

# Parent Handbook

2023-2024



***Know what it is to be a child?***

***It is something very different from the man of today.***

***It is to have a spirit yet streaming from holiness;***

***It is to believe in love,***

***To believe in loveliness,***

***To believe in belief;***

***It is to be so little that the elves can reach to whisper in your ears;***

***It is to turn pumpkins into coaches,***

***And mice into horses,***

***Lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything,***

***For each child has its fairy godmother in its soul.***

***-Shelley, 1908***

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## Welcome

Welcome to a new school year at River Song Waldorf School. Thank you for having your children with us. It is an honor to be with these amazing young people. In order to fully support them, we would like to orient you to some of the guidelines in our school. Please read the following information regarding: requests to parents, signing-in/signing-out procedures, clothing, lunch, nap items, media exposure, parent participation, and other important information.

If you should have any questions regarding these guidelines, please contact your child's teacher or the Director. We will be glad to assist in any way we can.

*-The Early Childhood Teaching Staff & Board of Trustees, River Song Waldorf School*

Becky Praamsma, Administrative Director

Cary Klataske, Assistant Director

Aurora Romine, Lead Teacher, Moon Garden Class; Faculty Chair

Samara McDonald, Lead Teacher, Bluebells

Shana Doss, Lead Teacher, Sun Garden

Karla Nelson, Lead Teacher, Star Garden

Eric Smith, Board Chair

Sam Davidson, Board Vice-Chair

Matt Bierwirth, Treasurer

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Brittany Depew, Board Member

Abby Shifriss, Board Member

Linden Hunter, Board Member

Liz Boyd, Faculty Representative

Mary Swanson, Board Member

Liz Bennett, Board Member



## Orientation

### ***Service & Program Policies***

#### **Student Enrollment**

- 1) Each student attending River Song Waldorf School must be properly registered before attending their first day. Parents/guardians must fully complete the online registration process through Early Learning Ventures and sign all other applicable forms included in the enrollment pack.
- 2) All contracts are for the school year, August 14 – May 31. Enrollments after August 14<sup>th</sup> will be for the remainder of the school year. (Summer camp enrollment will open in January)
- 3) All information contained in the Enrollment Packet and in the student's records is strictly confidential. Designated staff members do have access to these records for reasons connected with their job. However, no records are to be removed without specific authorization from the Executive Director.

#### **Enrollment and Intake Process:**

- 1) There is a non-refundable, one-time \$50 Registration Fee added to the first invoice for all new families. For new siblings starting with us there is a one-time registration fee of \$25.
- 2) Enrollment packets with handbooks, forms and program information are emailed late summer or within 2 weeks of your child's first day if beginning mid-year.
- 3) The lead teacher will contact new parent(s) to schedule a teacher-family meeting and an in-home visit. These are mandatory meetings to better get to know your child prior to their first day.
- 4) For fall enrollment, a deposit of \$125 must be submitted by June in order to hold a spot for the new school year. This is per family, is non-refundable, and will be applied to the child's first month of tuition. (There is no deposit required for mid-year enrollments).
- 5) All new students begin with a 30-day mutual trial period.
- 6) Enrollment packet forms must be signed and returned
  - a) Tuition and Policies contract
  - b) Registration in Early Learning Ventures for emergency contact info, authorization for medical treatment, and authorized pick-ups as well as billing purposes.
  - c) Statement of Health Status
  - d) Immunizations (waiver instructions: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/vaccine-exemptions>)



- e) Parent Permissions
- f) Family Commitment
- g) Family Questionnaire
- h) Tuition assistance application (if applicable)
- i) Donation form (optional)

**All forms are due 7 days prior to your child's 1<sup>st</sup> day. The health statement is due within 30 days.**

- 7) Enrollment will be denied if there is an outstanding debt to River Song Waldorf School.

## **Change of Enrollment**

### ***Reducing or Increasing Enrollment***

Parents wishing to reduce or increase their child's enrollment are responsible for the current tuition rate until a spot in the new desired program becomes available. If they are wishing to add days, they must wait until space becomes available. To change a child's enrollment, a written request must be submitted (email is acceptable).

### ***30 Day End of Care Policy***

Parents who choose to disenroll their child prior to the contract end date of May 24<sup>th</sup> are responsible for giving 30 days' notice. Tuition will be billed for 30 days from when such notice is received.

### ***Re-enrollment***

The re-enrollment period is a time for current families to enroll their children for the upcoming school year, before enrollment is opened up to the outside community. There is often a waiting list and re-enrollment allows parents the opportunity to have priority for changing schedules.

Re-enrollment occurs in January each year. If completed forms are not received by the specified deadline, parents will become part of open enrollment and will not have priority for schedule changes.

### ***Dismissal Policy***

River Song Waldorf School reserves the right to dismiss, whether temporarily or permanently, any student when, in the opinion of the Faculty and the Board of Trustees, such action is deemed necessary and appropriate and/or is deemed in the best interest of the student or class involved. In the event of temporary dismissal, re-enrollment will be contingent upon all obligations being current and Faculty and Board of Trustees approval. In such a case, an exit interview will also be conducted with the parent.



### ***Summer Camp Registration***

Summer Camp registration will take place in January, along with the fall re-enrollment period. Parents may choose to attend the full summer (10 weeks) or half summer (first 5 weeks OR second 5 weeks). Schedule options are the same for camp as they are for the school year.

### ***Drop-in Care***

Drop-in childcare is typically not encouraged at River Song. Children may attend during the days in which they are enrolled. However, children who are not enrolled on a particular day and time may be able to attend an extra day if we know of someone who may be absent. This will be determined and approved by the Teacher and Director on a case-by-case basis.

### ***Child Pick Up/ Drop off Procedure***

#### **Authorized Adult Pick Up**

Children will be released only to those adults specified on the child's **authorization for pickup (Early Learning Ventures)**. Other adults may pick up a child only with written permission of the parent and photo identification. If a person who has specifically been refused authorization or an unknown person attempts to pick up a child, faculty will:

- 1) Check the child's pick-up form to confirm authorization (or lack thereof)
- 2) Detain the child until phone permission is granted by the parent(s) & grant pick-up or refuse pick-up accordingly.

In cases where someone other than the parent/guardian or someone on the child's pick-up form will be picking up the student, a letter or email must be provided by the parent/legal guardian that includes the new person's name and date of pick-up. This must be given, in advance, to the child's teacher at a previous drop-off time or emailed to the Director.

#### **Late Pick Up Fees**

Any child who is in attendance after 1:00pm for half days and 5:30pm for full days will stay in direct care of a teacher until an authorized adult arrives to pick them up. Teachers will begin making phone calls at 1:10 and 5:30pm, per instructions on the emergency contact sheet, until someone is able to come to the school.

All parents picking up late will be billed \$1/minute, per child; rounded up to the nearest increment of \$5 (i.e.: 7 minutes late = \$10 charge; 12 minutes late = \$15). The closing teacher will alert the Director of all late arrivals.



As our teachers also have lives outside of work, we need to respect their time. In the event of excessive late arrivals and/or failure to pay fees, it may be necessary to ask families to find a different program that better fits their schedule.

*If a child is not picked up and arrangements have not been made by 45 minutes after closing time, faculty should call the police or sheriff and report the child abandoned. If all efforts to have the child retrieved have failed, release the child to the police or sheriff (per Colorado Division of Child Care Rules and Regulations).*

## **Morning Drop Off**

Dropping your child off at school is a special time for the parent, the child and their teacher. **We ask that when you bring your child into the school you sign-in, make contact with their teacher** and then prepare for leaving as quickly as possible, preferably at the gate, door, or cubby. It is tempting to want to visit with the teacher or other parents but this can be quite a distraction to the flow of the morning. Our building offers a community room in the upstairs area. Feel free to help yourself to a cup of coffee or tea from the kitchen and visit with your fellow parents in this area or on our front porch. Parents wishing to talk to the teacher about more in-depth subjects should schedule an after-hours appointment.

### Drop Off Procedures:

- Log into your ELV account
- Select 'Child Check In/Out' and scan the QR code located by all gates
- If you don't have the app, simply enter your security code on the tablet
- Click 'Check-In' (or 'Check-out' if picking up)
- Make contact with your child's teacher and let them know your child is here and any information they may need for the day.
- Leave lunches and bedding in appropriate places.
- Apply sunscreen if it wasn't done prior to arriving (even in winter months).

Before the parent/guardian leaves the school after dropping off the child, and as soon as they arrive at the school to pick up the child, that adult must take responsibility for the safety of the child. Siblings must always be with the parent/guardian and are their responsibility at all times.

## **Signing In and Out**

By law, all children must be signed in and signed out of River Song Waldorf School **on a daily basis**. Simply log into ELV Parent and scan the QR code to sign your child in and out for the day. Every person authorized to pick up or drop off **MUST** have their own individual code. You may pick a code





of your own or one will be appointed to you. Authorized drop off and pick up contacts must download the ELV Authorized Pickup app rather than the Parent one.

**EARLY LEARNING VENTURES**  
**Kiosk & Parent App QR Code**

Available on the **App Store** | GET IT ON **Google Play** | available at **amazon appstore**

**STEP 1:** Download and log into the parent portal

**STEP 2:** Click on "Child Check In/Out" to access the QR code scanner from the home screen

**STEP 3:** Allow your camera to take the picture

**STEP 4:** Aim your phone at the provider's Kiosk and center the code inside the red box

**STEP 5:** Click on child check-in/out

**STEP 6:** Notification of success appears at the bottom of the screen for 3 seconds

### Parking Lot Safety

When arriving to drop off or pick up children, a parent is responsible for the child and must accompany them until departure. In the parking areas and near on-street parking, an adult must be within arm's length of the child until they are in the car.

**Parents are required to supervise their children in the parking areas and gated garden/play areas during drop-off and pick-up.**

### Off-site drop-offs

**Children may only be dropped off on school grounds.** Drop off is from 8:00-9:00am each morning. If you are running late and your child's class is off-site, you must wait until the class returns in order to drop-off. You may, however, join your child's class and accompany them back to the school. During this time, they must be under your direct supervision until we return to the school and the drop-off policy above has been followed. Please speak with your child's teacher to familiarize yourself with their schedule.



## ***Tuition, Policies, and Permissions***

### **Tuition Payment**

Invoices are sent via email on the 27<sup>th</sup> of each month for the following month. Tuition is due on the 5<sup>th</sup>. Payments not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> are subject to a \$25 late fee. Payment may be made with cash, check, or electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your bank account. Payment can be made via credit card via the Early Learning Ventures parent portal, with an additional 3% fee to offset the cost to the school. If Payment is to be made via EFT, please fill out an automatic withdrawal form that was included in your paperwork. Consult the Contract form for most recent fees.

### **Late Payments**

Once an account is 30 days behind, a \$25 late fee will be added and contact will be made with the family to get the balance cleared up. Late fees will continue to be assessed on the 10<sup>th</sup> and end of each month. Once an account is 60 days behind, a payment plan will be put in place, including being put on automatic payments. At 90 days past due, or lack of following the payment plan, the contract will be terminated and care will end. Work assistance may be used to pay off balances as long as it is for a task we would normally hire out and mandatory volunteer time has been met.

### **Fee Deductions**

Tuition Assistance is available upon approval by the Tuition Assistance Committee and as funds are available. Tuition Assistance must be applied for on a yearly basis. Tuition assistance is available for a full year or temporary situations and are taken on a case-by-case basis. Please see the Director if you'd like more information.

No deduction from the agreed tuition shall be made because of absences, suspension, or expulsion of the student, regardless of the reason for absence, suspension, or expulsion.

No deduction from agreed tuition or fees shall be made because of school closings for weather, utilities, or scheduled school breaks.

### **UPK (Universal Preschool Program)**

If your child is eligible for UPK (turns 4 by October 1<sup>st</sup>), you must apply through their system, marking River Song as your first choice as well as indicating that you are currently enrolled with us. UPK will pay \$660.54 each month (Sept. – May) towards 15 hours of preschool. This will fully cover our 3 half and 2 full day option. Any care beyond this amount and the parent/guardian will be responsible for the remaining balance, up to our current rate schedule.



## **Volunteer Hours**

Volunteering is an integral part of keeping our school running. It's also very important in building the parent-child relationship when a child can see their parents lending a hand around the school. Therefore, all families are required to volunteer a minimum of 10 hours per school year. There are numerous opportunities throughout the year to get these completed. Please keep an eye on newsletters and class emails for volunteer needs.

Please speak to the Director if you are struggling to complete your hours.

## **Daily Supervision**

In order to conduct safe operations and an overall quality education, all River Song staff are responsible for the following standards of supervision:

- Daily child counts and roll calls are made throughout the day, documented and verified against the Director attendance.
- While the school is in operation, a minimum of one management representative shall be on duty in the school or available via phone at all times.
- Each classroom or area in use shall have on-site adult supervision at all times.
- Staff qualified by education & experience will conduct all programs, services.
- Proper safety equipment shall be used at all times.
- The student/teacher ratio shall not exceed 1 teacher for every 10 students. However, we strive to maintain a 1:7 ratio as often as possible.
- No faculty member may be alone with a child in a room with closed doors, including toileting.
- A daily schedule that lists activities by classroom and time must be posted in the school. If a teacher makes a change to the schedule, they must notify all other staff members present.

## **Potty training**

River Song welcomes children in our preschool program whether or not they are potty-trained. However, a child must be mostly using the restroom independently if they are to stay past 4:00pm due to staffing constraints at the end of the day and afternoons being mostly outdoors.

In order to assist those still learning to use the restroom, the following policies must be followed:

- Parents must provide diapers and wipes for their child. These shall be labeled and kept in the bathroom.
- Cloth diapers are permitted but teachers will not be responsible for 'rinsing' any stool off the diaper. Parents must provide a wet-bag to store dirty diapers in to take home each evening.
- Teachers and parents will collaborate on timing and technique for potty-training. This will be done on an individual basis.
- No attempt at potty-training will take place for children until they are developmentally ready.



- A diaper log will be maintained in each class.

## **Off-site Excursions**

River Song takes frequent excursions to Indian Hills Park ('the forest') and the Spring Creek Trail Willow Tree.

When the children leave the premises for an excursion the following procedures are to be followed.

1. A name-to-face roll call is completed and recorded before leaving the school.
2. The written roll call that has children present, marked by name, is carried with a teacher at all times.
3. Before departure the children are reminded of the rules for walking on the sidewalk - a call and response song is led (i.e.: "who goes in front?... the teacher... who goes in back?... the teacher.. who goes in the middle? ... the children")
4. Children must stay on the sidewalk while walking to the park or other destination.
5. Children must have a handhold on the walking rope - known as the "caterpillar" - to cross any road.
6. A teacher will check traffic and make sure crossing zones are clear and make visual contact with any cars in the vicinity.

Prior to departing from any site:

1. The call for children is made using a song.
2. One teacher is assigned roll call and one teacher is assigned to physically sweep the area to look for any children who may not have responded to the call
3. Once children are gathered a name-to-face roll call is made and checked off the traveling sign in sheet
4. The "sweep" teacher makes two more sweeps - one on the perimeter of the space and one on the interior of the space to ensure all children and belongings are accounted for.

### **Willow Tree:**

Upon arrival at the willow tree on Spring Creek Trail, teachers assess the water safety by looking at the water level, strength of current, and the air temperature. They also scout the area for trash or other hazards. If the area is clear and determined safe, the children are allowed to play in an open area that is defined by the trail, the water and the tall grass field. Children are allowed to climb the trees in the area and stand on the shore of the shallow creek.

1. To determine that conditions are safe for wading the children will check in with the "gnome" in the tree who will then whisper to the teacher yes or no.
2. The wading area is marked by the natural boundaries of large willow tree roots, the island and the mainland.
3. Children must have appropriate water shoes to play in the water (no flip flops or crocs).
4. Children are not allowed in water that is over the height of their knees.



5. Children are allowed to sit and splash in the shallow water along the shore.
6. A teacher, wearing appropriate water shoes, must be in the water with the children. They are positioned at end of the wading area where the water begins to deepen. (Identified by willow tree roots). One teacher remains on the main land.
7. One teacher is certified in lifeguarding techniques and all teachers are first aid and CPR certified.
8. Tree climbing is not allowed at the tree closest to the bike trail during wading time due to staff needing to focus on the water play.

The school wagon is loaded with the following items before each trip to the willow tree: emergency warming blanket, towels, extra clothing and first aid kit. All teachers have their phones in case of an emergency.

### **Walk Permission**

By signing the General Policies section of the Contract I give permission for my child to walk to Indian Hills Park, the willow tree on Spring Creek Trail, and/or other excursions away from the school, under direct supervision of the River Song teachers at all times.

### **Field Trip Permission**

For specifically identified field trips a trip permission form will be issued on an as needed basis.

### **Field Trips & Outings**

1. The maximum child to staff ratio shall be 1 to 7. There must be a minimum of two (2) staff on each field trip.
2. The Lead Teacher is responsible for compiling a list of all participants and collecting all permission slips. These articles are to remain in the transporting vehicles at all times. A duplicate list of participants must be filed with the office.
3. In the event that an outing is running behind schedule, all parents are to be called and notified of the change in schedule.
4. Any time a student travels from the school in an owned, leased, rented vehicle or private passenger car, to another location in or out of town, a Trip Permission Slip must be signed by a parent or guardian and filed at the school as well as an Authorization for Transportation form. The only exception is for our regularly scheduled activities for which a signed blanket permission slip has been obtained (i.e., Bluebell Adventure Day).
5. Before a group leaves the school on a field trip, a roster of all the attendees must be left at the school for reference during their absence.
6. This same roster must be also taken on the trip and remain in the possession of the faculty member in charge.
7. A first aid kit is to be taken on all trips.
8. The Lead Teacher is always responsible for counting the students as they board and depart the bus/vehicle.



9. Faculty will never leave the students unattended. Students are always to be accompanied to restrooms.

### **Inclement Weather**

River Song Waldorf School will take children outdoors rain, snow, or sun! We believe the fresh air and exposure to nature play an important part in the healthy development of children. However, we also take safety into consideration. If the temperature (including wind chill) is less than 17° or more than 100° we will remain indoors. Teachers will always ensure children have enough layers on for cold weather and will monitor them throughout outdoor playtime for signs of children getting too cold. For warm weather days, water will always be available for drinking as well as water play days to help keep children cool, comfortable, and hydrated. Please provide a labeled water bottle each day.

### **Broken Glass Policy**

River Song believes all children should know what to do to stay safe in the event of broken glass. This is a very important life skill. In the event something does break, all staff will follow our broken glass policy. They will have all children 'freeze' while they assess the damage. Extra help will be brought in from the kitchen assistant or Director. Children will then be safely moved from the area. One adult will get our broken glass kit to ensure proper clean up and disposal. Although broken glass can pose an injury hazard, it's very important for children of this age to learn cause and effect as well as watching the teachers model appropriate behavior for cleaning up the broken glass safely and effectively.

### **Students with Special Needs**

In order to stand true to our mission, River Song Waldorf School will serve members with and without disabilities to the best of our ability. Though we cannot accommodate one-on-one care, we do welcome outside resources to come in to provide that, if needed, and at the expense of the parent.

In order to accommodate members with special needs, faculty must:

- ▶ Meet with the parent to assess the needs of the child.
- ▶ Increase staff member awareness of the needs of the child.

Any questions regarding the accommodation of a child with special needs is to be directed to the Director.



## **Custody**

River Song Waldorf School will remain a neutral party and premise in regard to child custody/living arrangements. Parental access can only be denied in accordance with court documents. Proper court documents must be on file at RSWS. Staff is trained to put the safety of themselves and the children first. Staff will attempt to delay/stop unauthorized pick-ups while the authorities are notified

## ***Illness Policy for Children***

A child may be too sick to attend if:

1. The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the program's activities, including lower energy.
2. The staff cannot adequately care for the sick child without compromising the care of the other children.
3. The child has any of the following symptoms unless a health provider determines that the child is well enough to attend and that the illness is not contagious (physician note required):
  - **Fever** (above 100 orally) accompanied by behavior change and other signs or symptoms of illness (i.e. the child looks and acts sick)
  - Signs or symptoms of possible severe illness (eg. Persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing, lethargy)
  - **Diarrhea**: Changes from the child's usual stool pattern – increased frequency of stools, looser/watery stools, stool runs out of the diaper, or child can't get to the bathroom in time.
  - **Vomiting** more than once in the previous 24 hours
  - **Mouth sores** with drooling
  - **Rash** with a fever or behavior change
4. The child has any of the following diagnoses from a health provider (until treated and/or no longer contagious):
  - Covid-19
  - Infectious conjunctivitis/pink eye (with eye discharge) until 24 hours after treatment started
  - Scabies, head lice, or other infestation – 24 hrs after treatment and free of nits
  - Impetigo – until 24 hours after treatment started
  - Strep throat, scarlet fever or other strep infection – until 24 hours after treatment started and the child is free of fever
  - Pertussis– until five days after treatment started.
  - Tuberculosis – until a physician determines that the disease is not contagious



- **Chicken Pox** – until six days after the start of rash or all sores have crusted over
- Mumps – until nine days after start of symptoms (swelling of “cheeks”)
- Hepatitis A – until seven days after start of symptoms (e.g., jaundice)
- Measles – until six days after start of rash
- Rubella (German measles) – until six days after start of rash
- Oral herpes (if a child is drooling or lesions cannot be covered) – until lesions heal
- Shingles (if lesions cannot be covered) – until lesions are dry

5. Children must remain at home until symptom free for 24 hours, without the use of medication.

### **When children become ill at school:**

Staff will immediately contact the parents or someone who has been listed on the child’s Emergency Contact Form. The child will be supervised in an area that is isolated from other children until the parent can arrive.

Note: A child may be exposed to contagious diseases in any school environment, including River Song. Please be prepared for your child to be ill more often, especially if this is their first school experience.

\*If your child is **unimmunized** against chicken pox, and you know that your child has been exposed to chicken pox, please refrain from bringing them to school until 20 days have passed or until sores have crusted over.

### **Administration of Medications**

All teachers and staff, according to licensing regulations, will attend a Medication Administration Training. The full class is updated every 3 years, with delegation by our school nurse happening yearly.

To facilitate safe administration of medications we must have the following from parents BEFORE we can take any medications into the school:

- 1) A Medication Permission Form with the current date on it, signed by both a health care provider and parent/guardian
- 2) The medicine must be in its original bottle and be labeled with the child’s name (pharmacies will split the medication into two bottles upon request.)
- 3) If a medication is expired or left over after dosage period, parents are responsible for picking up and disposing of the medication.





- 4) These policies pertain to both prescription and over-the-counter medications.
- 5) Emergency medication like inhalers or epinephrine will be stored in the classes but out of the reach of children. These will be in a container (i.e. pencil pouch) and will include the medication, signed permission form, and child emergency contact information.

### **Staff responsibilities**

- 1) The staff member administering the meds must give the child the medication and log the time, date, mode, child, medication name, and employee signature in the Medications Log binder located in the office.
- 2) Faculty and staff must then return the medication to the locked medication cabinet. Faculty and staff are never allowed to cut pills for children.
- 3) If a child has an expired medication in the locked medications cabinet, faculty and staff must give this to the parents of the child whose medication it belongs to.

### **Homeopathic remedies**

Per the Larimer County Health Department, Natural and Homeopathic remedies may not be administered by school employees at any time. If your child requires one of these remedies, they must either be given at home or the parent may stop by school to give the appropriate dose.

### **Sunscreen**

We ask that all children arrive in the morning with the sunscreen of your choosing applied. Any child that does not have proper sun protection will have sunscreen applied before going outside in the morning. River Song will reapply sunscreen as needed throughout the day, provided by the school. If your child is unable to use what we provide you may bring in your own bottled, labeled with your child's first and last name. Sunscreen may not be kept in cubbies or backpacks so please hand to a teacher for safe storage. We ask that sunscreen from home be limited to those who cannot use ours. It is very difficult to store and apply from so many bottles.



## ***Emergency Response***

### **Emergency Evacuation Plan**

When a potentially hazardous substance (i.e., gas or odor) or other unsafe condition is detected in the school, or a threat of fire or bomb is present, the following steps will be taken:

If the unsafe condition is deemed to be an immediate hazard, as determined by designated personnel, the building will be evacuated according to the following evacuation procedures.

1. Be familiar with your escape routes
2. A designated teacher (Director or kitchen assistant) will CALL 911 ASAP. If the school cannot be safely re-entered, 911 notifications will take place from the emergency cell phone.
3. When there is a fire or other emergency in the building, the first priority is to evacuate all children, staff and anyone else from the building in a calm and orderly manner via the closest safe exit, closing the doors behind them.
4. Teachers will take their name-to-face forms and emergency cell phone. The Director or kitchen assistant will bring the emergency contact binder and school attendance. Classes will gather quickly and quietly in the parking area behind the school or along the homes to the west of the school, dependent on hazard location. The teachers will ensure that all children are present and accounted for. The Director or kitchen assistant will do a sweep of the school as safety allows before confirming with each class that all children are present.
5. When someone is unaccounted for, inquiries will be made and designated adult(s) will search the grounds, as is safe to do so. Fire or other emergency personnel will be notified of missing person. **DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING!**
6. A designated adult will meet incoming emergency workers to provide information as to the extent and location of the emergency.
7. Should weather be severe, or there is any other reason the children cannot gather on the parking area the children will be taken to the nursing home directly to the east of the school. Spring Creek Health Care Center, 1000 East Stuart St.
8. Parents will be contacted by their child's teacher or Director and, if necessary, asked to pick up their children.
9. If the child is picked up by someone other than the parent, we will leave a message on parent's emergency contact number including:
  1. *what happened,*
  2. *what we have done,*
  3. *who we contacted on their emergency contact list to pick up their child*
  4. **Name, date, and time of call.**



10. A thorough accounting of the incident will be written and filed by the director with the Licensing Agency within 48 hours.

### **Fire/Fire Alarm**

All persons evacuate the building through designated evacuation routes and follow procedures listed above for Emergency Evacuation Plan.

### **Tornado Threat**

1. Teachers will take along attendance, emergency contact sheets and the emergency cell phone into the basement under Star Garden or into interior bathrooms (Star & Moon).
2. Children and teachers will remain in basement and bathrooms until the tornado threat is over and the all-clear has been given by the Director.
3. If deemed necessary for the safety of the children, parents will be contacted by their child's teacher and, if necessary, asked to pick up their children.
4. If the child is picked up by someone other than the parent, leave a message on parent's emergency contact number including:
  - *what happened,*
  - *what we have done,*
  - *who we contacted on their emergency contact list to pick up their child*
  - ***Name, date, and time of call.***

### **Lost Child**

1. Teachers will frequently account for each child in the class for the day.
2. If a child is thought to be missing, an adult will be sent to notify and inquire from all other teachers and adults about the missing child.
3. A thorough search will be made of the school building and grounds. If the child is not found, the parents and police will be notified.
4. A thorough accounting of the incident will be written and filed by the director with the Licensing Agency within 48 hours.
5. An incident report will be written and filed in the child's file.

### **Child Protective Services (CPS)**

#### **Preventative Policy**

In all childcare centers and schools, the safety and well-being of children is of foremost concern. Therefore, all employees are required to report any suspected child abuse, regardless of who is suspected or where the abuse may have occurred. Judgment of actual abuse is not made at the school. It is the responsibility of the appropriate state agency to investigate the allegation and make



a judgment. The school's role is to report any conditions which indicate the possibility of suspected abuse.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that each staff member is informed of the child abuse reporting law and reminded of the responsibility to report suspicions of abuse to the appropriate agency. Records of reports and accompanying details must also be maintained.

### **Child Abuse Reporting Law**

As a licensed childcare center, we are required to report any suspected child abuse to The Department of Human Services.

Under the "Child Protection Act of 1987" (C.R.S. 19-3-301) in the Colorado Children's Code, child care center workers are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect. The law at 19-3-304 states that if a child care worker has "reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child is being subjected to abuse or neglect or who has observed the child being subjected to circumstances or conditions which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect shall immediately report or cause a report to be made of such fact to the county department or local law enforcement agency."

"Abuse" or "child abuse or neglect" means an act or omission in one of the following categories which threatens the health or welfare of a child: skin bruising, tissue swelling, or death; any case in which a child is subjected to sexual assault or molestation, sexual exploitation, or prostitution; any case in which a child is in need of services because the child's parents, legal guardian, or custodian fails to take the same actions to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision that a prudent parent would take.

If at any time a staff member reasonably suspects child abuse, it is the responsibility of that staff member to report or to cause a report to be made of this suspicion to the local county department of social or human services at 844-CO4KIDS or to the police department. It is not staff's role to investigate suspected abuse – only to report it. Persons who make a good faith report are immune from civil and criminal liability. Additionally, the law provides for the protection of the identity of the reporting party.

A child care worker who fails to report suspected child abuse or neglect commits a class 3 misdemeanor and will be punished as provided in section 18-1-106, C.R.S. The staff person could also be liable for damages "proximately caused thereby."



## **Complaint Policy**

To file a complaint against River Song Waldorf School, please contact the Colorado Department of Early Childhood by calling (800) 799-5786. Their hours of operation are Monday-Friday 8:00am-5:00pm.

## **Philosophy of River Song Waldorf School**

We understand that our families come from a wide range of experiences and cultures. In the past, some of our families spent all of their formative and school years in a Waldorf setting. Others were not necessarily even aware what a Waldorf school was until they came through our doors. We know from experience that both of these types, and all the points in-between, can become a wonderful addition to our story!

We provide the following information to get everyone on the same page, so to speak. Even if you were raised in a Waldorf home or school, we may do things a little differently.

### ***What is Waldorf Education?***

Simply put, a Waldorf education allows children to PLAY! It allows children to be children, uninterrupted by outside perceptions of what others THINK they should be experiencing. Young children, unencumbered by the media and unnecessary and artificial restraints, benefit greatly from experiencing their world on their own terms. This can be seen in the wonderful games they make up during their outside play, their exploration of the natural world around them, wet-on-wet water color painting and countless hours of playing pretend.

This is not to say that they are allowed to do whatever they want, whenever they want. Adults are there to guide them from activity to activity, without unduly tearing them away from the imaginary world they were just in. We strive to create a balance of in-breath activities (circle, snack, story, etc.) and out-breath activities (free play – both indoors and out). Children are supervised to make sure games are safe, while still allowing for some reasonable assessment of risk. For example: children are allowed to climb trees, but must show that they can get up and down from them without assistance, and may only climb to certain heights. Every opportunity is also given to help children learn to work things out for themselves in a safe, social environment.

Adults act primarily as buffers to the outside world for the children without stepping too directly into their games. When there is a disagreement, the teacher is there. However, they are not



stepping in and telling the children, “This is the way you must play the game.” It is a lovely balance that is of great benefit to both the children and the adults in their lives!

Welcome to the world of Waldorf!

## ***What Your Child Needs For School***

### ***Please label child’s name on all items!***

- 1) Lunchbox with a cloth napkin and any utensils. Please refrain from media-inspired lunch boxes. We do ask that food with lots of added sugar be saved for home.
- 2) Inside shoes/slippers: grippy soles, secured on foot.
- 3) Weather appropriate clothing, free of television/media/movie characters. **LAYERS!**
- 4) Sunhat and winter hat – weather dependent and sometimes both!
- 5) Two weather appropriate and complete changes of clothes, including socks and undergarments. Please put in a wet/dry bag, or plastic baggie, labeled with your child’s name.
- 6) Nap/rest items (for full-day children) including crib-sized fitted sheet, **small** pillow (please refrain from bringing full size pillows as storage is at a minimum), small blanket, and soft toy, if desired (non-noise making).

## **Toys from Home**

We ask families to please allow children to play with the toys we provide at school and to leave personal toys at home. In our classrooms we try to provide play items that engage the child’s imagination and provide them with the opportunity for healthy group play. Classroom items are also more neutral in the arena of possession, i.e., they belong to us all, whereas toys from home are not as neutral. If your child does bring toys from home for naptime, we will ask that they be put with the naptime items. Special items may be brought to the classroom for sharing with others during specified times during the day/week (please ask your child’s teacher when their ‘share day’ may be).

## **Communication**

We communicate information to families in a number of ways:

- 1) *House Keeping Notes* is our monthly newsletter, which contains current information, requests for help and coming events, and reminders. It is distributed via e-mail.
- 2) Reminders and emergency notices are also distributed via email



- 3) Emergency notices will also be completed via phone or text – please be sure you add a mobile phone number to your ELV app to receive emergency text messages.
- 4) Teachers will email class-specific newsletters on a monthly basis.
- 5) We post notices of upcoming events in the entryway at school
- 6) A school directory (student and family names and phone numbers) is published at the beginning of every year and is will be distributed via email
- 7) Our website is [www.riversongwaldorf.org](http://www.riversongwaldorf.org)

### **Parent Evenings**

Dates and times of Parent Evenings are listed on the school calendar and typically take place twice per year (fall and spring). These evenings are an important time to learn about the school, your child's class, why we do what we do, and for helping us come together as partners in your child's life. **Attendance is strongly encouraged!**

### **Festivals and Seasonal Gatherings**

Celebrations are an important part of the young child's life. They bring a sense of the rhythms of the year, a connectedness with others, and a sense of wonder and excitement. We have many celebrations throughout the school year that go along with the seasons and holidays, below are just a few examples:

- 1) **Welcome Picnic/Harvest Gathering:** We come together as a community to welcome new families, celebrate the bountiful season of harvest and enjoy each other's company.
- 2) **Lantern Walk/Martinmas:** A celebration with handmade lanterns and a candlelit walk bringing our inner light into the darkness.
- 3) **Spiral Garden:** A peaceful walk around the advent spiral
- 4) **Winter Holidays:** We strive to celebrate many holidays around the winter season, including but not limited to: Hannukah, Christmas, Solstice, Kwanzaa, etc. If you have a tradition you would like to share with your child's class, please speak with their teacher
- 5) **Winter Faire:** A community event of crafts, good food, and fun!
- 6) **Carnival:** Coming to school in pajamas for a special day of eating pancakes and carnival games (in-class)
- 7) **Spring Faire:** A community day of crafts, maypole dancing, picnicking, and celebrating spring!



## **Parents in the classroom**

We love having parents get involved! Reach out to your child's teacher if you'd like to lend a hand. Volunteers are utilized in classes as needed. Parents and college students are the main source for these volunteers, serving in various capacities. Volunteers must be briefed on River Song Waldorf School philosophy, policies, and procedures. Substitutes are always welcome! See the Director to get information about being on the "sub list". Volunteers and Parents may never be left alone with children that are not their own. A River Song staff member must always be present.

## **Fundraising**

Fundraising efforts are a vital part of RSWs existence! Your tuition dollars pay our marvelous staff and keep the healthy food coming, while also ensuring that the doors open and the plumbing works. However, there is always a need for extras, such as teacher trainings, tuition assistance support, new swings, and garden plants. We rely on parent and alumni support to help run our fundraising events and participate in our annual giving campaigns. Board members, teachers and staff welcome any contributions you would like to make at any time during the year. (See attachment on what fundraising at River Song looks like)

## **Three Basics for a Happy School Experience**

### ***Well Fed:***

Please try to have your child eat a good, healthy breakfast before school. The children expend so much energy while here and need a satisfied tummy to make the morning a happy time. Please let us know if your child has not eaten, and perhaps send something simple that they could eat on the way to school or during free play.

### ***Well Rested:***

With the lazy days of summer still lingering within us, it can be difficult to establish a rhythmical bedtime for our children. However, it is so important that your child get enough rest during the night. An earlier bedtime goes a long way to ensuring that your child will have the energy and enthusiasm to be at school and will help them be up early enough to be hungry for breakfast.

### ***Well Clothed:***

Send your child to school in sturdy, comfortable play clothing. We are outside every day, except during extremely inclement weather, so please dress your child (or provide additional clothing) with this in mind. During the winter if they aren't wearing snow pants (only when snow is not present) we require them to have two layers on their legs. Long underwear under their pants or skirt can really help insulate.





We play hard at River Song! We get wet, muddy, and have so much fun! Please take this into consideration when dressing your child. Any clothes you don't want dirty should not be worn to school!

Appropriate footwear is a must. Comfortable, sturdy shoes that coincide with the weather (warm boots in wet, snowy weather) are required. We do ask that flip flops not be worn to school during the summer months. Tights and undershirts are highly recommended during the cooler months. Jackets and sweaters as well as warm hats will be needed on cooler days and full snow gear will be the norm during the snowy, colder months.

### **Request regarding Media Exposure**

We request that your child's exposure to television, movies, computers, and the like be minimal, if at all. We understand the impact and magnitude of this request for some families, but feel very strongly as to the benefits of it. As we go through the year together, we will explore ideas to help us all with this.

**WHY?** Here at River Song Waldorf School, we wish to foster and allow that which is within the child and which will become the basis for later creative thinking and academic learning to emerge, namely their imagination and imitative abilities. These are very powerful and beautiful abilities of the young child. Yet these abilities become distorted and colored by exposure to the powerful influences of our technological, media-saturated world. When they are exposed to these things at such a young age, their imagination becomes what someone else imagined and their imitative play is a reflection of something often extreme and removed from what the adults and others that love them offer them to imitate.

### ***Curriculum***

The focus of the River Song Waldorf School curriculum is to:

- ▶ Nurture the imagination and wonder
- ▶ Spark a love of learning and a sense of pride in accomplishment
- ▶ Provide an environment free of the unhealthy and unnecessary pressures from teachers to sit for long periods and memorize abstract information too early, and pressure from peers to reenact behaviors from television
- ▶ Build a strong foundation for formal academic learning later on
- ▶ Strong focus on social-emotional development



## **Curriculum Activities**

The major curriculum activities include:

- ▶ Free play indoors and outdoors
- ▶ Exposure to nature
- ▶ Circle time
- ▶ Exploration of oral stories
- ▶ Painting & other seasonal crafts
- ▶ Baking and food preparation
- ▶ Handwork (modeling with beeswax and clay, sanding wood, sewing)
- ▶ Celebration of seasonal activities
- ▶ Guidance

## **Expected behavior for all students**

- ▶ Respectful conduct towards teachers and others.
- ▶ Willing participation and following of instructions.
- ▶ Respect and protect school and personal property.

## **Discipline**

In our early childhood setting, we strive to hold the balance between freedom of movement and loving kindness for the children, and holding firm and loving boundaries that allow all to feel safe and secure. There are some behaviors that require little more than a singing request for "walking feet inside". If the child does not slow down, we may physically touch the child gently on the shoulder and remind them that we walk indoors, and they may go outside to run.

We always try to remind them of the right behavior before we talk about alternatives or give consequences. Another example is "we use our best manners at the table", if a child is playing with their food. If that does not work, we will go to their chair and gently remind them with a whisper in their ear that they need to use their water for drinking, for example. If the child does not respond to cues, we may take the glass away briefly, if they continue to play with it. "I will give this back when you are ready to drink out of it instead of..."

We are here to help the children to remember, or learn for the first time, ways to be respectful, helpful, and kind to others around them. Good communication is key, and it is a skill that we as adults are still working on, too. It is important that we help a child communicate his or her feelings of frustration when a child had taken a toy away or done some harm emotionally. They need to communicate, "It hurt my feelings when you said you would never give me a turn on the swing". The adult can also help communicate this for the child that is too upset to speak. It is important for both the child who is hurting and the child who hurt someone to hear appropriate and honest



communication and ways to prevent it from happening again. “Johnny, Mary is so upset. She tells me that you said you won’t ever get off the swing to give her a turn. Is that true?” (Give the child the benefit of the doubt...often the hurting child has misunderstood). We give both children our sympathy and listening, and maintain full attention to the situation in the hopes of truly understanding what communications skills broke down and how we can help.

### **Child Review Policy**

When significant concerns are raised by teachers, staff, or parents regarding an individual child who is expressing difficult behaviors and/or having a difficult time following the rhythm of the class, a Review Process will be started. If there is a child who is repeatedly challenging our behavioral expectations and does not seem to respond to offered solutions, teachers will begin a Child Review procedure. The parents, the teachers, and Director meet regularly to review options for the child and the family. The goal is to determine how to best meet this child and help them overcome any difficulties they are having. This process may lead to dismissal from the program if other children are being hurt or consistently upset by a child’s behaviors. The lead teachers strive to maintain excellent communication with the parents and will help problem solve with all involved. This review process may also include local child mental health specialists or other recommendations, as appropriate. Dismissal from our program may also take place if the plan put in place is not followed by the family and the behaviors continue.

### **Dangerous or Violent Situations**

There are times when a child will do something dangerous or violent. First, we must attend to the child who is acting out, and ask for help from another adult for the other child if he or she has hurt someone. The next thing we must do is to calm and reassure the child that all will be OK. If you have ever done something terrible or dangerous, you may remember feeling out of control, scared, anxious, etc. Let the child feel safe before asking the all-important question, "What happened?" What happened? is a great open-ended question. It gives the child the opportunity to tell you what they experienced. It may often tell you a great deal about what led up to the incident, and lead to further discussion about where things went off track.

Once you find out the whole story, most often the child who acted out was feeling threatened or out of control of his/her surroundings, unable to communicate their needs, etc. A therapeutic approach to reintegrating them in to play is to make sure they have talked it out, give them skills for next time, and stay close to them for a while, getting them involved in what you are doing or taking an interest in what they would like to play next. Often a check-in needs to happen (see thoughts on saying "I'm sorry" below), and all need to feel safe and calm before returning to play. Further discipline is not usually necessary, unless the act was repeated, terribly unsafe (“we never throw shovels. Please sit down and cool off. You may take a break from playing with shovels for a while.”),



or harmful to an innocent person. If that is the case, we will have them sit out of play, with an adult, to observe how other children are playing cooperatively. They may also need to hold our 'kindness balls'. In the event that there is repeated behavior that is harmful, i.e., breaks the skin/bruises, the lead teacher may ask the family to support the safety of others by keeping them home for the day.

### **Saying "I'm Sorry".**

Saying "sorry" often glosses over the real problems at hand and may offer dishonest communication. It is important for children to hear what "I'm sorry" really means and when it is used appropriately. While we do want children to express their regrets if they have hurt someone else, we want them to be sincere in their communication. Therefore, we do not send Jane off to say "I'm sorry" to Jack. We may say, as the adult, "Oh Jack, I am so sorry that happened to you. Jane, why don't we see how we can make Jack feel better." Then we watch them and reinforce good habits and manners around taking turns. Making a child say "I'm sorry", especially if they are not sorry, will lead to a bad habit of insincere communication and saying things in order to please others, instead of saying things that are true in one's own heart. We want to teach loving communication, not empty words. Many times, if a child has hurt another, we will ask them to check in with that child by asking "are you okay" or "can I get you some rice ice or a band-aid?" These will continue to reinforce the more positive interactions while also helping them develop a sense of empathy.

✓ ***Note: The dignity of the individual child must be respected and protected. Therefore, personal matters should be discussed: only in private, only when necessary, and only with authorized staff. A child who needs help should not be an item of gossip. Discussions of behavior challenges should also not take place in front of the child, whether between teachers or teacher and parent.***

### ***Want to know more?***

Our website is full of great information about our staff, our program, our philosophy and who we are: [www.riversongwaldorf.org](http://www.riversongwaldorf.org) Go to the Why Waldorf tab and you will find our resources page. It is full of community information, blogs, books and other great parenting links.