



Dear Families,

I hope this letter meets you in the midst of a beautiful summer, full of sand, sun and relaxation. I must admit however, that I am very excited about our year together and I cannot wait for the children to return, but I will be patient! I am so glad that you have decided to join our Kindergarten community during these very unique times. We are happy to welcome new families to our class, as well as welcome back our returning families from last year. We recognize that all have navigated through uncharted waters and we are eager to support you and your child through the year ahead.

As you know, our program will alter in several new ways; with this newness comes great opportunity and many gifts, including much more outdoor time! We are looking forward to the healing benefits, fun, and community our nature spaces will bring to all of us. Toward this end, the children will need the following clearly labelled items to support our active work and play. These items will remain in school, except clothing that needs to be laundered.

- An extra set of clothing in a ziploc bag: long sleeve and short sleeve tops, pants, underwear, a few pairs of socks, and a sweater (The children will be active in all kinds of weather to experience the magic of all elements of nature. Therefore, expect MUD and lots of clothing changes!)
- A light jacket
- A sweater
- Inside shoes – a light, flexible but sturdy shoe/sneaker that provides some traction for inside play (The children will be climbing, jumping, skipping, and playing with heavy big blocks so please avoid slippers and backless or open-toed shoes.)
- A ceramic or metal mug (simple designs are okay if not media-inspired)
- Rain pants (overall style is great) and a hooded rain jacket. This rain gear will serve as daily outside gear for all months that we are not wearing snow gear.
- Sturdy rain boots
- Warm socks (Breathable wool is a good option inside rain boots.)
- Later in the season: winter coat, snow pants, hat, waterproof gloves, scarf, and insulated snow boots
- A child-size backpack (simple and comfortable)
- A sleeping bag (warm and strong enough for outdoor use)
- Two extra masks

The following websites offer all types of durable outdoor gear:

- www.landsend.com
- <https://www.polarnopyretusa.com>

- <https://oaki.com>
- <https://us.reima.com>
- <https://www.puddlegear.com/products/puddlegear-rain-mittens>
- <https://www.littlespruceorganics.com/organic-boiled-wool-winter-hat-otto/>

Please dress your child in clothing that is comfortable, uncomplicated and easy for them to manage at bathroom time – a great confidence booster. Also, please choose clothing, backpacks, and lunch bags that do not include distracting images and are **not media-inspired**. Such distracting images can interfere with the environment we strive to create – one where your child’s own imagination and initiative can flourish. Likewise, please avoid play-tattoos, nail polish, light-up shoes, watches and jewelry. Jewelry is easily lost and can become a safety hazard during active play and climbing. More information on appropriate school clothing can be found in [the parent handbook](#). We also ask that children do not bring in toys or stuffed animals from home.

We value the well-being of all of our community members. Please read our PPE protocol at:

<https://www.waldorfgarden.org/school-opening-protocols/>

Parents are asked to provide masks for their children that adhere to the school’s dress code policy and do not have writing, media-inspired, or distracting images on them. The school will always have a supply of disposable masks for those who need one.

Though masks must be worn inside the school building, there are exceptions and special circumstances as outlined in the protocol. With the youngest children, mask-wearing will be balanced with other ways of maintaining safety in a developmentally appropriate way. For example, we plan to spend as much time as possible outside, where the children will be able to wear *either* a mask or face shield (face shield hat).

We understand that following these protocols can be challenging, especially for our young children. We strive to bring warmth and care in meeting these requirements while keeping everyone safe and healthy. Attached is an insightful article by Stephanie Cleary on how to talk to children about returning to (or starting) school. Please be assured that it is normal to feel a little anxious when a child starts a new year at school; we recognize that this feeling might be heightened in the current unusual circumstances. We are here to support you---Please reach out to us via email to arrange a time to talk.

In order to allow us the opportunity to get to know your family in a comfortable, more relaxed setting, as well as help everyone feel more confident and comfortable on the first day of school, we would like to invite you and your child to an **individual classroom visit** to explore the room and play yard. We will be contacting you this week to set up a half hour appointment on the **afternoons of September 1st or September 4th**.

We also invite you to our class’ outdoor **Parent Orientation** meeting on **September 2nd, Wednesday at 5:30pm**. We will discuss our daily and weekly rhythms, class meetings, drop-off

and dismissal procedures, and answer any questions that may arise. Please note that this meeting is for parents/guardians only.

Our first day of school is Wednesday, September 9th, beginning at 8:00am and ending at Noon. The Kindergarten Afternoon Care Program will begin on our first day of school as well.

I am available to you, to discuss any specific issues during the school year between 1-3pm most afternoons. I am also available via email. My contact information is : helwigk@waldorfgarden.org, by phone, (646) 773-3245 or at school, (516) 742-3434. Prior to the beginning of the school year email is the best form of communication.

In closing, I am looking forward to seeing you all again and meeting our new families! We expect a wonderful year ahead and hope you all enjoy the rest of this glorious summer!

Sincerely yours,

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