should stay home from school.
- **Diarrhea** – Diarrhea is defined as an unusual amount of very liquid stools compared to the child's normal pattern. Children should stay home until able to participate normally at school.
- **Ears** – If your child has pain, swelling, drainage or difficulty hearing, please see your healthcare provider. Untreated ear infections can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss.
- **Eyes** – If your child has red, itchy eyes with a clear, yellow or green drainage from the eye, it may be contagious and a sign of bacterial conjunctivitis (pinkeye). A child with pinkeye can attend school as long as they are able to keep from touching their eyes and show that they can properly wash hands after contact with the infected eye.
- **Rash** – A rash might be the first sign of an illness. If your child has a rash with a fever and behavioral changes, or a rash that is oozing/open wound, or is tender with the rash worsening, your child should be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- **Sore Throat** – If your child has a sore throat, have the child gargle with warm salt water. If child behavior is normal and the child ate breakfast, it's probably safe to send your child to school. If your child has difficulty swallowing, or you notice saliva building up in your child's mouth because your child can't swallow, please keep your child home. If you notice white spots in the back of the throat please contact your doctor as this could be a sign of an infection.
- **Vomiting/Nausea** – Keep your child home if your child has vomited more than two times in 24 hours, has a fever or if they look or act ill.

COVID-19 Recommendations

Winterberry's school nurse may have free COVID tests available for students to use at home upon request. If you test positive, the following recommendations from the CDC are in place for Anchorage School District staff and students (as of April, 2024):

The updated guidance for all respiratory viruses, including COVID, recommends that people stay home and away from others until at least 24 hours after both their symptoms are getting better overall, and they have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication). Wearing masks upon returning to work/school is recommended by the CDC.

Security and Emergency Drills

All ASD schools have comprehensive crisis plans detailing action for an emergency on school grounds. As part of the plan, there are procedures that staff and students follow if there is a safety or security issue in the school's immediate neighborhood that could potentially affect students or staff.

Emergency drills are practiced regularly throughout the year. Drills include: Evacuation, Stay Put, Lockdown, Drop, Cover, & Hold on, and Active Intruder (ALICE).

Personal Safety

STAR Alaska (Standing Together Against Rape)

Since 1978, STAR has been responding to the needs of survivors of sexual assault, while integrating prevention and education programs with a goal of reducing harm to all Alaskans. The organization offers age-appropriate presentations that provide personal safety and sexual violence information as well as resources and skill building. STAR is very careful with the material brought into schools, using information geared toward the child's age and development. All curricula are reviewed and approved by the Anchorage School District.

As adults, it's our job to help keep children safe. STAR visits Winterberry's classrooms twice each year with the goal of promoting body safety and giving children the knowledge and skills to identify an unsafe situation and know what to do if these behaviors are experienced in themselves or others.

RESOURCES

Waldorf Education, Rudolf Steiner

Waldorf education has its roots in the research of the Austrian scientist and thinker Rudolf Steiner (186-1925). According to Steiner's philosophy, the human being is a threefold being of spirit, soul, and body whose capacities unfold in three developmental stages on the path to adulthood: early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence.

Winterberry Parent Guild

The WPG is a nonprofit parents' group with a mission to support Winterberry Charter School and its teachers for the betterment of the children attending the school.

winterberryparentguild.org

Non-violent Communication, Marshall Rosenberg, Ph.D.

A global nonprofit organization founded dedicated to sharing Nonviolent Communication around the world. NVC is about connecting with ourselves and others from the heart. It's about seeing the humanity in all of us. It's about recognizing our commonalities and differences and finding ways to make life wonderful for all of us.

nonviolentcommunication.com

Simplicity Parenting, Kim John Payne, M.Ed.

Education consultant/author outlines parenting methods that offer a simple, orderly, and effective pathway to simplify four realms at home to reduce stress on children and their parents, and allow room for connection, creativity, and relaxation.

simplicityparenting.com

Mindsight Institute, Dan Siegel Ph.D.

Interpersonal neurobiologist and author Dr. Siegel's cutting-edge science is made accessible for mental health practitioners, parents, educators, coaches and leaders, mindfulness practitioners, or anyone interested in personal growth

mindsightinstitute.com

The Center for Connection, Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.

Psychotherapist explores attachment science, childrearing theory, and the emerging field of interpersonal neurobiology to help raise children who are happy, healthy and fully themselves. Author takes research and theory from various fields of science, and offering it in a way that's clear, realistic, humorous, and immediately helpful.

tinabryson.com

Dare to Lead #daringclassrooms hub, Brené Brown, Ph.D.

Researcher, author, storyteller who's spent two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy.

brenebrown.com

You and Your Child's Health, Susan Johnson, MD, F.A.A.P.

Waldorf teacher and behavioral and developmental pediatrician shares health information about raising children and creating a healthier family life.

youandyourchildshealth.org

STAR Alaska (Standing Together Against Rape, Inc.)

Since 1978, STAR has been responding to the needs of survivors of sexual assault, while integrating prevention and education programs with a goal of reducing harm to all Alaskans.

staralaska.com

AWSNA Association of Waldorf Schools of North America

Nonprofit membership organization of independent Waldorf schools and institutes in Canada, the United States and Mexico.

waldorfeducation.org

WECAN Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America

Fostering a new cultural impulse for work with the young child from pre-birth to age seven. WECAN is committed to nurturing childhood as a foundation for renewing human culture

waldorfearlychildhood.org

Alliance for Public Waldorf Education

The Alliance works to revitalize public education through innovation that is developmentally sound, and supports high quality public Waldorf education meeting the needs of today's students.

publicwaldorf.org

Mayo Clinic (Nutrition for Kids: Guidelines for a Healthy Diet)

Nonprofit organization committed to clinical practice, education and research, providing expert, whole-person care.

mayoclinic.org

Appreciative Inquiry Commons

As opposed to just focusing on drawbacks, Appreciative Inquiry encourages exploration of existing strengths and successes of organizations/ individuals, to instigate positive change.

appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu

*May wisdom shine through me.
May love glow within me.
May strength penetrate me.
That in me may arise
A helper of humankind,
A servant of sacred things
Selfless and true.*

– Rudolf Steiner
(founder of Waldorf education)

MISSION

Grow the innate potential of each child.

“Receive the children in reverence;
educate them in love and
send them forth in freedom.”

– Rudolf Steiner (founder of Waldorf education)