



## **Greetings First Grade Families:**

I hope this letter finds your families healthy, happy, and soaking up the delicious rays of summer sunshine during these last few weeks of August.

As I turn my heart and mind to September and beyond, I look forward to our shared learning journey, throughout this year and those to follow. Truly, amidst uncertain and challenging circumstances that exist around us during this time, I am delighted to be your child's first grade teacher at the Waldorf School of Garden City. May the path we shape together be filled with many moments of joyful discovery, wonder, warm collaboration, and community!

To make the transition a smooth one, you will find some information on a few topics that may be helpful as you prepare for the first days and weeks of school.

## **Personal Clothing & Supplies**

Please keep in mind that all school supplies should be simple (no media images), sturdy, and labeled with your child's name. The first graders will need:

- Reusable refillable water bottle (no more than 16 oz, metal/glass/ceramic preferable)
- Comfortable indoor shoes to remain at school  
(secure on foot with enclosed heel /toe, for daily movement)
- A full change of clothes (underwear, pants, shirt, 2 pair socks)
- Painting Smock (apron, button down oxford style or larger tee shirt that can be independently slipped over school clothes)
- Rain Gear (boots, rain pants and a rain jacket with hood) so that we may all enjoyably learn and play outdoors in all weather
- Masks 3-5 comfortable masks to keep in cubby, and a clear face shield or shield hat if preferred for outdoor recess times. A variety of face shield hats and hat toppers, lip reading masks (those with a clear window around the mouth) and can be found on both Amazon and Etsy.
- yoga mat (preferably water-resistant material, to be used for rest times and/or outdoor learning opportunities)

## **Healthy Lunches and Snacks**

Keep in mind, longer school days will require more healthy fuel to sustain young growing bodies and minds! Your child's packed lunch and snacks should ideally contain a balanced offering of protein, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, free of candy or other high-sugar sweets or drinks. Warm thermos snacks are always a cozy addition, especially as we move into the cooler weather.

The school will also be providing pre-ordered meals this year, and the information will soon be available online.

If your child has any food allergies or dietary restrictions of which I should be aware, please do reach out to let me know.

### **School Attire/ Dress Code**

Please be sure your child is dressed in comfortable clothing and shoes to will allow them to move freely and participate fully during circle and outdoor play. You may refer to the updated dress code in the **Parent Handbook** -or reach out to me with particular questions but an important rule of thumb to follow is that clothing with writing or media imagery is not permitted. This is essential so that we can create a classroom learning environment freed from distractions. If leggings are worn, please make sure that a long shirt, skirt or other covering is worn (as long as mid-thigh). Thank you for following this, in advance!

### **Child/Teacher Visits**

In lieu of home visits this year, I will be hosting child visits on school grounds, along the nature trail and in our classroom. This will be a great opportunity for your child to reacquaint themselves with the environment before the first day of school, and to learn where and how they will enter the school, and where his/her cubby will be. Families are welcome to bring any of the listed supplies to school on the day of your visit. I am looking forward to greeting each one of your children in person!

### **Parent Meetings**

During the school year we will have several parent evenings. While some of our meetings may take place online this year, I also hope to schedule some socially distanced in-person meetings with parents and guardians, as we create this new class community together.

Your participation is so essential to the constructive development of our class community! These meetings give you the opportunity to peruse your child's work, get a sense of the social and academic life in the classroom, connect with me and other parents. During these times together we will address important educational topics related to curriculum, media, subject classes, nature-deficit, school events and policies, among others. Thank you for making an effort to attend.

### **Arrival/Dismissal: First Day and Rose Ceremony**

School begins at 8:00am on Tuesday, September 8th. With new arrival and dismissal procedures in place this year, it is especially important your child arrives approximately 15 minutes early on the first day. This will allow time to ease into the newness of first grade and time for reconnecting with friends before we officially start the day.

I warmly invite you to attend this year's Rose Ceremony. Traditionally occurring at the first day Opening Assembly this is a reverent occasion where our seniors give each child a rose while warmly welcoming them into grade school. It is mirrored with a similar ceremony at the year's end as the first graders bid seniors a warm farewell. As this fall's plans are confirmed, I will

share more details on how this beloved and beautiful event will be reimagined to meet current times.

Note that our first day dismissal is at 12 noon.

### **Family Photo**

As I begin this new relationship with your child and learn about the special people (and animals!) in their life, I would love to receive a family photo from each family, with the names included. Please feel free to email any photos to me at [espositom@waldorfgarden.org](mailto:espositom@waldorfgarden.org) or your child may bring one to their classroom visit.

### **Main Lesson Block Rotation & Daily / Weekly Schedule**

In addition to the academic aspects of the first-grade year, our first weeks will focus establishing class community and culture based on kindness and caring for ourselves and others, truth, stewardship, and community. The children will be learning new routines that will develop healthy classroom attitudes and habits and which will set the stage for successful learning over the next several years.

Our daily rhythm is as follows:

- 8:00 am Each morning the children begin outdoors for our morning verse and circle time, followed by multi sensory variety activities related to our main lesson subject work.
- 10:00 am: Snack and small recess
- Following snack are two different specialty teacher classes, each 40 minutes long and which include a mask break.
- Lunch and big recess
- Afternoon lessons will consist of a rotation of beeswax work, painting, nature walks, storytelling, movement, and other “languages of learning” that will serve to deepen your child’s understanding through creative expression.

**Our main lesson blocks that will carry through the fall are as follows:**

#### **Form Drawing (2 weeks)**

Through images and stories, the children become aware that our whole world is elegantly comprised of straight and curved lines! Through a series of movements, they awaken to the feeling of the form within themselves. Form drawing is a wonderfully unique introductory lesson block to start off the year. as it sets the foundational stage for letter recognition and writing (posture, crayon grip, use of materials, spatial orientation on a page, size, spacing, placement, direction). Form drawing fosters the development of children’s concentration, motor regulation and fluidity, and eye/hand coordination, and helps to strengthen their sense of balance and spatial orientation. Children will draw and explore forms with their whole bodies in a variety of

ways, in the air, on sand and slates, in beeswax and more, before translating and transcribing their experiential knowledge into main lesson books.

### **Language Arts (5 weeks)**

Classic fairy tales are at the very heart of the language arts block in first grade. These deeply imaginative stories provide the child with an engaging way to connect imagery, meaning and form to the capital letters. Through humorous poems, chants and tongue twisters, the children learn and explore the sounds of the alphabet, and then practice writing them. Fairy tales have a moralistic component, which allows the children to further develop a sense of right and wrong. Young imaginations are enlivened by the archetypal images, and children will live into these stories through their own dramatizations and creative expression.

### **Arithmetic (5 weeks)**

A lively introduction to numbers! Learning unfolds through hands-on mathematical immersion into forms of rhythmic and geometrical patterns. Through number stories and art, rhythmic games and poems, the children will learn about the common qualities, the particular essence, and beauty of numbers. They will begin to understand and write the in the language of math, including Roman Numerals, Arabic numbers, number sentences and visual representations, and geometric shapes that are associated with each number.

### **Language Arts (3 weeks)**

This return to language arts continues our focused exploration imaginative stories to engage the children's feeling nature in preparation for writing and reading consonants and vowels, recognizing and practicing a growing repertoire of sight words, drawing and writing with crayons, honing developing listening skills and retelling stories through memory. We will continue as well to explore the sounds of language, with lots of joyful phonetic word play and practice with long and short vowels, and word families.

Thank you for your trust, kindness and support as we partner in your child's education, working together with love, flexibility, patience, humor, and reverence. I look forward to each new beginning and milestone we will share this year!

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