



2024-25 Parent Handbook

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

-William Butler Yeats

Our Mission

Mangrove School of Sarasota is dedicated to providing a nurturing and calm space in which children can love, learn, and grow. We seek to engage the whole child in their education - head, heart and hands, while also honoring our inherent connection to nature through frequent exploration of and hands-on experience in our majestic natural surroundings.

Our Vision is to:

Honor childhood. Your child only gets one. It should be amazing.

Respect that each child has their own journey and will unfold in their own time. Meet children's needs at each stage of their development.

Recognize that children are not empty vessels to pour information into – instead - nurture the child's natural curiosity and sense of wonder that is essential for real, life-long learning.

Offer a thorough yet dynamic academic curriculum, integrating arts, movement, music and meaningful activities into traditional academic subjects.

Instill reverence for humanity, animal life, and the Earth through frequent service and exploration opportunities and by fostering supportive relationships within the classrooms and community.

Promote world peace and responsibility for one's actions.

Challenge children to discover the full range of their capacities.

Instill children with the confidence to try new things and take calculated risks.

Model and value creativity, innovation, and problem solving.

Our Community

We are an intentional school community founded by parents, teachers and friends seeking a unique, progressive education for our children. Serving early childhood through adolescence, Mangrove School of Sarasota honors imagination as the heart of every child's learning foundation to cultivate creativity, courage, confidence and contribution to the world.

School Policies and Information

School Hours

Please escort your child to their class by 8:25. At Pine Shores Campus EC Parents should park in the North Sanctuary parking lot. Grades parents may park in the Community Center Parking lot. If you have a child in both programs, please park in the EC lot. Arrivals after 8:30 will be marked as tardy (with the exception of Meadowlark and Plover).

8:45-12:45 Monday-Thursday

- Meadowlark Nursery

8:45 am to 1:00 pm Thursday and Friday:

- Plover

8:30 am to 1:00 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday:

- Owlets Mixed-age Kindergarten

8:30 am to 1:00 pm (Monday through Friday):

- Bluebird Kindergarten

8:30 am to 2:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

- Grades 1-5

8:45 am to 2:45 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

- Grades 6-8

Please be mindful of picking your children up on time, as this fosters a feeling of security. In addition, the teachers have other responsibilities to attend to after they dismiss their class.

Extended Care

1:00-2:30pm

- **Little Siesta** for Meadowlark, Plover, Sandpiper, and Bluebird students.

2:30 pm-4:30 pm

- **Late Afternoon Care** for Grades students.

Please see Appendix A for Extended Care rates and policies.

Attendance

Absences

Regular attendance encourages the social and academic success of the student. Great care is taken with the preparation of the day's lesson, missing even part of the day can create gaps in your child's learning.

An excused absence is one that results from:

- Illness.
- Funeral or death in the family.
- Religious observations and holidays.
- Family emergencies.

All other absences must be submitted to administration via email, before the absence.

If your child will be absent, please:

- Message your child's teacher and administration via the Illumine app before or by 8:00 am with the reason for the absence.
- Depending on the circumstances, you may need to wait for a return date from the administration before bringing your child back to school.
- If a student has an unavoidable medical appointment during school hours, please let the teacher know in advance.
- If you have not submitted an excuse by the time attendance has been taken, upon the recording of attendance you will receive a message asking you to please write your absence note, which will go to both your child's teacher and administration.
- Please utilize the Jotform link provided before the start of school to communicate and document all absences.

An unexcused absence is one that results from:

- The reason for the absence did not meet the excused absence criteria or was not documented.

Excessive Absences

Consistent attendance in class and prompt arrival are encouraged for your child's well-being and out of respect for the class itself.

- More than 9 absences per semester or 18 per academic year are considered excessive.

Excessive absences will warrant one or more of the following actions:

- Parents are notified in writing that absences are excessive.
- A meeting with the student's class teacher and a member of the administration.
- A written Corrective Action Plan created by school and the family to resolve the problem.
- A faculty review.
- Additional charges may be incurred if your child needs after-school tutoring to catch up on material they have missed, or if your scholarship amount is reduced by Step Up or AAA.
- Fees will be assessed for missing Leave requests.
- Students with excessive absences are at risk of repeating their grade or dismissal from the program.
- Having excused, documented absences can prevent the need for many of these actions.

Tardiness

Children who arrive late miss their teacher's greeting and the opening verse (in the Grades). **Tardiness is disruptive for both the student and the class.** Please aim to arrive at school between 8:15-8:25.

For your child's comfort and to prevent interruption during the main lesson activities, please be sure that your child has used the restroom before coming to class.

If your student arrives after 8:30 a.m or 8:45 a.m. (depending on the start time of each class):

- Please message your child's teacher in Illumine via a School message, before 8:30 to let them know
- Walk them to their class, and then please wait with your child until the teacher is ready to receive them.
- For Early Childhood families, please wait near the gate to the play yard for the teacher to receive your child.

Excessive Tardiness

Exceeding 5 tardies per semester or 10 tardies per year will result in the following actions:

- Parents are notified in writing that tardies are excessive.
- A meeting with the student's class teacher and a member of the administration.
- A written Corrective Action Plan created by the school and the family to resolve the problem.
- A faculty review.
- Additional charges may be incurred if your child needs after school tutoring to catch up on material they have missed.
- Students with excessive tardies are at risk of repeating their grade or dismissal from the program.

Early Release

If your child needs to leave school before the end of the day please let your child's main teacher know as soon as you know your child will need to leave early, and what time you will be picking them up, so they may advise you on the best pick up location.

Illness

If your child is ill, it is extremely important that they stay home, and rest. Students may return to school **48 hours** after their symptoms have subsided, to prevent the spread of contagious illness and allow them adequate rest. If you are unsure about the guidelines for other indicated illnesses, the Dr. Sears website is helpful in this regard: www.askdrsears.com

Children must stay home for the following illnesses:

- A fever of 99 degrees or higher
- Severe headache
- Exhaustion or fatigue
- Spasm or convulsion
- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- COVID exposure and/or illness
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Lice
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours.
- Sneezing or coughing
- Any cough that causes the child to become red or blue in the face
- Loss of smell or taste
- Nasal discharge that is cloudy, thick or yellow/green. A child with any continuous drainage that affects classroom hygiene should also remain at home.
- Infected eyes, especially red eyes with discharge and drainage, or matting of the eyelids
- Presence of any communicable rash
- Any exposed or open sores
- Any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in class activities and/or results in greater care than the teacher can provide, without compromising the safety or health of the other children in the class.

Parents will be notified and asked to pick up their child if they become ill at school with any of the above symptoms.

If the parent is unable to be reached, the emergency contacts listed on the child's Health Emergency form will be called and asked to pick up the child.

Students must also remain home after travel or high-density events. Please see our travel and illness FAQ (Appendix B) for more details on this policy.

Responsibilities of the School

- Observe children daily for signs of illness.
- Send children immediately to the office when symptoms of illness are identified and contact parents for immediate pick-up.
- Communicate to parents of the class where a communicable disease has been diagnosed (while maintaining confidentiality).
- Promote hand washing as an important practice in prevention.
- Encourage students to cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing.

Responsibilities of the Parent

- Notify the Class Teacher and Administration if a child has been diagnosed with any communicable illness listed above.
- Keep a sick child at home until the child is well.
- Pick up a sick child from school immediately following notification from the Office. If a parent is generally unable to leave work during the day, indicate on emergency paperwork alternate arrangements of who will be available to pick up a sick child.
- In some cases, a parent may need to obtain a physician's statement for re-admission. For example, chicken pox that states that the student is no longer contagious and can safely attend an active outdoor school setting.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a chance for each class to celebrate the arrival of your unique child to the world and honor their presence as part of their class. Each class will take up a birthday celebration to commemorate this special day, including summer birthdays. The agenda for such a celebration changes as the children grow and develop and become more independent from their parents.

Teachers will contact parents in advance of a child's birthday to discuss how they may assist or share in the class celebration.

If you choose to plan an additional celebration with friends outside of school, a small group of two or three close friends or a larger party with all the students (or all of the girls or all the boys, depending on their age) is much healthier for the social life of the class. If it will be a small party, contact parents directly; do not send invitations to school with your child. In this case, students should also be reminded that the party should not be discussed at school.

Cell Phone Policy

In order to protect our children from the EMFs of cell phones, as well as provide them with our undivided presence, please refrain from using your cell phone during drop off or pick up. Additionally, we request that the children do not bring cell phones or other devices to school. We also strongly recommend delaying their personal device use; please see www.waituntil8th.org if you are interested in learning more about this recommendation.

Code of Conduct

In order to ensure that our community has a social atmosphere that supports learning and tolerance, we expect all community members to their developmental degree, to follow these tenets:

1. I will be courteous.
2. I will be respectful of my peers, teachers, and all visitors to the school.
3. I will consider the safety of others' emotional and physical well-being.
4. I will take care of my property and that of the school and others.
5. I will use polite and socially acceptable language at all times.
6. I will be accepting of the differences of others.
7. I will ask questions, and utilize direct communication to the person or people involved, rather than spreading misinformation.

Code of Compassion

We recognize that with differences comes conflict. We are learning to see conflict as a normal occurrence and working to avoid what Kim John Payne calls “harmony addiction,” instead embracing conflict, and its resolution, as normal, good, and a rite of passage. In our 2021 training with Kim John Payne, he encouraged teachers and parents to expect conflict and difficulty and to have plans and processes in place to help guide students to the rich learning that can occur through difficult times.

Learning is akin to a gathering around a radiant, warm campfire. The wonder and awe of the fire keep many students within its ring of warmth, but sometimes students wander too far to possibly stay warm, or become so disoriented they end up far from the group in the surrounding forest. Our task is not to punish these disoriented students but rather to guide them back to the fire using various tools and resources. Disorientation is an opportunity for growth and transformation as students are reoriented socially, behaviorally, and/or academically.

The Code of Compassion is a powerful message promoting compassion, kindness, and empathy, shared with us by Kim John Payne, and contains values we can embody as a school community:

In a conflict, if you stop and take a step back and look at the situation from all points of view

Most often, empathy and compassion can emerge and change the course of an interaction so

All involved can be

Given the chance to truly be seen and heard

Instead of being dismissed, ignored, or left alone

Now is the time to

Encourage each other toward peaceful, compassionate solutions

Picture our school as a place where

Each one knows the worth and value of the other, where

Acceptance is demonstrated with big and small acts of kindness, and where

Compassion is present and practiced by

Everyone, everywhere, everyday

Bringing students from Disorientation to Self Discipline

The faculty at Mangrove School of Sarasota is committed to practices that focus on the development of a positive self-image in children, reinforcing positive behavior and de-emphasizing the negative. At times, consequences are necessary and appropriate, yet also respectful and relevant to the offense at hand.

Five basic rules are upheld at our school. These parameters are important because their primary purpose is to

ensure the safety and well-being of the children and the educational climate of the classroom:

1. No child shall hurt or endanger others.
2. No child shall endanger or hurt him or herself.
3. No child shall destroy or damage property.
4. No child shall leave the supervision of the teacher without that teacher's knowledge and consent.
5. Each child is expected to follow the basic rules of the school and classroom code of conduct.

Guidelines for School Behavior (Grade School)

In the beginning and throughout the year, teachers will clearly communicate to the children and to their parents the expectations for school behavior; these expectations will change as the children mature through the grades.

In support of a healthy, dynamic learning environment, all students are expected to:

- Follow classroom rules and directions given by their teacher.
- Participate and/or cooperate willingly in class.
- Speak and act respectfully toward others.
- Complete schoolwork in a careful and timely manner to their best ability.
- Be respectful of the school campus and the natural world.
- Behave in a way that honors the mood of the class and is not disruptive to others.
- Arrive to classes on time and ready to engage with the lesson.

Students are expected to refrain from dangerous behaviors such as:

- Roughhousing, if the teacher has asked the behavior to stop and the student has not complied.
- Kicking, hitting, biting, fighting, or any other behavior that causes physical harm/injury to another.
- Stealing.
- Repeatedly, and after warnings, refusing to follow the direction of the teacher.
- Extreme and overt disrespect toward peers and adults.
- Destruction or defacing of property.
- Possession of any type of weapon, or dangerous object.
- Severe harassment, including bullying (power imbalance).
- Use of abusive or obscene language, or profanity

Of course, teachers expect that children will misbehave from time to time, and this can help identify areas where the child is struggling and needs more support, and/or demonstrate that a child is looking for boundaries to push. Upholding or instituting them will further support their growth and development.

We are committed to maintaining a campus that is safe and supportive of all students. When an individual student crosses the line with their behavior, we commit to acting quickly to provide the needed disciplinary support, followed by steps to reintegrate the student into the group as soon as appropriate.

Disciplinary Responses and Support Strategies

Learning appropriate social boundaries and how to constructively express emotions is a part of learning. Violating these expectations presents an opportunity for learning. All children will be treated with respect during the resolution process.

Disciplinary responses draw on the professional judgment of the teachers and administrators responsible for making such decisions, using a range of discipline management techniques. Teachers often collaborate on helpful strategies for addressing such behaviors in class, to support the child without creating undue disruption in class.

Discipline action may include one or more of the following responses or strategies depending on the age of the children, the underlying function of the behavior, and at the discretion of the teacher:

1. D.A.D.D. Disapprove, Affirm... then later...Discover, Do- over (See Appendix E for this great tool that can also be used at home)
2. Preview/Review. The student briefly and privately previews with the teacher what is expected of him/her before the beginning of each lesson. A subtle signal is agreed if the student is getting off track with the agreed behavioral aim. At the end of the lesson, the teacher very briefly reviews with the student, with emphasis on what went well.
3. Movement Breaks. The student is given a signal that he/she needs a movement break. They need to agree to do this quietly and without disruption.
4. Alternate Space. The student is allocated a “quiet area” where he/she can work if disruption is beginning and they need some “cooling off”. It is important that this is arranged beforehand.
5. Redirecting Into the Familiar. If disoriented behavior starts to become felt by the student or seen by the teacher it is very effective to redirect the student away from the space and task that is being done by the rest of the class, and into something familiar where he/she feels safe and competent. This might include other quiet activities such as drawing or reading, and can also be doing some purposeful work within or just outside the class area. If the student is being redirected into purposeful work outside the classroom it needs to be anticipated and set up before the class begins
6. Pedagogical stories with nourishing, uplifting lessons hidden within the story can be healing for an entire class.
7. Sometimes, children need to go home for the day to have a true reset.

If difficulties persist, some strategies include:

1. Limited day attendance. Often morning lessons and one or two other known successful lessons are attended until a good basis of positivity has been achieved. Only then would a gradual introduction to the past problematic areas be considered.
2. Allowing the student to assist in other areas of the school to foster feelings of capability.
3. Implementing a support plan that includes outside interventions.

For more serious, consistent violations, an incident report will be filed, and the class teacher may request to meet with the parents to discuss specific behavior and disciplinary action to be taken, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances at the MSS. If a student presents an immediate danger to himself or herself or others, he or she may be temporarily physically restrained (held) to ensure either their safety or the safety of others.

Student Behavior at Off-Campus Events

When attending a school-sponsored event, students directly participating are under the immediate supervision of their parents or guardians, and are expected to follow the guidelines above.

Parent Partnership Messages

Teachers will utilize these forms to share any minor infractions that may need to be followed up on. (These could also be utilized for missing items, noting a lack of sleep or things like this).

Referral to Support

If a pattern of disorientation becomes apparent, the Class Teacher, with the support of the Administration, will determine a course of action. They may confer with faculty/staff who are involved with the student to discuss their concerns and recommendations and create a support plan to address the challenges. This plan identifies specific changes in behavior that are needed, as well as any identified learning or social/emotional challenges that might be contributing to the student’s ability to engage in class. We must get to the root of the behavior, rather than simply treat the “symptom”. They may also recommend positive measures to improve behavior and will outline criteria for gauging the student’s progress. In cases where student behavior poses imminent harm to fellow students or

members of the community a meeting with the parents will be required to discuss how the student can return.

Once the Support Plan is developed, it is shared with all faculty and staff who will interact with the student. The plan is shared during a meeting with parents (and the student, if appropriate.) During this meeting, the plan is signed by the teacher and parents. If recommendations for outside support are included in the plan, parents are responsible for beginning this work according to the timelines indicated.

If the student's behavior transforms according to the timeline and expectations of the plan, the process is complete. Occasional conversations between the Class Teacher and parents should still take place to ensure continued success.

If behavior challenges persist, the student's attendance may be interrupted, depending on the circumstances.

Every effort is made to help a student remain at the school once they are enrolled in a class. The key points to determine whether or not a child should remain at the school are parental support of the curriculum, the behavior support plan, the teacher, and the school, along with the child's fit in the class. Each aspect must be present for the school to serve the child.

If a student is exhibiting significant behavioral challenges that are affecting the overall health of a class, they may be withheld from attending school for a period of time. This can serve a variety of purposes. It is a response to a serious breach of trust between the student and the school or between students and classmates. It can be beneficial to allow time away from school or the class for breathing, reflection, and considering healthy steps forward. It can allow time for conversations between teachers and parents. This is followed by a conference with the student, his/her parents, and the Class Teacher, prior to the child returning to school. Sometimes a shorter day, such that a student can be successful, is an effective tool.

When there is a lingering question about a student's ability to thrive within our school, a contract that includes a Probationary Period may be required for the student to rejoin the class. This contract will include a probation timeline and any necessary steps that must occur for the student to remain enrolled in the school. Parents (and students, if age appropriate) are required to agree to this contract before the student may return to class.

Disciplinary Dismissal

Disciplinary dismissal is the termination of the student's relationship with the school for disciplinary reasons. On the rare occasion that disciplinary dismissal is warranted, it will be recommended by the Class Teacher and/or Administration, in consultation with each other as well as additional faculty members. The Administration will convey the school's decision in writing to the family.

Administrative Dismissal

An administrative case for dismissal occurs when a parent does not support the curriculum, or school policies, or does not demonstrate respect for their child's teacher(s) or other school staff. Lack of support may be demonstrated by but is not limited to/actions such as:

- Failure to respond to attempts to messages, emails, and/or to address certain issues or situations
- consistent violation of school policies
- inappropriate forms of communication with any representative of the school
- undermining the relationship of the teacher to the child.
- speaking to other parents about other students, the teacher, or the administration. All families sign the Conflict Resolution policy at enrollment to promote healthy and responsible resolution of all school-related issues. Failure to observe the Conflict Resolution Policy is the basis for dismissal as it creates and feeds misunderstandings amongst the community and does not facilitate cooperative resolution.
- Failure to sign and return Referrals for Evaluation and/or student Support Plans.
- Failure to attend parent-teacher conferences.

In situations such as these, the Class Teacher and/or a member of the administration will document the situation and may bring it to the full faculty for discussion. If needed, the administration will develop a plan and timeline to

address the problems. Once all parties agree to the plan and timeline, it is signed, and the family will be, in effect, on probation. The Administration will monitor the situation and when the probationary period is over will determine if the family and school are a good fit for each other.

If the plan of action is not signed and returned to the school by the deadline, or it is signed and not carried out by the parent, then the agreement is considered null and void and the withdrawal process will be initiated. The Administration will notify the family in writing.

Communication

We value clear, direct communication with space for differing viewpoints while maintaining an atmosphere of respect, flexibility, and growth. In support of this ideal, we strive for a community that develops relationships with others based on compassion and trust. All communication we engage in should support these values. You can expect the following types of communication from the school:

- **The Parent Partnership Update** will be sent to all Mangrove School of Sarasota families weekly through the parent communication app, our school messaging system. Upcoming festivals, events, and any requests or reminders can be found here. Please read it carefully, it will keep you in the know! In addition, you will receive a monthly newsletter from all class teachers that includes detailed descriptions of what our students are doing in class.
- Our community-wide communication service will also be used for reminders and updates to our operations. Please make sure you sign up, as this service will also be used for inclement weather emergencies.
- **Administrative Memos** - The office may send timely reminders that contain information and important deadlines.
- **Class Notices** - Notices from your teacher regarding class-specific activities, happenings, needs, or field trips will be sent from your child's teacher. Please speak with your class teacher if you have any questions regarding class-specific information.
- **Parent Partnership Q & A** - are scheduled to occur nearly every month; all parents are invited and this is an opportunity to meet with school personnel to ask questions, offer input into school or community matters, as well as to share ideas for parent-led initiatives within the school community.
- **Facebook** - Please follow the Mangrove School of Sarasota Facebook page/Instagram for upcoming events, articles of interest to families, and pictures of Mangrove Sarasota happenings.
- **Parent Class Meetings** - Parent meetings occur over the year when teachers provide a glimpse into classroom activities, explain the stages of child development, and how the curriculum meets the children. Specialty teachers may also be invited to share their curricular activities with parents. This valuable time together is used to share essential information with parents about the curriculum, to discuss any concerns that parents may have about life in the classroom, and to answer general questions about school programs. Parents are expected to attend these meetings. We recommend that all adults who are responsible for parenting the child are in attendance.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences** - Class teachers will schedule formal individual conferences with parents during the Fall and Spring terms. These conferences offer an excellent opportunity to discuss the progress of your particular child, the class itself, and any concerns you may have, therefore they are mandatory. Conferences are of direct benefit to your child as they enable the teacher and parent to be jointly supportive of the child's progress.
- **Quarterly narrative reports** are mailed home for each grade school student in early November, February, and April.
- **Year-End Reports** - For preschool and kindergarten children, year-end reports describing their work, play, and social interactions are mailed to parents in early June. At the end of the school year, each Class Teacher and specialty teacher prepares a comprehensive written report for each grades student. The report includes a curriculum overview and narrative descriptions of a child's academic, artistic, and social participation, and progress. Areas that need attention are also identified. Reports are mailed to parents in mid-June.
- **Communicating Directly With Your Child's Teacher** - Your child's teacher will let you know the best times to

contact them; generally at pick up or drop off, teachers will be focusing on the class needs, so they may not be available for an involved conversation at that time.

- **Communicating with Administration** - Please send a message through Illumine or to mangrovesarasota@gmail.com for any questions or concerns you may have, to update your child's file, report an absence or highly contagious illness, or if you have any requests. During the school day students are the primary focus of our teachers and staff, thus most messages will be responded to after school hours, unless it is an urgent need.
 - Please do not use Facebook or other social media as a means of communicating with teachers or staff regarding school issues.
- www.mangrovesarasota.com
The website is a place to obtain current information throughout the school year. The calendar can be accessed via the Illumine app.

If I have a question...?

Parents, teachers, and staff sometimes have questions, concerns, or suggestions about their child or about the school in general. Clear communication is vital to the children and to the interests of the community at large.

Consult the following list to direct any questions:

Your child's teacher for questions concerning:

- Your child's and family's experience
- Academic, social, and emotional support needs
- Class curriculum and activities
- Anything specifically related to the class
- School policies, particularly those that affect the children directly

Director for questions concerning:

- General curriculum questions
- Concerns about activities within the community
- Questions that remain after a discussion with a child's teacher or another member of the administration
- School calendar
- Enrollment inquiries for a new family
- School tours
- Marketing and outreach
- Grants and fundraising opportunities
- Employment openings

Operations Manager concerning:

- Legal and financial concerns
- Campus and grounds safety
- Registration
- Tuition or Scholarships
- Compliance Information
- Reimbursement for expenses
- Tax information
- Records/Contact information changes
- Class schedules
- Support Plans

Administrative Specialist for questions concerning:

- Urgent messages to faculty
- Office supplies and materials
- Fingerprinting/background checks/Employee Files
- Attendance
- Early Childhood Needs
- First aid information or supplies
- Substitutes
- Faculty calendar and time off requests

Daily Rhythms

Daily rhythms help children settle into their days with security and comfort. Our school rhythms vary by age. Drop off and pick up will be at the play yards for Early Childhood students, and their days will include free play, circle time, snack preparation (on campus only), meal time (s), nature and artistic activities, storytime, and clean up.

The daily rhythm in the grades will include core routines of nature awareness, their main lesson, meal times, recesses, downtime, and specialty classes. Nature walks and trips to the park may also be included. Towards dismissal time they will help close out the day, such as putting their belongings away and help perform community contributions, such as caring for the compost, filling water stations, taking out garbage, and watering plants, along with a closing circle. Pick-up will be in the same location as their drop-off location.

As an active school setting, a healthy and consistent afternoon and evening rhythm will support children through the next school day. This might include a healthy snack and refreshing drink, downtime, special time with a parent to foster a sense of connection and belonging, a housework task to support a sense of responsibility and contribution to the family, a nourishing dinner, and an early bedtime. For more specific ideas for your child's developmental stage, please connect with your child's teacher.

Dress Code

Students will be active during their school day. Clothing should be comfortable and allow for unrestricted movement, in all types of weather. They should bring a hat daily or keep one in their backpack. They must also have rain gear available.

- Natural fibers are recommended for maintaining a desirable body temperature.
- Flashy or revealing clothing is not appropriate for school. Be mindful that clothing is neither too tight nor too loose. Clothing should fit well.
- Keep in mind how clothing will act if the student jumps, rolls, hangs upside down, etc.
- Clothing should be weather-appropriate. **A raincoat and rain boots or waterproof shoes should be available on rainy days. Please make sure to label these.**
- A comfortable sun hat should be kept in the child's backpack.
- Clothes should be clean and without tears.
- Clothing should be free of pictures and words, including logos and advertising.
- For safety, avoid dangling jewelry (including earrings, bracelets, and necklaces).
- **Flat, comfortable, closed-toe shoes (suitable for running and games) are required.** Socks help avoid ant bites. **No sandals, flip-flops, wheeled shoes or shoes that light up, please.**
- **Please send an extra set of clothes to school in a soft bag in your child's backpack. Please make sure to label these, and replace them as needed.**
- **Please plan ahead for cooler weather.** We are an "all weather" school; aside from dangerous meteorological events, the children are outside. Please plan on having layers, as well as cold weather gear such as jackets, hats, and mittens or gloves for your child's comfort during any cold spells we may have.
- Please avoid the use of perfumes or colognes (and other scented products), as many are chemically sensitive to these substances.

In observance of special festival days and events, please eschew t-shirts, sweatpants, and sweatshirts on these days.

Inquire with your teacher about which types of clothing would be appropriate for particular events. On the most formal occasions, students are invited to attend in dress pants/shorts, collared shirts, dresses, or skirts to encourage an atmosphere of reverence for the occasion.

Reminder: Should your child have any outgrown outdoor gear, please consider donating it to the school, for another student to utilize, or as extras in the classroom.

Emergencies and First Aid Concerns

First Aid

The faculty and staff are infant CPR and First Aid certified. In addition, the majority of our staff, including all of our Forest teachers, are also SOLO Wilderness First Aid certified. If a student needs minor first aid treatment for conditions such as small scratches, bruises, cuts, or scrapes, a teacher will tend to the situation. The school does not employ a registered nurse. Homeopathic remedies and over-the-counter first aid treatments are kept at the school and may be administered with prior signed consent on the student's registration forms.

Student Medication

Students are not allowed to self-administer any medication at school without prior approval by the parent and knowledge of the supervising teacher. In circumstances where children need to take medication at school, these procedures must be followed:

1. Parent/guardian must submit medical authorization in writing from the child's physician to the Administration.
2. Medication will be brought to the teacher by the parent/guardian in the original container. Prescription medication must come labeled with the physician's instructions. The teacher can then supervise or administer medication as instructed by the student's physician.
3. Students must have received at least one dose of the medication (if new to them) at least 24 hours before coming to school to ensure they are not allergic.

Life-Threatening Allergies

We have an obligation to keep the class and school environment free of allergens that pose a threat to certain students. If a child has a potentially life-threatening allergy, it is vital that the child's Class Teacher and the Administrative office are alerted about triggers that affect the child, as well as protective measures needed to ensure the child's safety. If appropriate, parents of allergic children are asked to send EpiPens to keep in the child's classroom with specific instructions on its use.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, the supervising faculty will assess the seriousness of the medical emergency. Either emergency medical personnel will be summoned by calling 911, and/or the supervising faculty will summon another adult to supervise the class while they tend to the child, depending on the extent of the situation.

All teachers have first aid supplies available at all times in their class area. Additional supplies are located inside the school building in clearly marked containers that can easily be retrieved by additional staff. There is an AED on campus. Parents and/or emergency contacts are informed as soon as possible in an emergency situation. If the child needs to go to a medical care facility, a faculty/staff will accompany him/her with the student's medical emergency information (including emergency contacts, insurance information, and permission to treat in an emergency).

The faculty/staff who witness the incident will describe the situation to the parents/guardian and a member of the administration ASAP, and then promptly complete an accident report in duplicate, one copy going into the student's

file and one to the parent.

The Class Teacher will call the student's home on the same evening to check on the child's condition.

Head Injuries and Concussions

Concussions are usually caused by some type of trauma to the head from falling on the head, sports injuries, or when two children hit their heads together. Concussions are especially dangerous in young children, because they may not be able to tell you how they are feeling. Children with head injuries must be watched carefully for any signs and symptoms.

1. In the case of a head injury, students will be assessed initially and evaluated continuously for signs of concussion.
2. For students with any level of head injury (no matter the extent) the student's parent is notified.
3. If there are any signs of concussion, the student will need to receive medical attention and be given clearance before they are able to resume school activities. Rest is imperative for brain injuries - this includes rest from physically and mentally taxing activities, including school work and any kind of rapid eye movement required for visual media participation (TV, movies, video games).

Weather-Related School Closings

When the Sarasota County Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather or other emergency, Mangrove School of Sarasota will be closed. Due to being completely outside, we may also close for any days that we anticipate will endure intense prolonged storms. Inclement weather days will be called when it appears it will be unsafe to be outside all or most of the school day and will be announced by 9 pm the evening before whenever possible

During the day, should the weather become dangerous (for example: lightning, tornado warning), classes may move indoors at any time as needed.

Field Trip Chaperone Considerations

When serving as a class chaperone, the adult accepts responsibility for all students. The adult will refrain from extending special consideration or favor to one's own child or a select group, as this will create a feeling of inequality. Additionally, all school or class policies must be followed on the trip, these cannot be overridden by the presence of a parent. If the chaperone feels the entire class will benefit from something extra, the chaperone will discuss the suggestion with the teacher. Chaperones recognize that the teacher knows the group of students and families best, and it is the teacher's responsibility to make final decisions regarding any change of plans.

The chaperone helps in creating boundaries and structure. If a student pushes these boundaries, the chaperone is encouraged to immediately give that student the support he/she needs, in addition to bringing it to the teacher's attention. While having fun, chaperones will also stay focused on the purpose of the trip.

Travel time is an important social time for the students. During the trip, students get to know each other in a different way than they would at school. Chaperones will often be amazed to hear the conversations of students in cars!

During the trip or activity, the chaperone should remain aware of the location of first aid supplies and cell phones for emergencies, however, cell phone usage should be restricted to trip communication and/or medical emergencies. The vehicle should have adequate fuel in the tank before the class departs from school. Seat belts are to be worn at all times. When vehicles are equipped with front seat airbags, passengers in those seats must be age 13 or older and/or weigh at least 100 lb. Students weighing less than 40 lbs. must have a booster seat in which to sit during the trip.

While photographs may be taken during field trips, chaperones are asked to be discreet and not post photographs on personal social media accounts. Please share all class photos with your class teacher or school administration.

Flow of the Year

Observing seasonal turning points helps to establish a yearly rhythm for the children. Each seasonal festival is planned and organized each year as we honor tradition and nature, while also being mindful of the times and needs of our community, so there are often new aspects to experience as well. Some festivals may be celebrated as school-wide events, while others take place within the classroom. Teachers and students may take up festivals that arise out of their study of the different cultures of the world and/or those that reflect the religious traditions of the families within each class.

The following is a description of the events of a typical year. As we grow and evolve these events may change as well. Other events may be added. Specific information about each event will be included in the Parent Updates throughout the year.

Community Work Days

Working side by side for the betterment of our children's educational environment supports a feeling of true community spirit, as we collectively set the intention for another successful and productive year. Before this, we will email the list of tasks that must be accomplished in order to be ready for the first day of school, and families can then either come on the work day or in for certain tasks (such as sanding, refinishing, etc), contact us about picking up tasks to do at home if that is desired.

Welcome Back Potluck

At the beginning of each school year, parents, teachers, and staff gather to share a meal and welcome new and returning families. This is a casual, family event to kick off the school year.

Rose Ceremony

Honoring the transition of the young child as they journey from the world of early childhood to 1st grade has been a tradition in many schools all over the earth. In a Waldorf school, this right of passage is particularly cherished. The Rose Ceremony is designed for the oldest students of the school community to welcome the youngest children. Leaving kindergarten and entering first grade is an enormous shift for young children. During this ceremony, first graders walk the bridge from Early Childhood to Grades, as a metaphor for the entire first grade year. To meet the young child of today, our first grade offers the beginning of formal, organized, academics, while also still recognizing the need for more play and movement for children around age seven. Each child is offered a rose by the oldest students in the school and is received by the first-grade teacher, who tells them their very first story as first graders.

Watching the exchange between the oldest and youngest students as they offer a rose and gentle, guiding hand into grade school is very touching. The little ones are surely looking up to these bigger students with awe and admiration, as the older students are remembering their first days of school. The beautiful complexity of the rose symbolizes this transformation and growth.

Mandatory All-School Parent Partnership Meeting

This event is an opportunity for parents to learn more about our school and community. You will get a sneak peek of what is to come for each grade over the year, as well as meet other parents and teachers within the community. Please plan on having at least one parent attend.

Autumn Equinox Festival

The Autumn Equinox Festival is the first festival of the school year and celebrates the first day of Autumn – when day and night are perfectly balanced. This year our festival is a bit later than usual, on Saturday, 10/1. This equilibrium also represents the duality of light and darkness that exists within human beings. This festival honors the courage and

strength in each of us, as we face this part of the year, of longer nights - a natural time of turning inward, reflecting, and facing our own darkness. This is traditionally pictured as the brave warrior in the act of subduing a dragon, which represents the dark side of human nature. For the younger children, this message is not overtly stated, but rather, this time of year is filled with stories and songs of the brave and true. The children learn that with great valor, dragons can be beaten.

For our festival this year, the Grades students will perform a play for the community that depicts the story of George and his battle with the dragon. Finally, the children are invited to perform various challenges, testing their bravery and skill.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Conferences are offered twice a year, Fall and Spring, by appointment. Your child's teacher will notify you when sign-ups are available.

Lantern Walk

The lantern is the symbol of our own light which we can shine on a dark world, and we celebrate this festival by holding a reverent "lantern walk." This year, our lantern walk will be held on Friday, 11/11 at 5:30 pm.

This family walk is complete with lanterns made lovingly by our dear children, as well as songs they have learned in class. Comfortable, warm clothing is recommended for this event. We do ask that you not allow your child to run, in order to maintain the reverence for this event. (This behavior also tends to be contagious!) Quiet conversation is fine, however, please do not get so engrossed that you are distracted from supervising your child.

Winter Assembly

On a Friday before Winter break, an assembly is held before an early dismissal for all at 12:30 pm. Parents, grandparents, and friends are warmly invited to attend as each class offers a performance for the rest of the school, followed by a potluck lunch. This year the Winter Assembly will be held on Friday, 12/16.

Santa Lucia Day

Santa Lucia is celebrated during the school day on December 14th. This festival celebrates the warmth of light and giving. The 2nd and 3rd graders, dressed in white and singing traditional songs, visit each class with a special treat for each student.

Winter Solstice Camping

Please join us for a community camping trip to Crowley Museum and Nature Center from 3 pm Monday through noon Wednesday, to observe and honor the coming of winter! We will have some planned activities, plenty of chores, as well as ample time for freedom of exploration of the woods and witnessing its subtle winter changes. If you choose not to camp, children can be dropped off for the regular school day on Tuesday December 20th. We will need to know your RSVP by December 1st so we can plan accordingly. A sign-up sheet will be emailed to all who will be attending such that all gear can be supplied and community meals can be made during the trip.

Winter Spiral Garden

This year our Winter Spiral will take place in nature, at Crowley Museum and Nature Center, during our camping trip. Once the spiral begins, we ask for you to please maintain reverence for this event. Grades Children will sit with their classes, and one by one, each child will take a turn to slowly walk the spiral, holding a red apple with a small unlit candle inserted into it. As the child reaches the center, he or she lights the candle and then returns out of the spiral, where they will place the apple and candle near one of the golden stars. Each child lights the way for those who will come after them. As children take their turns, more and more lit candles light the spiral, and it begins to glow. The evening is quiet and moving. With the winter days being short, and the nights long, the spiral celebrates a kindling of

our inner light and holds a promise that spring, light, and life will begin again. This year our Spiral Garden will take place on Monday, December 19th, at 5:30 pm, and will be offered for students Kindergarten age and up. Younger EC students will participate in an alternative spiral that will happen at an earlier time of day.

Mermaid Faire

Mermaid Faire is a day filled with magic and wonder for all ages. Enchanting activities, educational opportunities, live music, and delicious food make this a true family event with something for everyone. We will need all hands on deck; a sign-up sheet will be emailed beginning in January. This wholesome, endearing, (and zero-waste) event is not to be missed for Mangrove families and friends.

Kite Festival

For this festival, we rejoice in the arrival of spring! Students can create their own kites to fly, for anyone else in attendance, handmade and store-bought kites are welcome! Join us as we set our kites aloft, transforming the sky into a dancing mosaic of brilliant shapes and vibrant colors!

Early dismissal follows at 11:20 a.m.

Festival of May

Our “May Day” is updated to better reflect our seasons here in Florida. Families gather before dusk for an evening at the beach, dressed in white or pastel “spring-like” colors for a festival of “Letting Go”. Students will make head wreaths and dance the maypole with their class. The evening will be complete with music and dance as we celebrate the freedom and relaxation that comes with summer. This year's Festival of May will take place on Friday, May 5th, on Siesta Key Beach at 5:30.

End-of-Year Assembly and Gallery

At this assembly, we will see the culmination of the entire year, as each class offers a performance for the rest of the school, along with displaying beautiful classwork. Teachers, staff, and key volunteers are honored for their dedication to our school and community. A community potluck closes out the year, just as it began.

Summer Solstice/St John's Day Festival

At the Summer Solstice, the Earth is breathing out to its fullest. The new life and light promised at our Winter Solstice spiral is born again in the Spring and now reaches its peak. It is also the turning point of the year, the longest day and shortest night here where we live, and typically brings a natural inclination to spend as much time outdoors as possible.

The custom of lighting a fire at this time, also called Midsummer, is an ancient one, but it is still followed in many places, often including an experience of purification. In the Middle Ages, it was customary to dance around the fire with garlands of flowers and herbs, and finally jump over it, throwing the garlands into the flames, wishing for all ills to burn among them, transforming into sparks sent up to the spiritual realm.

For many around the world, this time has also become known as St John's tide, in which the fire ritual serves as the central element, a conduit between earth and the heavens, symbolizing change and evolution in ourselves, not for ourselves, but rather, for the service of all.

This is a time to honor all of the elements (air, water, fire, earth) within ourselves as each group circles the fire, and as we close, if you are willing, jumps over its embers one by one, purified and transformed, fitting for the time of renewal of the human conscience.

This is a time to ask, who are we to each other, the world, and the universe? We are bursting with life but also searching for deeper meaning in this life. We will rejoice in celebrating humanity as a whole; what it means to be a

human being who is both of earth and flawed, but also of the spiritual realm and pure light as well.

Other events that will occur throughout the year might include Family Fun Nights, Crafting Events, Adult Enrichment opportunities, and more. Information about these events will be included in the Parent Update.

Food Guidelines

The connection between food and mood has long been established. Healthy food is essential to a productive school day. Attention span, immunity, and impulse control are all directly influenced by food and drink. Sugar specifically has been known to lower immunity. **Natural, unprocessed foods help children have enough energy to participate fully and avoid behavioral issues. Foods that are highly processed, high in sugar, non-satiating, and low in nutrients can significantly affect your child during school, as we remain active throughout the day.** In the interest of providing the best possible learning environment for all students and staff, we have developed a Food Guidelines policy based on the experience of the faculty and related current scientific data. **Please check the ingredients on packaged foods carefully.** If you have any questions or comments about the Food Guidelines, please speak with your child's teacher.

- Each grades student should bring a healthy snack and a full lunch in a basket or lunchbox (**no characters, please**) and two cloth napkins. Please be sure your child has reusable utensils as needed.
- Early Childhood students may bring a healthy snack, as they prepare a mid-morning meal together. They should also bring lunch if they are staying for Little Siesta rest time.
- One full, large water bottle should be brought to school each day. Please label this with their first and last name. As we are outdoors, so a rugged design is recommended. On Forest Fridays, students should have two full water bottles. **Please bring water only.**
- **All foods containing added sugar, food dyes, artificial additives, or preservatives may not be brought on campus and will be returned home.** This includes, but is not limited to:
 1. Soda or other sweetened beverages
 2. Gum
 3. Candy
 4. Non-nutritional chips (Doritos, Cheetos, etc.)
 5. Non-nutritional yogurt (Gogurt, etc.)
 6. Pudding/Jello cups (all types)
 7. Sweetened granola bars
 8. Cookies, cakes, etc
- **Aim for balanced meals that contain a mix of healthy proteins, fats, and carbohydrates, particularly fruits and veggies for the very best fuel for your child.**
- In consideration of students with food allergies, lunches may not be shared.
- Please also keep packaging waste in mind. Please use reusable containers whenever possible.
- Thermal containers and ice packs are helpful for keeping food fresh.
- **Some suggestions of what to bring – a balance of the following types of foods: whole grain sandwiches, fruit, veggies and hummus, nuts and seeds, seaweed, hard-boiled eggs, Lara Bars, soups, salads, cheese, crackers, olives, avocado, leftovers from last night's dinner, quinoa salad, rice, and beans. On chilly days a thermos of soup or oatmeal is extra nourishing and soothing.**
- Children of all ages can assist with lunch packing or unpacking on some level. Please talk to your child's teacher if you are unsure of what a developmentally appropriate expectation of this responsibility should be.
- **To further promote harmony and ease in the classroom, we request that students do not eat any of the offending foods before coming to school, as well.**

The faculty and staff are greatly appreciative of the steps families make in adopting the Food Guidelines for their students. We truly believe that eating whole, natural foods is one key to a productive and enjoyable school experience for all.

Forest Fridays

On Fridays, Mother Earth serves as both our teacher and classroom, as we enjoy many wild natural areas each week. While children immerse themselves in nature for this extended period, our goal is to stimulate their innate curiosity, and foster compassion and empathy for all living beings, all while providing an opportunity for interest-led learning to flow organically. Our locations will rotate, to provide a balance for the needs of the community members, regarding factors such as distance and cost. You will receive a schedule before the beginning of each semester. Children must be well rested for Friday mornings, as we are extra active on this day.

When we are at Crowley Museum and Nature Center, students will have access to the Crowley woods and farm and will be responsible for certain farm chores each week. Drop off will be at Crowley at 8:30 am, near the screen house. The cost for this field trip will be \$5/family.

Items needed for Forest Friday:

- Two reusable water bottles
- A rash guard or lightweight long-sleeve shirt for sun protection
- For water locations - students must have either sturdy water shoes or old sneakers that can get wet.
- a hat
- Other sun protection as needed (sunscreen etc)
- Bug spray can be helpful for some locations

Other optional but helpful items are:

- Small, quiet personal fans
- Cooling towels (teachers always have these in first aid kits as well, but some students may prefer to use them daily)

Our Core Values:

Reverence

Helping children create a connection to our land, and inspiring a sense of wonder, gratitude, and responsibility for the earth, is the greatest gift we can give the earth and each other. People who are in awe of nature will always be a protector of it – not just in words, but in actions – big and small.

When we enter the forest we enter the home of many beings, only some of which we can see or hear, and we want to be the most respectful house guests we can be. When we walk through the paths, we use our forest voices and respect that many beings live among the understory of the forest, the saw palmettos and cabbage palms. Many insects, lizards, and other small creatures live in the nooks and crannies of these plants, and the plants themselves are also beings to be respected and not hit as we walk along. We are not there to dominate and use the space for only our purposes. The trees also have feelings, so we only climb those who can bear the weight of a child and never hit them, or swing on the Spanish moss or vines that may hang from them.

Many children like to pick plants, flowers, berries, and ferns, this is best done by asking the plants permission and then sharing gratitude while being mindful of the plants' place in their environment. Are they the only flower, or are they among a field of flowers that will not be affected by a child graciously taking some?

Many locations we visit hold a deep indigenous history, which we also recognize and honor; having opportunities to respectfully explore the rich local heritage further unites children with the earth and the generations who have both shaped it and been shaped by it. Reverence in children is transformed into advocacy as they step into the world in their rightful place as land stewards.

Rhythm

Rhythm is a core value of our entire school year – our days, weeks, and school year all follow predictable rhythms, and this principle is essential on our forest day as well.

We let the rhythms of nature guide us. Flow learning allows us to orient ourselves to the nature cycle – much like the

rising and setting sun, our energy and focus shifts throughout the day. Teachers plan the flow of their day with time to create enthusiasm, focus, and share inspiration, all in tune with our own natural rhythms, of higher and lower energies, while offering time for reflection and downtime.

Service

Children who regularly engage in service activities reap the many benefits from a young age – service is known to foster appreciation, enhance perspective, boost self-esteem and confidence, and develop a sense of purpose, and self-awareness. Our nature days offer many opportunities to serve our greater community and recognize our interdependence.

Invasive plant pulling, coastal tree planting, and trash clean up are a few of the ways we have helped serve others, at locations such as Crowley Nature Center, Phillippi Park, and Robinson Preserve.

Naturalist skill acquisition

Age-appropriate, purposeful naturalist skills are interwoven throughout the program, inspired by our locality, and what we believe are essential wilderness skills and deeper understandings for children to acquire – this ranges from building a fire safely, learning bird language, native plant identification, building shelters, and many, many more. Each class incorporates core routines into their day in nature that enhance and enrich their naturalist practice, awareness, and knowledge of the place. These are learning habits, such as sit spots, gratitude circles, expanding our senses, opening circle, and story of the day, to name a few, that help children get out of their heads and into their senses, and allow us to remember our original instructions, what humans evolved with – a blueprint designed for a dynamic awareness of nature. Each human being possesses this ancient blueprint for connecting with the natural world, and core routines bring this into our consciousness effortlessly.

Foundation

It is the interweaving of home, school, and outside activities that create the fabric of the child's life. First and foremost, in order to provide a solid foundation, it is essential that the two main environments the children experience are similar in expectations and philosophy. In addition, we request parents communicate to the Class Teacher any home or family situation that may affect how the child behaves at school. The importance for the child of a strong connection between home and school cannot be over-emphasized, and therefore we share the following ideas and suggestions for thoughtful consideration. If you are interested in more suggestions, Kim John Payne's books are a wonderful resource for enriching childhood and family life.

Toys

Less is more both in quality and quantity. The ideal toy is one that a child can pour their imagination into; the less complex a toy, the more they can become, in play. Additionally, limiting the number of toys can also help to create a sense of order and appreciation, which is healthy for children—and adults as well! Simple objects made of natural materials will awaken the child's imagination and freedom to bring their own ideas into play. Toys that are very fixed are often very limiting to the imagination, as they can only be used in one way, or for a specific story/movie.

Rhythm

Rhythm is a natural and healthy part of life. Most people are not fully aware of the continuing rhythms of nature but experience their effects both daily and over the year. A healthy rhythm is established in the home when meals are generally served at the same time each day, and when bedtime is set at a regular hour. The child whose life is ordered by rhythm gains a secure foundation for life.

Learning to set a time for all tasks is an important life skill. Rhythm then becomes a healthy habit for living a balanced life. Predictability does not mean there can never be a spontaneous adventure; it is the overall consistency that provides the essential form. First guided externally by the parent for the young child, over time this practice shapes internal self-discipline in an older child.

Rituals can be added to family life to enhance the rhythm of life in meaningful ways. By lighting a candle at the shared evening meal, or creating a special family birthday tradition, families can bring warmth and purpose to daily activities.

It is recommended that parents support the balance in a child's life by limiting the number of extra-curricular activities and play dates in which children participate. Teachers are available to discuss developmentally appropriate schedules for children if needed. Generally speaking, however, modern life seldom provides enough downtime for children, yet this time provides the most valuable opportunity for them to grow and develop.

Rest and Sleep

Teachers of children of all ages can easily see the effects of over-tiredness in a child's classroom behavior and work. Students expend a tremendous amount of energy during the school day. A period of quiet time or rest after school is highly recommended for younger children, and downtime is important for all ages. All children benefit from early, regular bedtimes ensuring well-being and readiness for the next day. Adolescents may also require an increased amount of sleep, despite their sometimes burgeoning schedules. Parents should be aware of and honor the changing needs and rhythms of a growing child.

Fundraising

Our affordable tuition covers approximately 90% of our operating expenses. Mangrove School relies on internal and external fundraising to meet our annual budget needs.

All families are expected to participate in annual fundraising efforts, through contributions or volunteerism. Even if you are not able to give a lot, all families are encouraged to give some amount or engage family and friends who wish to support your child so that our annual participation rate is 100%. This allows our school more grant opportunities.

Additional information will be available in the Update as Fundraising events approach.

Issue Resolution

Mangrove School of Sarasota Resolution Process

We strive to support parents in their community involvement and request that all persons in our community engage in honest, respectful, and direct verbal and written communications. Should conflict or concern arise, we aim to resolve issues and conflicts in a healthy and transparent manner. Conflict resolution occupies an important role in building a community. We sincerely hope that if you have a concern, you will let us know, so we can help resolve it in a timely manner.

When an issue or concern arises please follow these steps in this order:

1. Speak directly with the individuals involved. Often issues can be resolved through open, direct, and respectful communication.
2. Inform a member of the Administration if your concern if it remains unresolved.
3. Have a mediated discussion if necessary. Notes from the meeting will be documented.

All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately, and as quickly as possible. **Please note that it is a violation of the Conflict Resolution Policy to speak to other parents, faculty members, or other individuals who are not directly involved with the issue. This creates misunderstandings and can be damaging to the community.**

We appreciate and welcome your feedback.

Media Guidelines

The use of computers, laptops, handheld devices, tablets, and television by students is strongly discouraged. Media interrupts the child's natural inclination to:

- Move their bodies
- Create original pictures in the mind
- Engage in lived experiences.

Additional concerns include:

- Inhibited neurological development
- Shortened attention span
- Consumerism
- Inappropriate content/attitudes
- Interrupted sleep patterns
- Body image issues
- Loss of patience
- Social exclusion

It is easy and convenient for adults and children to be consumers of media, and of course, there are positive uses of devices and media for adults. However, media consumption by children hinders the foundation of inner picture building, imagination, and the strengthening of the will that are essential to the healthy development of the child. It is therefore critical that parents make careful and conscious decisions about when and how media is introduced to and used by their children and/or in front of children. Faculty has seen that when children are exposed to media, it affects their behavior, and learning, and can even impact the entire classroom environment.

For Students from Early Childhood through Grade 4

Our teachers strongly recommend that the daily experience of the young child not include exposure to electronic media, including computers, cell phones, or other handheld devices/screens. Young children are best served by interacting directly with the world around them and with real people. If needed, a family might choose to do a family movie night on a weekend evening by choosing a carefully curated movie to watch together. If a teacher observes a negative impact due to a child's media use on the child's individual or social behavior, or academic performance, the parents will be notified and a resolution must be found.

For Students Grades 5 and Up

Even at this age, our teachers still strongly recommend limiting media exposure in the child's daily experience. Limited viewing of carefully selected and supervised media could take place on nonschool days, and should not be excessive on extended breaks. It is important that use remains limited and that parents be aware of the content and ensure it is appropriate. If a teacher observes a negative impact due to a child's media use on the child's individual or social behavior, or academic performance, the parents will be notified and a resolution must be found.

To develop some level of computer competency before high school, classes can begin to slowly introduce helpful skills such as typing, internet research, and email etiquette. If on occasion they do use the computer, please monitor and limit access, and have the child work in a visible family space.

Texting, messaging and the use of social media can be distracting, addictive, and on some occasions, even inappropriate or harmful for children and the social fabric of a class. These technologies not only pose real safety threats but also hamper students' ability to interact with their classmates in socially healthy ways. **To cultivate aware, empathetic, and genuine interpersonal skills, Mangrove School teachers request that all students refrain from using social media and have parental monitoring and guidance when it comes to texting.**

Student Use of Cell Phones

Student use of cell phones during the school day or at any school activity is not allowed. If a student must bring a cell phone to school for custody or after-school logistical purposes, it must remain completely turned off (not on silent or vibrate) during the school day and safely tucked away in the student's bag. Any communication needed with parents/guardians during the school day can take place through the school or teacher's phone.

We ask the same guidelines to be followed both as a student participant and as a student spectator at all school events. This includes evening activities.

Cell phones will be confiscated if students are discovered using them during the school day, or at a school event. Confiscated cell phones will be returned to a parent as soon as possible or may be picked up from the office at the end of the school day.

Wait Until 8th (waituntil8th.org)

The Wait Until 8th pledge empowers parents to rally together to delay giving children a smartphone until at least 8th grade. By banding together, this will decrease the pressure felt by kids and parents alike over the kids having a smartphone.

Smartphones are distracting and potentially dangerous for children yet are widespread in elementary and middle school because of unrealistic social pressure and expectations to have one.

These devices are quickly changing childhood for children. Playing outdoors, spending time with friends, reading books, and hanging out with family is happening a lot less to make room for hours of snap chatting, instagramming, and catching up on You Tube.

Parents feel powerless in this uphill battle and need community support to help delay the ever-evolving presence of smartphones in the classroom, social arena, and family dinner table. Take the pledge at waituntil8th.org to band together to wait until **at least eighth grade** before children are allowed to have a smartphone.

Every major carrier makes a basic phone that just calls and texts without a data plan if you believe your child will need to get in touch with you before 8th grade. The Wait Until 8th pledge is encouraging parents to delay the smartphone. If you would like your child to have a basic phone that just calls and texts or a two-way calling watch, you still can sign the pledge! The basic phone and two-way calling watch avoid many of the distractions and dangers of the smartphone.

Childhood is too short to waste on a smartphone.

Why Wait? (via Wait Until 8th)

There is a reason why top Silicon Valley executives are saying no to the smartphone until at least 14 for their children. There is a long list of reasons and parents need to know them.

SMARTPHONES ARE CHANGING CHILDHOOD

Childhood is changing for children. Playing outdoors, spending time with friends, reading books, and hanging out with family is happening a lot less to make room for hours of snap chatting, instagramming, and catching up on YouTube. With children spending anywhere between 3 to 7 hours daily in front of a screen, many childhood essentials are pushed aside for online amusement.

SMARTPHONES ARE ADDICTIVE

New research shows dependence on your smartphone may produce some of the same addictive brain responses similar to alcohol, drug, and gambling addictions. Smartphones are like slot machines in your children's pocket constantly persuading them to crave more. The tech industry intentionally designs smartphone apps and social media for people to use for long periods of time because this is how they make their money.

SMARTPHONES ARE AN ACADEMIC DISTRACTION

Elementary and middle school years establish the foundation for your child's academic success. Children learn how to productively manage time, projects, and homework. Introducing a constant distraction with a smartphone is paving a path for academic mediocrity. The early results of a landmark study on brain development by the National Institute of Health show children who spent more than two hours a day looking at a screen got lower scores on thinking and language tests. Research from the University of Texas suggests the mere presence of your smartphone reduces cognitive capacity and test-taking brainpower. One study demonstrated that using smartphones in classrooms can even lower a student's grade. Another study found that children who attended schools with smartphone bans did better on tests.

EXCESSIVE SMARTPHONE USE IS ALTERING CHILDREN'S BRAINS

Initial results from a groundbreaking study by the National Institute of Health reveal that MRI's found significant differences in the brains of children who use smartphones, tablets, and video games more than seven hours a day. Children who spent an excessive amount of time on screens were found to have a premature thinning of the cortex. That's the outermost layer of the brain that processes information from the five senses.

SMARTPHONES IMPAIR SLEEP

Studies show that the use of smartphones and other portable devices with screens affects the quantity and quality of sleep in children and teens. Adolescents are likely restless because they anticipate receiving texts and social media messages from friends, which affects their nighttime routine. Some children even wake up in the middle of the night to check texts or social media. Sleep disturbance in childhood is known to have adverse effects on health, including poor diet, obesity, weakened immune system, stunted growth, and mental health issues.

SCREEN TIME IMPACTS BEHAVIOR

Tweens who spend more time on screens have a higher likelihood of developing disruptive behavior disorders, with social media having an especially strong influence, a new UC San Francisco-led study published in the Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry found. Social media use was most likely to be linked to conduct disorder, while other forms of screen use—such as watching videos and television, playing video games, and texting—were more likely to be associated with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD).

Conduct disorder is characterized by violating others' basic rights or societal rules with actions such as bullying, vandalism, and stealing, while ODD is marked by a pattern of angry or irritable mood, argumentative or defiant behavior, and vindictiveness.

SMARTPHONES INTERFERE WITH RELATIONSHIPS

Many parents regret allowing their child to have a smartphone because they have experienced the way the smartphone is destructive to relationships. The parent-child relationship suffers. Children are often inattentive with the constant distraction the phone brings. Face-to-face relationships dwindle as children shift their time and energy to investing in their online "friendships."

SMARTPHONES INCREASE THE RISK OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Children are not emotionally equipped to navigate tricky social media waters at such an early age. Viewing someone else's highlight reel on social media often leads youth to think they are missing out or are not enough compared with their peers. Research shows that the more time someone uses social media the more likely they are to be depressed. A Harvard Business Review showed the more you use Facebook the worse you feel. Another report demonstrated that adolescents' psychological well-being decreased the more hours a week they spent on screens.

In addition, when children overuse technology, the constant stimulation of the brain causes the hormone cortisol to rise. Too much cortisol can inhibit a child from feeling calm. The loss of tranquility can lead to serious anxiety disorders.

Suicide rates are on the rise, especially for girls between the ages of 10 and 14 years old. For this age group, suicide

rates have tripled over the past 15 years.

SMARTPHONES PUT YOUR CHILD AT RISK FOR CYBERBULLYING

Bullying is no longer limited to the playground or locker room. Bullies seek to harm children through social media and texts often making retreat for the victim impossible. The most common medium used for cyberbullying is the phone. About one out of every four children has experienced cyberbullying, and about one out of every six children has done it to others. Only one in 10 victims will inform a parent or trusted adult of their abuse. Recent research indicates that children who receive smartphones in elementary school versus later in childhood are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying. According to the researchers, the increased risk of cyberbullying related to phone ownership could be tied to increased opportunity and vulnerability.

SMARTPHONES EXPOSE CHILDREN TO SEXUAL CONTENT

Smartphones have enabled children to view pornography anywhere. Pornography marketers intentionally target youth online to lure them to dangerous images and videos. One study showed that 42% of online youth users have been exposed to online pornography. Of those, 66% reported unwanted exposure to pornography often through online ads.

Not only are children viewing sexual content with their phones but they are creating it as well. More and more children are “sexting” (sending sexual text messages and or explicit images). Also, various apps open the doors to sexual predators seeking to track, groom, and harm our children.

TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVES BAN SMARTPHONES FOR THEIR CHILDREN

According to a New York Times piece, many technology executives wait until their child is 14 before they allow them to have a phone. While these teenagers can make calls and text, they are not given a data plan until 16. If leaders of digital giants like Google, eBay, Apple, and Yahoo are delaying the smartphone then should this not give us pause?

Executives that flourish on the success of technology are protecting their children from the smartphone. Should we not do the same?

Cyber Civics

We strive to foster lifelong learning in our students, along with the ability to act with clarity, compassion, and purpose in the world. In the middle school years, we began to incorporate the Cyber Civics curriculum to help address relationships in the digital world. The main topics are drawn directly from Kim John Payne’s Social Inclusion work and focus on conversations and activities around bullying, teasing, and digital reputations to prepare our students to be ethical and empowered digital citizens of modern society. Activities focus on critical thinking, ethical discussion, and decision-making through conversation and role-play. Topics include appropriate and responsible online behavior and boundaries as well as a conscious and informed relationship to technology in general, understanding sources of information, and producing versus consuming media.

Parent Support for Media Guidelines

We recognize that each family is in a different place in their journey, and may have varying rules about media in their homes. We strive to support families that may need to move towards consuming less media so that the children can benefit the most from their experience at school. It is our hope that these guidelines will motivate you to take this up with your family and to help strengthen the integrity of our community. It is always ok to scale back previous permissions you have given as a parent, either based on what you are observing with your child, or based on new understandings of how these technologies affect children.

Why are media guidelines important to follow?

Following our school’s media guidelines supports the children in their learning and in their development while also strengthening our school community. Upholding our media guidelines is a shared responsibility.

What is the role of our staff in supporting our media guidelines?

Class teachers engage in respectful dialogue about the use and/or exposure to media with individual parents and provide support and clear guidance to bring media exposure to age-appropriate levels. Faculty and staff discuss our media guidelines during parent evenings, with the goal of creating a community culture based on information and mutual respect.

What is the role of parents in supporting our media guidelines?

Parents have the final and ultimate responsibility for the well-being of their children. In addition to attending class discussions about media, parents may also choose to inform themselves about the negative impact that media can have on children. There is much current information available on this issue, based on research done by pediatricians, child psychologists, neurologists, and other professionals, even eye doctors. Parents in every class can support each other in navigating the media issue, to arrive at a more homogeneous and harmonious class environment, where all of the children are supported and nurtured.

How do these media guidelines support our educational goals?

We aim to cultivate the child's imaginative capacity, their wonder at the world, and their engagement with it, along with supporting healthy social dynamics. Children need live interaction with other children to learn how to work out social challenges. Free play and a strong imagination are the precursors of intellectual and conceptual thinking, creative problem solving, math and reading skills, and healthy management of social challenges.

All of the above-mentioned aspects (imagination, free play, direct experience of the world, social dynamics, and creativity) plus physical health and neurological development are affected by the amount of media to which a child is exposed.

How can my family transition to using less media?

Transitioning to less media will look different for each family. Different families have different habits around media use, but these are some of the areas that are important to look at:

1. Media-free play dates, sleepovers, carpool rides, and birthday parties.
2. In Grades 4-8 - In the interest of supporting healthy relationships between all students, the school recommends monthly social opportunities for the entire class to support a healthier adolescence. Parents or teachers are encouraged to organize gatherings to which all students are invited. Games nights, ice-skating or roller-skating outings, costume parties, bowling, biking, or other activities are recommended.
3. Try to arrange activities with extended family, community, neighbors etc that are not oriented around media.
4. It can be helpful to identify when the use of media occurs in your home and think about how you can substitute this with other types of downtime.
5. Encourage unstructured play - this is how children truly learn to be creative
6. Offer engaging activities, such as baking, crafts, fort building, nature walks, bike riding etc
7. Hone that "boredom" - have a "boredom jar" - create a jar with various activities (with their input) on slips of paper to choose from; if they are bored they randomly choose an activity to do.
8. Children should also participate in household chores and this is another way to engage children in activities that also instill a sense of pride and responsibility.
9. Some children may experience withdrawal-type symptoms when media is reduced or eliminated. If you prepare yourself for this with fun alternatives, it will be easier to "ride out the storm"

Your teacher can be an invaluable source with regard to age-appropriate activities that may work for you and your family, or how to support your child during this transition.

How do I approach media restrictions with my children of different ages?

Children who are of different ages need to be treated differently. In addition, some children in the same family react to media differently. Teenagers may become computer-fluent and literate, while at the same time helping to protect

their younger siblings from inappropriate media exposure. Simple house rules can be put into place, such as times, content, and amount of use, to help older children regulate their choices. Media use can be considered a privilege that requires responsibility.

If you as a parent are struggling to follow the media guidelines or would like support on how to begin, please contact your class teacher. Many of our community members, parents, and teachers alike, have met similar challenges with their families and can offer helpful, realistic suggestions.

We recommend that children under the age of 10 avoid media of all types. Older students may use screens sparingly, avoiding it altogether on the evenings before a school day. We strongly recommend that children under 14 do not utilize a smartphone or social media.

It is our sincere desire that each family consider the available research and recommendations regarding media and become whole-hearted supporters of our media guidelines.

If you have any questions about the media guidelines or how to reduce screens in your child's day, please speak with your teacher. The links below will further explain our position on media and screens.

- <http://www.waldorftoday.com/2013/01/the-sorcerers-apprentice-mind-over-machinery/>
- <http://nytimes.com/2011/10/23/technology/at-waldorf-school-in-silicon-valley-technology-can-wait.html?ref=gradingthedigitalschool&r=0>
- www.waituntil8th.org
- commonsensemedia.org (for assistance in curating media choices for your family)

Policies of concern

Physical and Sexual Abuse

State law mandates that if an employee of the school becomes concerned about the possibility of neglect, or physical or sexual abuse related to a student, the school is required to consult with the Department of Children and Family's Services to see if the concern warrants a report. Faculty and staff are trained in these protocols.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The abuse of alcohol, street drugs, prescription drugs, or inhalants is strictly forbidden by any community member in the course of any school-sponsored activity.

No Smoking Policy

In order to protect the health of the students, teachers, parents, and the public, smoking is prohibited on the school grounds, including but not limited to, school and administrative buildings, restrooms, and storage facilities. There are no designated smoking areas on campus. The No Smoking Policy, like the Drug and Alcohol Policy, extends beyond the school property to all off-campus activities attended by Mangrove students.

Policies on Environmental Toxins

The Mangrove School of Sarasota is in full compliance with all federal, state, and local guidelines pursuant to the monitoring of radon and lead levels within the school. We are very responsive to any issue that could lead to mold. We request that families do not utilize perfumes or other chemical-scented products when on campus for those with chemical sensitivities.

School Organization

Our school is unique in that the children are the messengers here, thus we work from the bottom up, rather than the top down, and in a very collaborative manner; the teachers come together to discuss both overall principles, as well as day-to-day logistics of running the school.

The result is a fluid, thoughtful process where everyone has input, based on their own experience with their students and an empathetic approach for each child in our care.

Decisions regarding the policies and procedures of the school emerge from a process of discussion, consensus, communication, and feedback among relevant school groups whenever possible.

The full Faculty and Administration meet for two or more hours weekly on Thursday afternoons for discussion on program development, teacher development, parent enrichment, general school business, administrative matters, and all aspects of the lives of the students.

The Board carries the legal and financial responsibilities of the school. Its functions include budget review/approval, fundraising, site planning, and Development. The Board is composed of faculty, parents, and community members who meet monthly.

School Supplies

The school provides the high-quality academic, artistic, and other supplies your child will utilize throughout the year. However, there are other personal items your child will need to fully participate in our outdoor activities.

Essential items include:

- Comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing for play and movement, including athletic, closed-toe shoes (and an extra change of clothes in their backpack).
- Rain gear - lightweight rain jacket, rain boots/shoes, rain pants
- A full, large reusable water bottle (2 for Forest Friday)
- A reusable lunch bag
- A sturdy backpack that can hold their lunch, water bottles, and extra clothing.

(Please choose clothing and accessories without media characters or prominent logos on them, patterns or solids are fine)

For Forest Friday:

- Two reusable water bottles
- A rash guard or lightweight long-sleeve shirt for sun protection
- For water locations - students must have either sturdy water shoes or old sneakers that can get wet and a lightweight towel.
- a hat
- Other sun protection as needed (sunscreen etc)
- For some Forest Friday locations bug spray can be helpful

Other optional but helpful items are:

- Small, quiet personal fans
- Cooling towels (teachers always have these in first aid kits as well, but some students may prefer to use them daily)

Service Hours

Volunteering provides a meaningful and necessary service for the school while enriching the experience of both the child and the family. Mangrove School truly needs and appreciates the active support and gifts of its volunteers. Our school offers many opportunities for parents, grandparents, and friends to invest their time in our community, and the students' education. It is because of previous volunteers that the school exists today.

We have found, however, that often just a handful of very dedicated volunteers do the work that should be spread out over the entire community. For this reason, we now require each family to engage in service hours for a

minimum of 20 hours per school year. Offering your time helps keep costs down, is supportive to community life, and is an excellent impression for your child to take in at any age!

We recognize that volunteer time requirements can be challenging to manage, and there are times within every family when you can give more, and sometimes less. Many tasks can be done from home, and are very flexible to fit a variety of schedules. In your enrollment paperwork, you will find your timesheet for tracking these hours. This year we are also specifically looking for a Volunteer Coordinator, a Campus and Grounds Chair, and a Fundraising Chair. If you are interested in either position, first of all, thank you(!) and secondly, please message us, and we will give you more details. The Garden Dream team is also an option for anyone interested in growing our garden program.

Sleep

Children who get the optimal hours of sleep per night can meet their day with vigor and positivity. A full night's rest also helps to prevent illness, as it strengthens the immune system. The following chart lists the recommended hours of sleep for each age:

Child's Age	Recommended Hours of Sleep
4-12 Months Old	11 - 15 hours per day
1-3 Years Old	12 - 14 hours per day
3-6 Years Old	10 - 12 hours per day
7-12 Years Old	10 - 11 hours per day
12-18 Years Old	9 - 10 hours per day

Please note that parents are responsible for ensuring that their children experience enough rest on the evenings before school. Rest days are not considered excused absences. Please plan accordingly so that busy weekends do not prevent students from attending school during the week.

Student Placement

Placement in First Grade

As children transition from kindergarten to 1st Grade, they are assessed in several developmental areas. These include large and small motor skill development, language development, social/emotional behavior, and the ability to enter into deep and focused work and play. Academic readiness and social compatibility with the other children also going to 1st Grade are factors well considered. A family's commitment to the school, including a commitment to limiting media influence, is also a consideration.

When forming the first-grade class each year, the school considers not only the individual child but also the social grouping of the class as a whole. If a class is not the right social grouping, because of the age and maturity of the other children, it can be more challenging for a child in the future with that class. The faculty will discourage having a child enter the 1st Grade when they believe that it would not be in his or her best interest. Teachers want to see children do more than just get through school; they want to see each child thrive!

As a guideline, kindergarten children must be six years old by May 1st to be considered for the first-grade class in the fall, making our children generally older than their counterparts in other schools. All children potentially eligible for first grade from our kindergartens or elsewhere will participate in a movement-based assessment conducted by the school's Early Childhood Faculty. Recommendations about placement will be based on a teacher's observations of the child throughout the year, as well as feedback from this assessment. Parents are encouraged to speak with the

child's teacher if there are any questions concerning this process.

Placement in 2nd Grade and Up

At our school, placement in a particular grade is determined based on the student's physical age, as well as social and academic capacities. If at any point during a student's school experience, they are deemed unable to meet academic, social, and/or emotional expectations in the classroom, regardless of the child's actual age, the Class Teacher, others who observe and evaluate the child, and select members of the faculty or administration will evaluate the appropriateness of the child's placement and may recommend that the child change grades. Classroom placement is determined by this group, in conversation with parents.

Probationary Period for New Students

Class teachers evaluate new students for the first sixty (60) school days. Where questions or concerns arise, the teachers will document any concerns and bring these to the parents. Should they determine that continued enrollment is not in the best interest of the child, or that the school does not have the resources to support the child in the class, the parents will be notified. In this event, the student's records will be sent to the student's new school.

Student Progress

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. Please allow 30-45 minutes for the meeting. Both parents are encouraged to attend the conference to best address both parents' concerns effectively. The meeting will address the academic, social, physical, and emotional development of the student. You will also receive a written update mid-year. Additional parent-teacher conferences may take place throughout the year, as needed. Please contact your teacher if any issues arise.

Progress Reports

Quarterly narrative reports are mailed home for each grade school student in early November, February, and April.

Year End Reports - For preschool and kindergarten children, year-end reports describing their work, play, and social interactions are mailed to parents in early June. At the end of the school year, each Class Teacher and specialty teacher prepares a comprehensive written report for each grades student. The report includes a curriculum overview and narrative descriptions of a child's academic, artistic, and social participation, and progress. Areas that need attention are also identified. Reports are mailed to parents in mid-June.

Assessments and Standardized Testing

Our curriculum is designed to develop students academically, emotionally, and physically. In our daily activities, we support gross and fine motor skills, foster spatial and body awareness, build the foundation for understanding mathematical and scientific concepts, and cultivate healthy social awareness.

Teachers will keep parents informed of the child's various strengths and challenges in their quarterly narrative reports. Standardized tests may be administered as requested, or as required for scholarship program compliance, however, exposure to test content is not a factor for classroom teachers when developing their lesson plans.

Student Support

One of the main goals of our school is for healthy and successful students and healthy social relationships among students, teachers, and members of the school community.

This value is reflected throughout our curriculum and operations, as we invest in the social/emotional, developmental, and academic health of our students.

Our curriculum aids in the social development of students and works implicitly through nature awareness activities, developmentally appropriate stories, movement, drama, and art. Teachers cultivate an expectation on the campus of politeness and courtesy to all members of the community, and when social conflicts or behavioral difficulties occur, teachers intervene to facilitate appropriate resolution.

When supporting our students individually, we look at three “Streams” as a way of understanding each individual situation and enable us to better assist students who are having academic, social, or behavioral difficulties. The three Streams are Social Inclusion, Educational Support, and Discipline and Guidance. Previously in the handbook disciplinary measures were discussed. This section will focus on social emotional and academic challenges, however, these of course be intertwined as well!

Most problems can and should be handled in the classroom in coordination with the student’s family, and there are many implicit approaches that can be supportive to a child (see lighter touches below). However, when a student is observed as having significant social, academic, or behavioral difficulties, teachers and administration work closely to identify particular challenges and support the child in their ongoing development (see firmer holding below)

Participants in the Student Support Process vary based on the situation and the particular needs of the child. The process is overseen by the Administration, in conjunction with teachers and the child’s parents.

Classroom Teachers often work with students and parents over multiple years, and these in-depth relationships provide a unique perspective on the needs and challenges facing a student. Since teachers develop lasting relationships with their students, they can make ongoing observations regarding an individual’s demeanor, social interactions, emotional maturity, and self-control.

When a teacher observes a student is struggling beyond their capacity to support in class and may need additional assistance, they will bring this to the faculty for a child study. **Administration**, other grades teachers, or specialty teachers may be asked to observe students who may have academic, developmental, social/emotional, and/or behavioral challenges. These observations may provide a broader picture of the child’s development and learning modality for both the parent and the classroom teacher. They may also assist the classroom teacher in ideas for supporting the child in class or suggest any outside support services that might be helpful to the child.

A member of administration ensures that **Support Plans** are created for struggling students, and refers students, when indicated, for outside evaluations, therapies, and support, while also actively supporting teachers with classroom modifications, accommodations, and training. They will participate in meetings with parents and teachers as needed.

You may be referred to Child Find, for a free developmental assessment through the Sarasota County Schools system. If it is determined that your child is eligible to receive services, they can take place on our campus and will be free of charge. You may also be referred to a private provider for evaluation or services as part of the care plan.

It is very common for students to need additional support outside of school, and by doing so, we help these children fully develop all of their capacities.

It is our sincere hope to provide as many children as possible with this unique, progressive education. We strive to serve children with diverse learning needs whenever feasible. Sometimes, however, children will need additional support in order to reach his or her full potential.

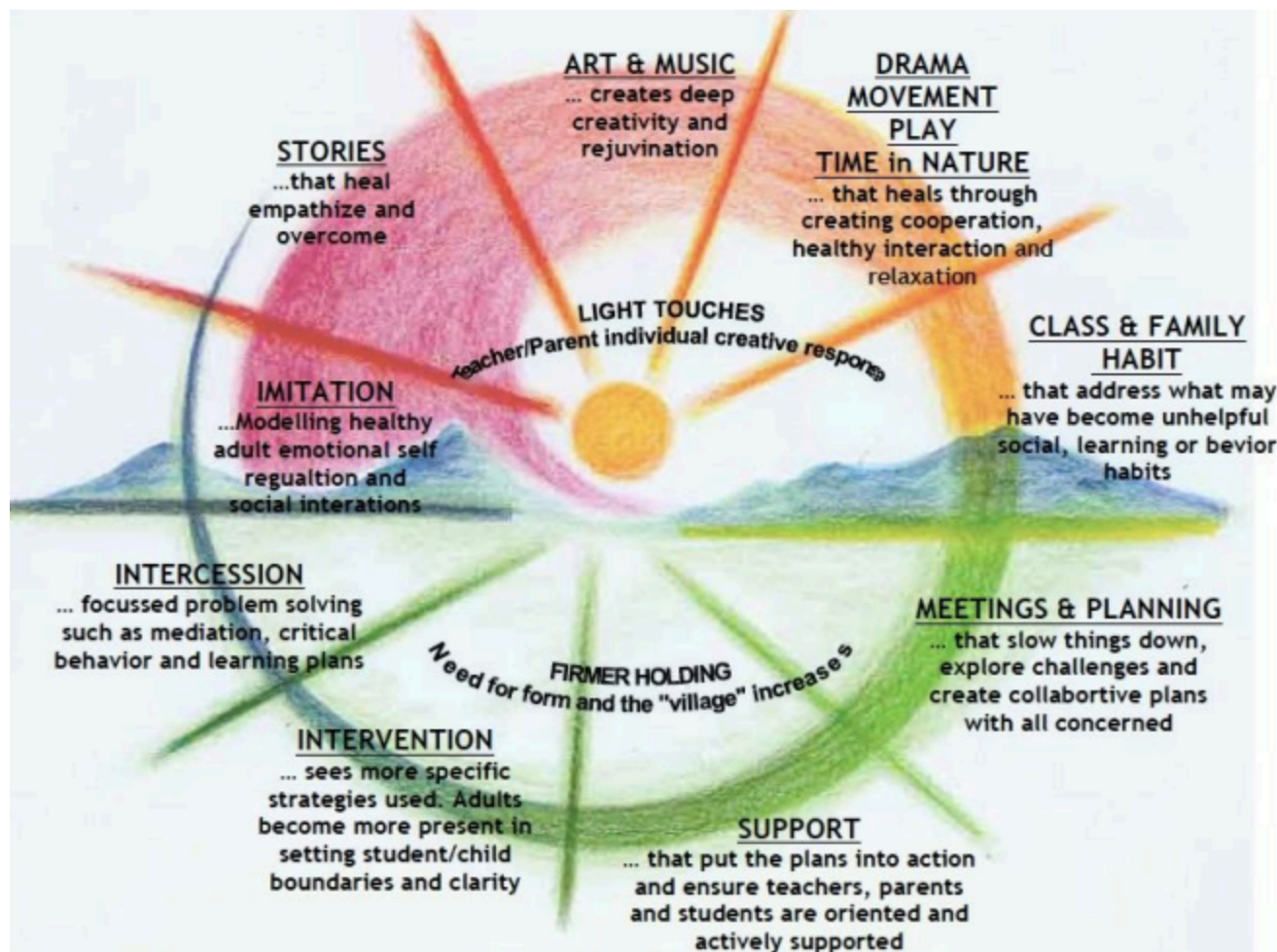
Please let your child’s teacher know if your child begins any therapies during the school year, such that the teacher can establish and maintain communication with therapists to ensure that we are meeting your child’s educational and social-emotional needs.

If you have any additional questions about this policy, or for more information on requesting an assessment through the county, please touch in with your child’s teacher.

Educational Dismissal

Rarely, during the Educational Support process, it is determined that the school is not able to meet a student’s

needs, or that the student's needs are having an adverse effect on the class as a whole. In such cases, the teacher identifies and documents a problem with a student and shares this information with the student's parents. The Faculty may hold a child study or a meeting of all the student's teachers to establish the next steps. If the problem continues, the teacher and Administration will develop a plan of action to be presented to the parents. Once all parties agree to the plan and timeline, it is signed, and the Class Teacher, along with support staff, monitors the situation and documents the student's work and behavior regularly. At the end of the probationary period, these records are reviewed to determine if adequate progress has been made. The next steps may include the conclusion of the educational plan, further recommendations, or dismissal from the school. If the decision is reached that the child would be better served in a different educational environment, the Class Teacher will convey this both verbally and in writing to the parents, with the support of the Administration.



Tuition and Arrears

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the financial health and stability of the Mangrove School of Sarasota. To that end, the following financial policy has been established:

Tuition Payments

- The Registration fee is due on June 1st.
- The first tuition payment for the school year is due on July 1st.
- The July 1st payment holds the student's place through July, the August payment holds the student's place through August.
- For families choosing the 10-month payment plan, payments are due on the 1st of each month through April.
- Although tuition can be broken into payment plans for affordability purposes, it is not a

month-to-month obligation, but rather, an annual commitment.

Unfortunately, there are times when a family is unable to make a payment due to illness, job loss, etc. We do not want any family to leave due to inability to pay. **However, it is your responsibility to contact the office as soon as possible if you are having difficulty in making your tuition payments.** If a payment is late/missed and an arrangement has not been made with the administration, the following arrears policy applies:

Arrears

1. Payments made after the 6th day of the month will be assessed a \$50.00 late fee by TADS (this late fee goes to TADS, not to us).
2. After 5 days, an email will be sent as a reminder.
3. If a payment is not received by the 10th day, the Administration will notify the family via email that the student(s) may not attend class until payment arrangements have been made.
4. When 30 days have passed, a 5% finance charge will be assessed on the total arrears.

The financial stability of the school costs us time and resources. Please be mindful that any excessive activity in collecting payments is taking away attention in other areas of school operations and prevents school growth.

Education Resources

Books

Simplicity Parenting by Kim John Payne

The Soul of Discipline by Kim John Payne

Emotionally Resilient Teens and Tweens by Kim John Payne

You are Your Child's First Teacher by Rahima Baldwin

School as a Journey by Torin Finser

School Renewal by Torin Finser

The Education of the Child by Rudolf Steiner

Creativity in Education by Rene Querido

Beyond the Rainbow Bridge by Barbara Patterson and Pamela Bradley

Waldorf Education: A Family Guide by P. Fenner and K. Rivers

Online Resources

Waldorf Online Library: www.waldorflibrary.org

The Alliance for Childhood: www.allianceforchildhood.org

Wait Until 8th: <https://www.waituntil8th.org/>

Simplicity Parenting: [Simplicity Parenting](http://www.simplicityparenting.com)

The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Mind over Machinery

By DOUGLAS GERWIN, PhD



The term “media” has an interesting and surprisingly short biography. As recently as the 1970s the *Oxford English Dictionary* listed only three meanings for this term—the oldest going back no further than the 1840s—and none of them had anything to do with newspapers, magazines, radio, film, or television, though the phrase “mass media” has circulated in popular American parlance since the 1920s.

Instead, “media” is listed in the OED as a biological term denoting the middle membrane of an artery, while in phonetics it refers to a soft mute sound, such as in the consonants “b”, “g”, or “d”. The third definition is simply as the plural of the noun “medium”. On this view, iron bars or pools of water or even table tappers could be described as being “media” for sounds, waves, or disembodied spirits.

Today “media” is such a common (and sometimes abused) currency that we all know—or think we know—what we mean by it. Let’s explore different aspects of what by now we call “the media”, especially in their relationship to technology as vehicles or platforms for education. . . .

When Is Technology a Tool? When a Crutch? The Role of Technology in Education

During the course of history, advances in technology have typically been accompanied by stern warnings about their false promises and dangers to our physical or mental health. Listen only to the words of Thamus, legendary king of Thebes, who according to Socrates had this to say to the divine Theuth when the Egyptian god presented the king with a new technology for recording events and memories called “writing”.

“If men learn this,” exclaimed the king, “it will impart forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder.”

“And it is no true wisdom that you offer your disciples,” he went on, “but only its semblance, for by telling them of many things without teaching them you will make them seem to know much, while for the most part, they know nothing, and as men filled, not with wisdom, but with the conceit of wisdom, they will be a burden to their fellows.” [Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275a-b]



Similar outcries during the Renaissance were launched against the printing press, and in more recent times we have heard laments about the corrosive effects on our language of the tape recorder, the typewriter, the word processor, spell check, and now email and Twitter and AAA — the Age of Acronyms and Abbreviations. A modern-day Cassandra might well tweet, “OMG. How un42n8!”

Thamus’ words of caution did not prevent writing from becoming an increasingly widespread tool, first among priests and scholars and by now in the pudgy hands of every eager first grader. No elementary school teacher would wish it otherwise.

And yet there is prescience in Thamus’ warning. Our powers of memory today, it would seem, are no match for those of the Ancient Greek bards, who we

are told could recite Homer's epic poems by heart, hours at a time. I hear high school teachers say they can tell by its tone and fluency whether a student's essay was hand-written or composed on a keyboard.

Do I wish to imply that we should roll back the teaching of writing or extend "Screen-Free Week" to all electronic communication? No. (How, after all, could I expect you to be reading this article, if I did?) Rather, my point is to suggest that Socrates' cautionary tale hints at an aspect of technology we may be prone to overlook.

As the root meanings of the word suggest, technology [Gr. *techne*, "tool" and "way, means"] implies something about instruments, on the one hand, and something about ways to use them, on the other. Now, before you can make use of a tool, you need first to develop a measure of skill to carry out on your own the physical or mental deed that the tool is intended to make easier. Don't give toddlers a hammer, for example, until they have mastered some level of skill at hitting things accurately. Keep calculators away from children until they have acquired some proficiency in arithmetic operations. In the first case, youngsters need to build up physical muscle before a hammer can serve as a useful (rather than as a recklessly destructive) tool; in the second case, children need to build up "spiritual muscle"—say, through mental math—before a calculator can function as a useful aid to intellectual operations rather than as a substitute for them.

Herein lies the key: give a child a tool early on in life, and it will supplant the very skill it was intended to supplement. In other words, tools become prosthetics, or crutches, if introduced too soon. Their use also tends to become addictive.

The same case can be made about any piece of technology, to the degree that it enhances a human skill or way of doing something. Electronic media are no exception. The fundamental questions remain the same:

1. Which human skill are these electronic "tools" designed to assist or even mimic?
2. At which age will children have developed these skills sufficiently so that these "tools" can serve rather than subvert them?

Let's take television, perhaps one of the more controversial examples. Television mimics the human ability to create pictures. According to Rudolf Steiner, children learn to think by inwardly creating mental pictures and mental images. If pictures are outwardly supplied and ready-made, they rob the child of the opportunity to build the "imaginative muscle" needed to become independent thinkers. Since the ability to think unfolds gradually, the age at which children can benefit from television, rather than become slaves to it, will vary. A general guideline, though, will be: the later, the better, recognizing that we cannot shut off our children from all exposure to these kinds of tool.

Indeed, Rudolf Steiner cautions against banning tools of technology outright. In a lecture given shortly after the outbreak of World War I ["Technology and Art", Dornach 28 December 1914], he declared: "It would be the worst possible mistake to say that we should resist what technology has brought into modern life, that we should protect ourselves . . . by cutting ourselves off from modern life. In a certain sense this would be *spiritual cowardice*." [emphasis added]

Instead, Steiner goes on to say, the more we expose ourselves to technology (rather than flee from it), the more we need to strengthen in ourselves—for instance, through the arts—precisely those human capacities that technology mimics or supplements.

In our present time, attention is turning to the appropriate use of computers in schools. Paradoxically, we read about kindergarten teachers who are encouraging the use of computers and tweeting in preschool

while some university professors are banning them outright from their lectures and seminars. In this hotly contested field of enquiry, the same questions suggested above can be posed:

1. Which human skills does the computer mimic or supplement?
2. At which age will children have developed these skills sufficiently so that the computer can assist rather than hijack them?

The first question: Which human skills does the computer mimic or supplement?

It is tempting to think of the computer as a fancy calculator or stern grammarian, and for many people (myself included) this device does indeed serve these functions. But what makes the computer distinctive from other technological devices is its ability to *simulate human experience*. In fact, as one respondent suggested, we should rename the computer “the simulator” in recognition of the tremendous benefits that the computer has wrought in our culture, especially in the fields of engineering, medicine, and—yes—entertainment and even broadcasting.



Computer models allow us to test new engines, fly new airplanes, try out new drugs without even creating them in the physical world. Using virtual models, we are able to experiment with new designs and simulate their effects. By the same token, every weather map you see on the evening newscast and just about every vehicle or building you see get blown up in a scene of a so-called “action movie” these days is some kind of computer simulation. If you have remained seated in the cinema long enough for the end of the credits, you will know just how many people work on a film’s computerized “FX”.

So, what’s the problem with that? The problem is the same as for all examples of technology. It’s great when it *supplements* a skill you have already developed, and it’s not so great when it *supplants* it. If you have mastered some drawings of projective geometry, the computer can enhance your understanding and appreciation of this mind-bending subject through models of geometric forms set whirling in simulated motion. But in teaching this subject, I would never wish my students to work with these simulations until they had first achieved a measure of skill in making their own drawings. It’s the difference between listening to a recording of music you don’t know and listening to a recording in which a skilled soloist plays precisely the piece you have struggled for months to play for yourself. The recording is all the more thrilling if it supplements your own experience rather than replacing it.

There, then, is the first point: the computer supplies us with a virtual experience that can serve to supplement our actual, that is to say *lived*, experience. The mischief—including, I would suggest, the beginning of addiction—begins when the computer supplants it.

Virtual experience is of a different order of being than lived experience. It is like an advertisement for a loaf of bread: the promise—but not the delivery—of nourishment. If anything, the image will stir the craving but not, of itself, relieve it.

The second question: At which age will children have developed these skills sufficiently so that the computer can assist rather than hijack them?

If we can recognize the specific genius of the computer as being its ability to simulate human experience,

then (at least in an abstract way) we have already answered the second question. The child will be ready to benefit from simulated experience to the degree it has already engaged in its own lived experience.

But here's the rub: who is willing—or even able—to withhold the computer from children for that long? As one set of parents reported in response to our questions, the more they try to keep the computer from their children, the more they run after it. So we need an alternative approach.

Here's one. Let's ask a practical question: what are children *not* doing while engaged with the computer that otherwise they might be doing? Three things come to mind:

1. They are not *moving*
2. They are not *creating their own mental pictures*
3. They are not *engaged in lived experience*

Empirically, we know that children need to exercise all three of these capabilities if they are to enjoy a healthy physical, emotional, and spiritual life, both in childhood and later in adult life. In the context of Waldorf education, we know that all three of these exercises involve the child's developing sense of self, or "I". When the child's "I" is engaged, the child will develop healthily; when the "I" is not engaged, the child will not mature.



Empirical studies show that the "I" is most engaged when the child is stirred to physical movement (especially in the preschool years), when it is inspired to create mental pictures (especially during the grade school years), and when it is motivated to embrace self-directed lived experience (especially in high school and in the years that follow). To the degree, then, that children spend their time on the computer at the expense of exercising these three capacities, to this same degree their caretakers—that is, we as their parents and teachers—need to provide all the more opportunities to

develop them.

A ratio of computer time to movement time; a ratio of computer time to mental creativity time; a ratio of virtual computer experience to lived experience needs to be calculated — perhaps negotiated and modified, as the child gets older. The key point, though, is that movement, mental creativity, and lived experience are "front loaded", so to speak. *First the real, then the simulated, or e-real.*

Otherwise, the child will run the risk of growing up without the full involvement of its "I" or ego. And when ego is treated as e-go, in time it will be e-gone.

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About the author: Douglas Gerwin is the Director of the Center for Anthroposophy and Co-Director of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, and has taught history, literature, German, music, and life science at the Waldorf high school level since 1983. He presently divides his time between adult education and teaching in various North American Waldorf schools. Douglas is the founder of the Waldorf High School Teacher Education Program at the Center for Anthroposophy and editor of several books related to Waldorf education.

Notes about the images and the title “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” -Ed.

The images are from “Fantasia” by Walt Disney and from Goethe’s “Der Zauberlehrling.” The Sorcerer’s Apprentice (German: Der Zauberlehrling) is a poem by Goethe, written in 1797. The poem is a ballad in fourteen stanzas. The poem begins as an old sorcerer departs his workshop, leaving his apprentice with chores to perform. Tired of fetching water by pail, the apprentice enchants a broom to do the work for him — using magic in which he is not yet fully trained. The floor is soon awash with water, and the apprentice realizes that he cannot stop the broom because he does not know how.

Not knowing how to control the enchanted broom, the apprentice splits it in two with an axe, but each of the pieces becomes a new broom and takes up a pail and continues fetching water, now at twice the speed. When all seems lost, the old sorcerer returns, quickly breaks the spell and saves the day. The poem finishes with the old sorcerer’s statement that powerful spirits should only be called by the master himself.

Der Zauberlehrling is well known in the German-speaking world. The lines in which the apprentice implores the returning sorcerer to help him with the mess he has created have turned into a cliché, especially the line *Die Geister, die ich rief* (“The spirits that I called”), a garbled version of one of Goethe’s lines, which is often used to describe a situation where somebody summons help or uses allies that he cannot control, especially in politics.

Fantasia, the animated dialogue-free 1940 Disney film *Fantasia* popularized the story from Goethe’s poem, and the Paul Dukas symphonic poem based on it, in one of eight animated shorts in *Fantasia* based on classical music. In the piece, which retains the title “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” Mickey Mouse plays the apprentice, and the story follows Goethe’s original closely, except that the sorcerer (“Yen Sid”, or Disney backwards) is stern and angry with his apprentice when he saves him. *Fantasia* popularized Goethe’s story to a worldwide audience. The segment proved so popular that it was repeated, in its original form, in the sequel *Fantasia 2000*.

Some versions of the tale differ from Goethe’s, and in some versions the sorcerer is angry at the apprentice and in some even expels the apprentice for causing the mess. In other versions, the sorcerer is a bit amused at the apprentice and he simply chides him. The sorcerer’s anger with the apprentice, which appears in both the Greek Philopseudes and the film *Fantasia*, does not appear in Goethe’s *Der Zauberlehrling*.

Some Thoughts on Rhythm

by Susan Gray Weber

Life is full of rhythm! Our bodies are full of it: our heartbeats, our breathing, our organs, for example, all have rhythms. We walk rhythmically, and we talk with rhythm. We dance and sing with rhythm, and we wake and sleep rhythmically. The natural world also has rhythms: picture the moon and its in and out pull upon the tides as they visit the land, only to leave it again. The growing of the plants, the falling of the leaves, the ripening of apples and tomatoes - each has its moment. Our human activity also traditionally has had many rhythms: planting and harvesting; cutting, splitting, and gathering wood for warmth, household work - the laundry, the baking, the cleaning. And not only was there a rhythm to the week, but the activities had their own rhythms – kneading bread, swinging an ax, plowing or hoeing the field – and there were even songs to accompany work. After the hard physical effort came rest. The seasons had a profound effect on daily life - what people ate, what tasks they did, and even how comfortable they felt.

Today technology has freed us from these natural cycles and much of the physical activity of work. With electric lights and modern communications, with stores open all night, it can be “daytime” anytime at all,

seven days a week. Even a day of rest is not often so any longer. And we can eat any food in any season, coming from so far away that we have not even a picture of who the farmer is who has grown our food. The most common rhythm for us may be the hum of the computer or refrigerator! Truly, these aren't rhythms at all; – life filled and varying – but unceasing beats without change. And the beat is not leisurely or natural, but busy and hurried, and is not really rhythm at all, as rhythm is filled with life. These sounds are merely a shadow of the life of rhythm, a droning beat. It is not that we are not grateful for all that technology gives to us. On the contrary, many helpful and useful things have come our way through technology. But it is helpful to recognize that there are losses as well as gains.

Children, especially, benefit from life rhythms. They are in the midst of the process of creating and developing the rhythms of their hearts, their breath, their digestion and sleep. For them, the possibility to trust in regular times and sequences for the activities of their lives brings bodily health and security. In the early months and years, it is the familiar that brings comfort – a familiar blanket, face, hand, or voice; a predictable sequence of events. Regular sequences and times help a newborn baby settle into life, and give a secure foundation from which to get to know the world. All the special people and places, the sounds and smells that greet her are new, and they are her life! For the adult, care giving may become repetitious and uninteresting, but for the child, it is the greatest joy. Imagine the child's joyful anticipation of special time with those who love her, taking care of her: after we eat, daddy will give me my bath, momma will help me to put on my pajamas, a familiar voice will sing to me and tuck me in bed. This familiar sequence and pattern bring delight for the child, and as these sequences become a habit, they later become the source of discipline, because "this is just the way we do it."

Rhythm also helps avoid over-stimulation and fatigue for young children, because the "breathing" of the day – now more active, now less active and quiet – refreshes their energy. It also builds good habits for later life when the pace of our day and the stress of life make us forget to pace ourselves in a reasonable way. This work – play – rest rhythm is a health habit for a whole lifetime! Dr. Jane Healy, a Ph.D in psychology with a background in neurological development, feels that a rhythmic home life is vital to developing thinking skills. Establishing order from chaos helps develop neural pathways that create routes within the brain that enable us to think. The nursery rhymes and finger games we play with our children, the lullabies and songs all help with this process, and it is their rhythm that both brings delight to the children and helps them to recall them.

The year turns round, over and over, bringing birthdays, family celebrations, travels to visit grandparents. The toddler remembers these events and finds joy in their repetition. Spending time in nature is a wonderful support to rhythm within our homes. Getting in touch with the seasons bring happiness to children and renewal to us. The young child begins to feel a security in the order of the year - first springtime with the tiny blossoms, spring bulbs blooming, puddles, and new leaves. Then comes summer with its fluffy clouds, green all around, lightning bugs... all at a pace that a very young child can absorb without stress and the confusion of hurry. These slower rhythms of nature can slow us down as well – the breezes, the crickets, the bird's songs, sun sets - and then our internal rhythms become slower, more peaceful, and healthy.

As a popular song of the 1940s (I think!) says, "I've got rhythm, I've got rhythm, I've got rhythm, who can ask for anything more?"

How can we create or strengthen rhythm in our lives? Creating rhythm arises out of a balance between the adult's awareness of the child's needs and the child's naturally emerging rhythm. We begin with the rhythm of waking, sleeping, and eating, for in the beginning this is all there is. As we observe closely, patterns will begin to express themselves, and we can support these patterns in becoming an actual predictable, secure rhythm. As our children grow, play is added, and bathing, and time outdoors. Our

children take their cues from the sequence of the day's activity. "If I have just had my walk, now it must be time for my nap", imagines the infant.

The repetition of this sequence brings joyful anticipation over time and a willingness to be guided into the transition toward the next activity of the day. Parents discover that when a rhythm is created, far from compromising their freedom, life actually begins to give more freedom. Children are more relaxed and comfortable, more secure, less anxious and stress-filled because they know that the adult they love and trust is guiding the flow of the day. They relax into this security and often are less clingy or demanding. They need not be preoccupied with making sure that their own needs are met and can be free to play imaginatively, to explore, to observe. For the adult, the possibility to predict what will happen when, to anticipate the sequence of the day with its more active and more restful periods, enables a possibility to imagine how she or he will spent time when a child is napping times or play with the deep engagement that is possible when the security of predictable rhythm underlies daily life.

The alternative is a child who becomes preoccupied and at times obsessed with gaining adult attention, with manipulating the environment, or with gaining access to food continuously because she does not know what to anticipate and trust throughout a day. The child who knows, for example, that meals will come on a predictable rhythm, can spend energy on other things. With a rhythmic life, our children are gently guided toward order from the chaos of their first days of life. We refine our rhythm and recreate it as our children grow and change and as we discover how best to support them.

By Susan Gray Weber, Sophia's Hearth Family Center

Appendix A

Little Siesta for Meadowlark students (available upon teacher recommendation and availability).

12:45-2:30 Monday-Friday **\$14 per day drop-in or \$12 per day in advance as follows:**

\$ 240 per month, in advance for Monday-Friday

\$192 per month, in advance for 4 scheduled days each week.

\$144 per month, in advance for 3 scheduled days each week.

\$ 96 per month, in advance for 2 scheduled days each week.

\$ 48 per month, in advance, for 1 scheduled days each week.

I would like to reserve Little Siesta space for my Meadowlark Nursery student on the following days:

____ Monday ____ Tuesday ____ Wednesday ____ Thursday ____ Friday

Little Siesta for Plover Preschool students

12:45-2:30 **\$14 per day drop-in or \$12 per day in advance as follows:**

\$ 96 per month, in advance for 2 scheduled days each week.

\$ 48 per month, in advance, for 1 scheduled days each week.

I would like to reserve Little Siesta space for my Plover Preschool student on the following days:

____ Monday ____ Tuesday ____ Wednesday ____ Thursday ____ Friday

Little Siesta for Sandpiper students

12:45-2:30 Monday-Friday **\$14 per day drop-in or \$12 per day in advance as follows:**

\$ 240 per month, in advance for Monday-Friday

\$192 per month, in advance for 4 scheduled days each week.

\$144 per month, in advance for 3 scheduled days each week.

\$ 96 per month, in advance for 2 scheduled days each week.

\$ 48 per month, in advance, for 1 scheduled days each week.

I would like to reserve Little Siesta space for my Sandpiper Kindergarten and VPK student on the following days:

____ Monday ____ Tuesday ____ Wednesday ____ Thursday ____ Friday

Little Siesta for Bluebird Kindergarten

1:00 pm-2:30 pm Monday-Friday \$12 per day drop-in or \$10 in advance as follows:

\$200 per month, in advance, Monday-Friday

\$160 per month, in advance, for 4 scheduled days each week.

\$120 per month, in advance, for 3 scheduled days each week.

\$ 80 per month, in advance, for 2 scheduled days each week.

\$ 40 per month, in advance, for 1 scheduled days each week.

I would like to reserve Little Siesta space for my Bluebird Kindergarten student on the following days:

____ Monday ____ Tuesday ____ Wednesday ____ Thursday ____ Friday

Aftercare for Early Childhood and Grades students

2:30pm-4:30pm Tuesday and Thursday **\$14 per day drop-in** or **\$12 in advance**:

\$ 96 per month, in advance, for 2 scheduled days each week.

\$ 48 per month, in advance, for 1 scheduled days each week.

Students who remain in Late Afternoon Care after 4:30 pm or who are not picked up between 2:15 pm and 2:30 pm on Fridays do not have a program to be signed into. Charges begin at \$2 per minute for post-program care.

Appendix B

FAQ's Regarding Attendance, Illness, and Travel

A. What should I do if my child is ill and cannot attend school?

1. Please submit a Leave notice via the Illumine app before 8 a.m. **that includes the reason for absence.**
2. If your child was ill, attended a theme park, or flew on a commercial flight, please include those details. Once your child has been symptom-free for 24 hours, please send a message via Illumine.
3. Based on the above, Admin will respond with a return date. Students may not return to school without a return date.
4. It is strongly recommended that siblings of a student with a fever also remain home.

B. What should I do if my child has had close contact with someone who is confirmed to be or presumed to be positive with COVID?

1. Please send a message to mangrovesarasota@gmail.com that includes the date of exposure and any other relevant details.
2. Students will quarantine for at least 10 days post last known exposure. Admin will send a date of return.
4. Before the date of return, please message with an update confirming that there has not been any new exposure by additional family members and that your child is well-rested and feeling healthy.
5. If additional family members become ill, the return date will be adjusted from the new date of exposure.

C. What should I do if my family intends to travel and/or visit a theme park?

1. Please notify the teacher and admin via email, at least one week in advance, unless the travel is emergent.
2. Indicate the type and length of travel, including the destination
3. You will receive an estimated return date. In order to prevent the accidental spread of illness, students must remain home for at least 3 days after attending traveling by plane or attending a theme park, as these activities have consistently caused illness 1-4 days afterward. Travel by car in the Eastern time zone is reduced to 24 hours to allow for rest.
4. Upon returning from travel, please contact your teacher and update them on any changes from your initial plans.
5. Admin will confirm your child's return date.

D. Can families take vacations during the school year?

Yes. While we encourage families to plan vacations around summer break, winter breaks, long weekends, and spring break, this is not always possible. Family travel is an important and enriching experience during childhood.

Please consider the following when making travel plans:

1. Students may be subject to Rest Days at home following a return from travel.
2. Students may find it difficult to make up missed school, as our curriculum is designed to be experienced in person.
3. Preparing missed lessons before travel and helping students to catch up post travel requires a lot of additional time and thought on the part of the teachers.
4. Students with extended absences or those who are experiencing learning challenges may need tutoring outside of school hours to catch back up with the class. Families are responsible for the cost.
5. Students that receive AAA, FES-EO, FTC, FES-UA (formerly Gardiner), and Hope scholarships are subject to reduction or loss of scholarship award funding when absences exceed 18 days per year, per the Department of Education. Missed scholarship funding becomes the responsibility of the family. Excused absences include illness, death in the family, religious observances, and family emergencies. If elective travel is planned beyond the 18 day limit, scholarship awards may be subject to reduction by the Scholarship Funding Organization. Please plan accordingly.

E. Why does Mangrove have an illness and travel policy?

Mangrove has long had a conservative illness and travel policy. We believe that children often need more rest and recovery after illness than is typical in our society. We also believe that we should model consideration to others by not attending school when we are potentially contagious with any illness. Most parents are appreciative of these policies, as it results in their children not being sick as often as they could be in another environment. Changes to the travel and illness policy will likely result in fewer Rest Days required following travel, but will not ever be zero. You will be notified when the air travel/theme park restrictions change.

F. How does the Travel and Illness Policy serve the Mangrove Community?

1. It protects students from catching contagious illnesses and bringing them home to their families.
2. It prevents teachers from becoming ill and needing to miss school. Mangrove teachers are highly specialized and trained to teach the specific grade of their class each year. This makes it nearly impossible to recreate the class experience with a substitute teacher.
3. It prevents potential temporary shut-downs of classes or the school as a whole. In the event of a positive COVID case, a class or classes could need to be closed for 1-2 weeks. For other contagious illnesses (chickenpox, pertussis, measles, etc.), the Department of Health has the authority to close classes and/or require unvaccinated students to remain home for 20 days, even if only potentially exposed to the contagious illness.
4. For families that choose not to travel and those that need to work during school hours, the illness and travel policy protects their peace and livelihood by reducing the opportunities for their children to become sick at school and the need to stay home.
5. The policies model rest and consideration of others to our children, which will be excellent qualities for them to bring with them into adulthood.
6. The policy supports the spirit of community.

G. What if I don't agree with the Mangrove School of Sarasota's Illness and Travel Policies?

The diversity of the Mangrove Community is greatly valued. Diversity brings with it many ideas, values, and opinions. As such, there will never be 100% agreement regarding school policies. Please be assured that every decision and policy is carefully considered by the faculty and reflective of the wishes of the teachers. It may be helpful to consider that there are often variables that are unfamiliar to those outside of the decision-making process, but are easily explained. If you have concerns or feedback, we encourage you to discuss this with your teacher and/or a member of the administrative team.

It is our sincere hope that any differing perspectives may be communicated in a peaceful way in alignment with our grievance policies. However, if common ground cannot be found, this may be an indicator that a family's personal philosophies are not fully aligned with Mangrove's and that another school may be a better fit. Please note the following behaviors and actions will not be tolerated at Mangrove:

- a. Misrepresenting or lying about travel plans to subvert the Rest Day/Illness policies.
- b. Knowingly sending a student to school who has been exposed to COVID or other contagious illnesses by family members or other close contacts.
- c. Administering a fever-reducer to a student and sending them to school ill and/or contagious, with intent to deceive.
- d. Intentionally misrepresenting or lying about a student's illness to bring them back to school earlier.
- e. Violating the Conflict Resolution Policy (signed at enrollment and viewable in your TADS documents) by discussing policy issues with parties other than teachers and admin. If you have any questions about the travel or illness policy, please send us a message in Bloomz.

Overall, families must be willing to honor the policies transparently, for the sake of the community.

We are very appreciative of your support of Mangrove School of Sarasota and your efforts towards maintaining these and other proactive health measures, such as wholesome nutritious foods, quality sleep, and plenty of fresh air. These steps foster a healthy, active, childhood experience.

Appendix C

Emergency Preparedness

Having an awareness of hazards: Emergency Plans for Weather Bulletins, Lightning, Tornado Procedures.

Generally, we watch the weather fastidiously and will err on the side of caution if a potential storm could bring unsafe conditions and have extra weather days in the calendar for such an event. However, should unsafe weather come up unexpectedly while in school, we have alerts in place and the following applies:

- Tornado WATCH or lightning nearby: An administrator will verbally notify teachers, give conditions and directions as appropriate.
- Tornado WARNING: Warning notification will be given by repeated short blasts of an air horn, as hazardous conditions exist. Seek shelter and take cover. Any classes located off campus will be contacted by the Director.
- Administration and specialty teachers will assist any classes that need if they need to relocate inside.
- The class roster and first aid kit is in the teacher's possession when exiting the class area to go inside (keep both in a place that is immediately available).
- If emergent, students are not permitted to gather ANY personal items.
- If a student is away from his or her class, they should take cover with the nearest class they find.
- Students and staff will assume protected positions—crouched down with arms covering their head, remaining in those protected positions until the administrator gives verbal all clear signal.

Procedures for Fire, Smoke, Gas, Explosion

- The class roster and first aid kit is in their possession when moving a safe distance from the hazard.
- Students are not permitted to gather personal items, get a drink of water, or go to the bathroom.
- Students exit in a brisk, QUIET, and orderly manner.
- If a student is in the restroom he or she should join the first class encountered and stay with that class as they proceed to the classes gathering point. Teachers are to keep this "extra" student RIGHT beside them.

The extra student can be escorted to their class gathering spot by a knowledgeable adult or stay with your class for the whole evacuation.

- Getting to the gathering spot safely is the only goal.

Suspicious Person

- All teachers and staff maintain an awareness of all people who enter our campus, or visit parks while we are there.
- If a teacher or staff member notices anything unusual about a pedestrian or park patron, they will at minimum notify administration. Depending on the circumstances, they may send a message to all faculty (for example at a park to avoid a certain area), alert a park ranger, or if there are any very concerning behaviors, move away and call either the county non-emergency phone number, or 911.

Mandatory Lockdown

The Mangrove School of Sarasota collaborates with the local emergency personnel in the event of an emergency. When determined by school personnel or instructed by emergency responders, the school may go into lockdown. In this case, teachers are notified of the situation and how to respond via school runners to all class areas and/or cell phone. Faculty and staff will make a prompt determination whether to enter the building or take shelter in the safest possible place available. If inside, teachers will not open doors unless instructed to do so by a staff member that they recognize by sight or voice.

Appendix D

Field Trip Policies

The policies for field trips that apply to all classes are:

- There is at least one adult for every ten students in the EC and lower grades. For upper grades, it will depend on the activities, duration, and location of the field trip.
- All children must wear seat belts (or use car seats) at all times when traveling in a car. By Florida Law, children under the age of 8 (unless they are over 4' 9" tall) must ride in a booster seat supplied by the parents, when driven.
- Children under 12 may not ride in the front seat of a car (unless it is with their parents driving).
- The teacher takes a first aid kit, a cell phone, and emergency health information for each student.
- Students are expected to uphold the school's Behavior Guidelines.

All volunteers who chaperone MSS students must have:

- A national criminal background check completed by the school within the last three years.

All volunteers who drive MSS students (other than their own child) must have:

- A valid and unrestricted driver's license and up-to-date record of vehicle insurance policy with a minimum coverage of \$100,000 bodily injury; \$300,000 per occurrence and \$100,000 property damage (copies of the license and insurance card must be given to the teachers organizing the trip one week prior to the field trip to be filed in the office).
- A vehicle that is safe and in good driving condition (i.e., brakes in good operating condition, treads not worn on tires, lights and wipers working, etc.)
- Operating shoulder and lap belts for each student in the vehicle.
- A national criminal background check and motor vehicle record check

Field Trip Emergency Procedures For Chaperone Awareness

Medical Emergency

- Assess the need for calling 911. Make the call if there is any doubt.

- Administer first aid and comfort to the injured person. Continue to do so until emergency medical teams arrive if called.
- Do not move victims with possible head, neck, and back injuries, unless an imminent more threatening danger exists. Teachers will not leave their students until another representative from the school arrives, unless they need immediate medical attention themselves.
- Immediately document what happened, names of those involved, and names of witnesses.
- If needed, the Administration will dispatch a representative from the school to the hospital.

Traffic Accident

- Call 911
- Contact a member of the administration - they will designate a contact person who will notify affected families.
- The School Director will act as liaison between the accident site and the school.
- Teachers will have permission/release forms to identify all students in their care in their binder. Those forms also contain important medical and emergency contact information should it be needed.
- Teachers will always carry identification for themselves.

Lightning

Teachers and chaperones must take extreme caution. When thunder is heard, move the students inside or inside a hard-topped car immediately. If camping, all students must leave tents and go into an available building or inside hard-topped vehicles. If caught outdoors, seek the lowest point and squat down with only your feet touching the ground. Stay away from trees and metal, and group into twos. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before going back outside.

Tornado Procedures

Tornado WATCH—Hazardous conditions are expected to develop. Monitor conditions closely. Know where shelter can be found.

Tornado WARNING—Hazardous conditions exist. Seek shelter and take cover.

If a tornado warning is issued in your area

- Immediately stop all scheduled activity and seek shelter away from windows.
- Notify the school when it is safe to do so. Relay your current situation and ask for assistance if it is needed.

Suspicious Person

- It is important to maintain an awareness of the surrounding areas we visit and consult with the teacher if you note anything unusual.
- If a teacher or staff member notices anything unusual about a pedestrian or park patron, they will at minimum notify administration. Depending on the circumstances, they may send a message to all faculty (for example at a park to avoid a certain area), alert a park ranger, or if there are any very concerning behaviors, move away and call either the county non-emergency phone number or 911.

Missing Student, Chaperone, or Faculty/Staff

- Gather and contain students. Verify student count. Identify the missing student(s) or missing person.
- Upon verification of the missing person, CALL 911. It is better to call and not need them, than waste time.
- Identify yourself, your location, the situation, and give a detailed description of the person.
- Use available staff to search and gather information.
- Call the school to alert the School Director, who will contact the parents.

- Next steps could include all other students returning to school with most chaperones and school personnel. A member of the Administrative staff may come to the location to drive students back, as well.

Appendix E

A gentle, effective discipline tool for parents and caregivers

1. CONNECT BEFORE YOU DIRECT.
2. STAY CLOSE.
3. D.A.D.D. = Describe/Disapprove – Affirm – Discover – Do-Over
4. INSIST.
5. FOLLOW THROUGH.

This simple, 5-step process takes far longer to explain than it actually takes to follow in practice! It is a wonderful process that can be adapted to suit almost any age, providing you with a natural framework for guiding children towards more positive behavior. One of the best things about it is that during the whole process, parents use their own words, their own language, helping it feel natural for each family.

1. **Connect before you direct.** There is simply no point in ‘talking into thin air’ when your child is yelling in another direction. You have to connect with your child before you can direct their behavior in a more positive direction. Touch them gently on the shoulder, make eye contact, get to their level – once you have made a face-to-face connection, there is a shift in their thinking.
2. **Stay Close:** Your calm physical presence will help calm your child. Has directing your child from across the room ever been effective? I doubt it. Being calm, and staying close, right by their side, you have a much better chance of ‘holding’ your child.
3. **D.A.D.D.** = Describe/Disapprove – Affirm – Discover – Do-Over

First... DESCRIBE and if necessary, DISAPPROVE

Begin by gently describing what happened very briefly. “You hit your sister.” “I see you are very upset.” If necessary, express clear disapproval for the action. “It is hurtful to behave like that.” “We don’t speak/act that way in our family.” “It is ok to be upset, but it is not ok to hit.” Speak with quiet directness. Say as little as possible. Mean it.

And... AFFIRM

We know that we are meant to separate a child’s actions from his/her whole being, but it’s not always easy. To achieve this, the describe/disapproval step needs to be followed up right away by an affirmation... “You hardly ever speak like that.” “So often you do kind/helpful things.” “You usually have such gentle hands.”

Then... DISCOVER

Then the adult discovers what the subtle issues are, wondering to him or herself “What’s up?” or checking lovingly with the child “Something must be bothering you, what is it?” The question must come at the right time to get an honest response: this might be AFTER the child has had time to calm down from the heat of the moment.

Finally... DO-OVER

When the issue is clarified, the adult can help the child do it over, saying kindly and firmly “Let’s find a way to say what you need to say kindly/without hitting.” “You may make up for the words you used, and then you can say what is bothering you.” “How could you say/do that kindly? What could you say that would work better?”

4. Insist. Insist that your child can do the right thing. Insist that they ‘do-over’ their actions. Your children will consistently test your boundaries – it’s their job! It is your job to consistently reinforce the boundaries that you have chosen for your child.

5. Follow through. Stay close, and help your child follow through with whatever action you have insisted upon. Be beside them whilst they do it. They are learning how to live up to social expectations and boundaries, and we can help them as they learn.

This 5-step process usually begins learning more than a forced apology.

With two to 7-year-olds, you don’t have to do all of the steps, all of the time. Once you are familiar with the process, you begin to learn which steps work better for which ages/ Discovering the cause of an incident may be impossible with a two-year-old, and a do-over becomes irrelevant for two to 4-year-olds if it can’t be done right away, in the moment. If you have to wait for a three to 4-year-old to calm down, chances are they will have forgotten about the incident and have no idea what you’re talking about when you finally come back to it!

The less you talk, the more children listen. **Try to model behaviour you want to see – imitation of positive behavior comes more naturally to children and is easier than correction of difficult behaviour!**

Modeling Genuine Apologies at Home

Parents can model or demonstrate by making authentic apologies and do-overs to each other in front of the children “Oh honey, I am sorry, that came out unkindly. Let me try again... and then can we have a kiss so I know you forgive me? I guess we are all learning to be kind.”

Parents only need to do this – genuinely – a few times for the children to begin imitating. Far too often parents leave genuine apologies until after the children are in bed – depriving children of an opportunity to learn about real apologies.

(Based on the work of Kim John Payne, M.Ed.)