



Parent Handbook

*****Please sign, date, and return the last page of this handbook*****

2020 - 2021

Nestling Nursery/ Morning Garden Preschool
*PO Box 228
57 Church Street
Saranac Lake, NY 12983
518.891.3206*

*northernlightsschool.org
info@northernlightsschool.org*

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Dear Parents,

We warmly welcome you and your family to Northern Lights School. This school year will be challenging as we prioritize the health and safety of our children, teachers, and staff during this public health crisis. This handbook will provide information about our commitments to you and your child, our educational philosophies, goals and policies. It will inform you about your responsibilities to the school, and give you some insights into the daily life of the children. We hope that this information will answer many of your questions about the school. Should you have any further questions please feel free to ask.

Please sign, date, and return the last page of this handbook to acknowledge your review and agreement to our policies and procedures. We look forward to a rewarding school year full of joyful learning and growth.

Sincerely,

The Faculty and Staff of
Northern Lights School

*“Receive the child in reverence,
Educate the child in love,
Let the child go forth in freedom...”*

Rudolf Steiner

Our Mission

The mission of Northern Lights School is to engage the mind, fire the imagination, and strengthen the will as students develop initiative, creativity, and skills to serve an evolving humanity. This approach supports each stage of development with academic, artistic, physical, and social activities that draw forth each child’s unique capacities. Our philosophy meets the challenges of an ever-changing world with education that addresses the whole human being – head, hands, and heart. Our purpose is to provide a harmonious balance in the development of the child's mind, body, and spirit. Each child will begin to build a solid foundation within; to give purpose and direction to their life as they learn the skills needed to be a productive, independent, responsible and caring human being. We believe that children, given the support of our School, parents, and friends will become confident and free-thinking adults—able to create new solutions to the problems of our age and impart purpose and direction to their own lives.

We teach children to master academic knowledge and skills through developing clarity and insight in their thinking. Individual talents are recognized and nurtured. We encourage the children to develop strong human values and the confidence to act upon them. A respect for humanity and nature is fostered along with the awareness of the spiritual foundation of existence.

Respect and love of learning are cultivated in an environment where every student is embraced by the whole school community. The result is an educational blend of academic freedom, artistic expression, celebration of traditions and attention to the human spirit.

In establishing the Northern Lights School we seek to provide a center for parents and friends to share in the artistic and social elements of the school. In building community we hope to provide support for the children, offer opportunities for individual growth and encourage constructive social change.

We seek to provide parents with the opportunities to create a philosophical connection between home and school. We hope to enrich family life by building festivals, by deepening the relationship between children and their parents, and assisting parents in understanding their children's development.

Our History

Our School began as a parenting and playgroup concerned about educational opportunities for their children. The parents involved desired a school that was truly excellent—a school that would treat their children with respect, recognize their individuality, nurture their natural curiosity and creativity, and at the same time give them a rigorous foundation in not only the basics of reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and the sciences, but also in art, music, drama, creative movement, and practical skills. They wanted a school that would educate the whole child and leave him/her with a lifelong love of learning and a solid foundation to make his/her own way in the world. Finally, they wanted their

children to become self-confident, purposeful, to be able to work well with other people, and to be respectful of the natural world around them and of other peoples and cultures.

After three years of study, a core group of parents committed themselves to providing Waldorf-inspired education for their children and the greater community. The parents who originally organized the Northern Lights School and those who have continued to work for its growth and development are convinced that the Waldorf School movement comes closer than any other educational philosophy to realizing these ideals in their children. Out of this conviction, dedication and perseverance the first preschool/ kindergarten opened its doors in Wilmington in September of 1996. Our school has grown each year with all programs now being offered in Saranac Lake. Today, Northern Lights School has many offerings for families with young children. We are proud to offer free Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Newborn Care classes, and a New Parent Support group that meets monthly in addition to our normal school programming including:

Nestling Nursery Continuity of Care -6 weeks to 3 yrs old from 9 am to 12 pm with Miss Vannesa.

Email: vannesa@northernlightsschool.org

Morning Garden Preschool- 3 – 5 yrs old from 9 am to 12:30 pm with Miss Kim.

Email: kim@northernlightsschool.org

In August of 2017 we became a New York State licensed day care provider (790466). Our Extended Care Hours are 7 am to 9 am and again from 12 or 12:30 to 5 pm and offered by contract or by the hour. These are our normal hours of operation,

History of Waldorf Education

The Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner school movement began in 1919 in Stuttgart, Germany. Emil Molt, the owner of the Waldorf Astoria Cigarette Factory, was deeply concerned for the well being of his workers. Aware of the educational work of Rudolf Steiner, Molt approached him with the request to start a school for the children of the factory workers. The concern and generosity of Emil Molt made the Waldorf School possible, thus allowing a new and more humanistic approach to educating the growing child. That first Waldorf School became the model for a worldwide educational movement which today comprises some 700 schools on five continents, with over 100 in the United States. Northern Lights School's philosophy, curriculum and teaching methods are inspired by and based upon this model, thus we refer to ourselves as a Waldorf-inspired school.

The Waldorf Method

The uniqueness of the Waldorf curriculum, upon which we base our curriculum, lies in how the child is taught. The belief that education is an art is fundamental to the Waldorf approach. In the preschool and kindergarten child, the imagination is cultivated and exercised. The rich and powerful imagery of folk and fairy tales, offered through storytelling and dramatics, enfold the child. Fostering the imagination enriches the capacity for later creative thought.

Rudolf Steiner and Anthroposophy

Waldorf education is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian-born philosopher, artist, scientist and teacher. Steiner offered penetrating insights into a broad spectrum of human endeavors based on a spiritual vision. Steiner called his work, “Anthroposophy” (Greek for ‘wisdom of humanity’) or the Science of the Spirit. He emphasized that faculties lie dormant within each of us which can lead to new realms of knowledge about ourselves and about the world, if properly nurtured. He described a path of self-development using clear thinking, acute observation, and refinement of feeling, which transforms the will.

Anthroposophy is not taught to students. It is not a religion. In the words of Rudolf Steiner, “It is not our intention to teach growing human beings our ideas, the contents of our world conception. We are not aiming at education for the sake of any special dogma.” Anthroposophy does, however, inspire the method of education, and NLS faculty and staff are engaged in a continuing study of the work of Rudolf Steiner. This philosophy, which gives Waldorf education its distinctive qualities, forms a common point of reference for the faculty, a source of inspiration for their work, and a direction for their talents.

Religion

Northern Lights School aims to awaken the child’s reverence for the wonder and beauty of life. Children develop an inner attitude toward the majesty and spiritual foundation of the world. Our school does not seek to teach a particular religious view. Students from all religions, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are welcomed to the school, and their differences are respected.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Northern Lights School is an equal opportunity employer in that we do not discriminate and will take active measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment and advertisement for employment, compensation, termination, promotion, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Likewise, this policy extends to the admission of students and families in that we welcome and admit students without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Firearms Policy

Northern Lights School does not permit any firearms, shotguns, or rifles on this property.

The School Structure

Administration

Our school is administered by the faculty and staff. The faculty is responsible for the pedagogical endeavors of the school. Faculty/staff meetings occur weekly and include study and artistic endeavors as

well as business. The Board of Trustees is made up of members representing our faculty, parent body, and community. It carries the overall vision and direction of the school, and oversees the legal and financial health of the school. Board meetings are held once a month.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism has been and remains a vital part of Northern Lights School. Our school community consists of a warm circle of teachers, staff, parents and community members. It is the children who stand in the center, embraced by our gifts of example and love. We work together to give the children the best education possible and provide them with a beautiful, safe and nurturing environment in which to learn. Just as a child has many growing needs, so also do our school facilities and events. There are many opportunities for all of us to meet these needs. We all have gifts and talents to share – there is a place for everyone to contribute. We have many committees that we hope you will find interest and rewarding work that is so important to our school. The committees are listed below, please consider contacting one of them to offer some of your time.

Buildings and Grounds Maintenance	Chair: open
Festival Planning and Coordination	Chair: Carina Moore carinamoore21@gmail.com
Fundraising	Chair: Holli Edgely holliedgley@gmail.com
Grants	Chair: Julia Goren jgorenster@gmail.com

Through active involvement in the life of our school, we find friendship and fun (we are a diverse, talented and very interesting group of people!) and we strengthen the link between home and school. Thank you in advance for your support.

To Whom Should I Speak?

Communication between all members of our school community is essential. Please ask if you have any questions or concerns regarding the school, what a Waldorf-inspired education and our curriculum means, or your child.

General questions - Questions including those about enrollment procedures, school events, financial issues and the general operation of the school should be directed to School Administrator, Polly Kelting. You may email her at info@northernlightsschool.org or call at 518.891.3206 if you do not find her at her desk.

Teacher Contact- The early morning time before and during the student's arrival is very sacred to the teachers. It is a time of preparation and focus and sets the tone for the day. Therefore, if you need to contact your child's teacher, please make every attempt to do so *after* the class has been dismissed for the day. Our teachers are very diligent in their observation and interaction with each child. These observations are documented and shared with parents on a regular basis throughout each month.

Concerns about your child or his/her classroom – Questions about your child or the program she or he is enrolled in should be taken to the Lead Teacher of the program. Your child's teacher will inform you when he/she will be available to answer questions and/or meet with you once the school year

begins. If after discussing a situation with the teacher(s) involved you feel that a problem still remains, you can speak to the Faculty Chair, Rebecca Ciraulo, rebecca@northernlightsschool.org. If you still need to pursue a particular issue further, you may contact the Board of Trustees President, currently Julia Goren email jgorenster@gmail.com.

Tuition statements – Please contact Polly Kelting, info@northernlightsschool.org with questions about tuition contracts/statements and other invoices as needed. Tuition invoices are emailed to the email address provided at the beginning of the month. Payment terms are net 30 days, before finance charges are added. Please let Polly know if you would prefer paper invoices to be mailed to your home address or if you would like to use Paypal to pay your tuition.

Extended Care (Beforecare and Aftercare) statements-Extended Care statements are prepared at the end of the month. You may choose to save a spot for your child by agreeing to a monthly fee upon signing your tuition contract. Or you may sign up as needed and as space is available in the Extended Care 3-ring binder located on a desk near the office. Each child will have their own attendance/billing page where parents can sign the time in and out of school. The hours in school programs (9-12/12:30) will be subtracted from your child's time in and out. Please provide your child with healthy snacks for extended care (i.e. a snack for the morning if attending before care and a snack for the afternoon if attending aftercare) and a nutritious lunch for aftercare. Contact Polly Kelting with questions regarding your extended care statements and procedures. The Extended Care rhythms are kept very similar to school programming.

School policy, curriculum or procedures in general - These questions can be directed to the Faculty Chair, Rebecca Ciraulo. rebecca@northernlightsschool.org.

Questions concerning our curriculum –Information about Waldorf-inspired education and our curriculum can be asked of any teacher. Parent evenings, enrollment/education events, and our parent education classes are most helpful. This year, we will have to move these kinds of events to a zoom format until it is safe to gather together again.

Feedback, ideas and suggestions? Please discuss these with any of our staff or Board members. We will have various parent events throughout the year that will give you the opportunity to share ideas. Also, if you wish to provide written anonymous feedback, you may put the paper in the black mail box in the office area where tuition payments are made.

If you are ever unsure about to whom you should speak, please ask your child's teacher or the administrator who will direct you to the most appropriate resource.

Board of Trustees – Northern Lights School is overseen by a 12 member Board of Trustees. The following is a list of our Trustees, if they chair any committees, and their contact information.

Julia Goren, President, Grant Chair, jgorenster@gmail.com

Holli Edgely, Vice-President, Fundraising Chair, holliedgely@gmail.com

Scott McKim, Treasurer, tambournes@hotmail.com

Rebecca Ciraulo, Secretary, Faculty Chair, rebecca@northernlightsschool.org

Carina Moore, Events and Property Search Chair, carinamoore21@gmail.com
Ben Hameline, Social Media and Marketing Chair, ben.hamelin@yahoo.com
Kim Holmlund, Morning Garden Lead Teacher, kim@northernlightsschool.com
Cassie DiMarino, cldima08@gmail.com
Nora Sacco, norasacco521@gmail.com
Emily Foppert, emilyfoppert@gmail.com
Mary Smith, marys5adk@gmail.com

Practical Information

Arrival and Dismissal (Please note that the start and end times are subject to change.)

Children attending our programs should arrive at school by 9:00 am. Promptness is important. Beginning the day together as a class helps establish the rhythm, which is the foundation of the school day and helps create a smooth transition from home. This year all programming will begin outside while the weather permits. If you find that you are in need of child care before 9 am please contact the administrator. In light of our commitment to the safety of everyone, there will be a health screening and hand washing station for children and adults who will be entering the play yard. All adults are required to wear masks on the school grounds.

The Nestling Nursery program is dismissed at 12:00 pm and Morning Garden is dismissed at 12:30 pm. It is very important to be here promptly at pickup time. If you are unavoidably delayed in picking up your child, please call the school so that arrangements and reassurances can be made both for your children and our staff. For the children's safety it is essential that the school be informed of changes in pickup time, or a change in the person picking the child up. Notification of changes may be made by sending a note/email or calling the office.

Extended Care

All Extended Care invoices will be emailed at the beginning of the month covering the month prior. Emails will come from Intuit E-Commerce, not directly from Northern Lights School email. If you would prefer paper invoices, please inform the School Administrator.

Beforecare

For families who need to bring their child to school early, we offer a Beforecare program (available for an additional fee). Drop off time begins at 7:00 am and children are supervised on the playground or in the preschool classroom until the start of their class. Please speak with a teacher or our administrator if you would like your child to participate in this program. Parents can sign up their child on the Extended Care notebook located in the school office area. Space is limited and parents are encouraged to sign up in advance. There is also a monthly contract rate available to hold a spot for your child. Please note that continued participation in this program is subject to all related charges being kept current. This year, there is not enough demand for this service for us to be able to offer it. However, please share your interest with the administrator and we will reconsider if there are enough children.

Aftercare

An afternoon Aftercare program (available for an additional fee) is offered for those children needing to stay beyond the regular school day. This includes quiet time, stories, occasional crafts, a snack, and outdoor play. Please speak with a teacher or our School administrator if you would like your child to participate in this program. Parents can sign up their child in the Extended Care binder located on the table near the office and also sign the child out noting the time at pickup. Space is limited and parents are encouraged to sign up in advance. There is also a monthly contract rate available to hold a spot for your child. Please note that continued participation in this program is subject to all related charges being kept current.

Car Pools

Families in surrounding communities often form car pools. A brief gathering at the beginning of the school year is helpful to make sure that every family understands plans and schedules. Check your parent address list for families in your area. If your child will be leaving the school with someone other than a parent, names of individuals who are permitted to pick up your child need to be indicated on the Emergency form.

Bus Pick up / Drop-off

Bus service to and from Petrova and Bloomingdale Elementary School may be available for students and their older siblings living within the Saranac Lake Central School. Please contact the Saranac Lake School District bus garage to make arrangements and our School Administrator. The bus contact is Lenny Barker at 518.891.2859 or email: slcsbusinfo@slcs.org.

Parking Lot Safety

Arriving and departing from school is a busy time. Please be mindful of the parking signs posted and traffic within the parking lot. This will aid all in transporting NLS children with a safe arrival and departure from school. It will also respect our neighbors with whom we share this parking lot. Close supervision of your child is strongly encouraged. Cars are not to be left running or with keys in the ignition.

Calendar

The school calendar lists all holidays, and school vacations for the year. Notices of festivals, arts days and special events will be shared via email, NLS website and Facebook. Please be aware the calendar may change but every effort will be made to notify you well in advance.

Absences and Attendance

Each and every child is important to us at Northern Lights School. We ask that you call us to let us know that your child will be late or absent by 9 am so that we can have “peace of mind” as to their welfare. It is also requested that you notify the school with the symptoms that your child or you are experiencing. Sometimes we need a “mental health day”, please just let us know so that we don’t worry.

We recommend that a child who has had a fever or episode of vomiting spend at least 24 hours at home fever free without the use of medication or with no episodes of vomiting before they return to school. Children who have contracted head lice may return to school once treatment has been started.

Please advise your child’s teacher of the reason for all absences. While you are encouraged to keep

children home when they are overtired or recovering from an illness, you are similarly encouraged not to schedule regular doctor and dentist appointments during school hours. Family vacations should coordinate with school vacations when possible. Other arrangements should be discussed with the class teacher. If your child has been absent from school we ask you to please send in a note when your child returns that states the date(s) and nature of his/her absence.

Please try to complete the health screening for your child before you leave the house for school. Once at school if we find that your child is exhibiting symptoms of sickness or registers a fever, we reserve the right to refuse admittance for the day.

In addition, we will be attentive to the health of our teachers and staff, asking them to please not come to work if they are exhibiting symptoms of sickness. As such, we may have to cancel a class from time to time as we do not have enough substitutes to cover classes. This is just an unfortunate circumstance of the year ahead.

Cancellations and Snow Day Policy

Our school follows the school closings of Saranac Lake Central School in the event of inclement weather. If there is a 1 hour delay, classes will begin 1 hour later but we do not offer beforecare. If there is a 2 hour delay, classes will begin 2 hours later and there will be no beforecare. Aftercare will run as regularly scheduled from 12/12:30 pm to 5 pm.

Northern Lights School closings or delays will be communicated through school email and Facebook and follow the Saranac Lake Central School District cancelation protocol. Closings and delays will also be announced on **WPTZ** television, **WLPW** 105.5FM, **NPR (WSLU)** 90.5, 91.7, 88.3 FM by approximately 6:30am. Remember if you do not see Northern Lights School listed, simply follow the instructions for Saranac Lake Central School District. If due to the location of where you live, you do not have access to the resources listed above, please inform your child's teacher.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

An Emergency form with parents' home and work telephone numbers and an emergency number for someone who can be responsible for your child is required for every child. It is important that the school be informed of any changes in these numbers and that at least one person on the emergency contact list is available at all times during school hours. It is also important that the people on your list will be available to retrieve your child at any time.

Medical Requirements

All medical forms will need to be submitted before a child can attend school. These include:

1. A Child in Care Medical Statement or current physical with results of lead screening, within the last 12 months
2. A copy of an updated immunization record. Religious exemptions are no longer accepted in place of immunization record, according to NY State Law. Children will have 2 weeks after the start of school to ensure their immunizations are complete.
3. Topical Consent form for the administering of a natural sunscreen and bug spray as needed.
4. Authorization for Medical Treatment Form

5. Emergency Card

Northern Lights faculty and staff cannot administer any medications. If your child needs medication during school hours, please make necessary arrangements with the Administrator.

Clothing

Children need to come to school dressed neatly and warmly, in clothes that are appropriate for both indoor and outdoor play. The children play outdoors every day—rain or shine. Children will probably be running, playing in the sandbox and with water, and gardening. Dressing in layers will assure your child's comfort as the temperature changes during the day. Students should have a labeled bag at school with at least 2 complete changes of clothes such as extra hat, mittens, shirts, underwear, pants, socks, and shoes. All children will need a pair of indoor shoes to wear in the classroom. (We recommend light “tennis” shoes that will provide support and protection during fire drills and that will stay on during the day.) Labeling all clothing helps to prevent someone else accidentally taking something home. Please check your child's extra clothing frequently and replace any items that have been soiled. In addition, update sizes as your child grows. We ask that clothes and shoes remain simple. In particular, children are asked not to wear clothes with images of a violent, sexual, or drug related nature or that depict cartoon characters (super heroes, Disney, television or monster characters).

This year, due to the pandemic, we will not have extra clothing on hand. Please be diligent about checking your child’s supply of extras.

Snacks/Lunches

Nursery and Preschool- The school provides the major components of our healthy morning snack. Parents will be asked to help provide fresh produce and/or dairy products on a monthly basis.

Children participating in the aftercare program should bring their own lunches. Attention to nutrition is particularly important after a full morning. A wholesome lunch containing whole grains, protein, vegetables and fruit builds healthy and wholesome children. We ask that parents not pack junk food items such as soft drinks, candy, and food/drinks that contain a lot of sugar, hydrogenated fats (ex. processed cookies), dyes or preservatives. Please make the school aware of any food allergies or special dietary needs that your child may have.

Tuition Payment and Re-enrollment Policies

The principal expenses for the school are fixed on a yearly basis, and the tuition fees are budgeted accordingly. Tuition payments are paid monthly, semi-annually, or annually. Monthly tuition invoices will be emailed the address on file at the beginning of each month. Emails will be from Intuit E-Commerce and not from the Northern Lights School address. Monthly tuition bills that are not received in the office within 30 days are subject to a \$25 late fee on each occurrence. Finance charges will be assessed at an APR of 18% on any overdue balances. There will be a service charge of \$20.00 for any check returned unpaid. Accounts in arrears over 60 days that have not made payment arrangements with the administrator may be sent to a collection agency and further services to the family may be terminated by NLS.

Tuition/fees as stated in the tuition contract remain unchanged by absences (legal or illegal) or withdrawals. Students who begin a semester are obligated to pay for the entire semester at the rates

stated in the contract, even if the student officially withdraws from Northern Lights School during that semester. Families may be excused from payment only if there is a loss of job, they move outside of the area (35 miles), death, or divorce. Maintenance and cleaning fees are non-refundable.

This year we expect we will have to close for reasons due to illness or as required by the local health department if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in our area. The tuition payments are expected if we close for two weeks and we will move to a virtual environment of contact. If the closure extends beyond 2 weeks, you will be released of your obligation to pay.

Tuition Assistance

We feel that no child should be denied enrollment strictly for financial reasons. However, the work of the teachers and the costs of running the school are dependent upon the tuition and fees charged. Northern Lights School relies almost entirely upon the parent body and fundraising endeavors to cover our expenses. To enable more children to have access to our creative, quality education, Northern Lights School has set up a Tuition Assistance Program that is funded through grants from the local community. Decisions for admission to the school and tuition assistance are made separately. To apply for assistance, one must first enroll his or her child and then complete the application for assistance. Tuition assistance is given for a specific school year. Parents wishing to continue their participation in the program must submit a new request and new financial information each year.

Curriculum

The Waldorf-inspired Nestling Nursery and Morning Garden Preschool Programs

"When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I come to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than any talent for abstract, positive thinking."

Albert Einstein

The Nestling Nursery (6 weeks to 3 year olds) and Morning Garden Preschool (3-5 year olds) programs are based on the conviction that imitation of what is meaningful and true in life is the most important activity for strengthening and nurturing the young child. These early childhood programs provide a warm homelike atmosphere and an opportunity for children to learn through imitation and activity. Play is a child's real work and way of learning. Fairy tales and other stories, regular creative activities, sharing of tasks, individual activities, and group play are balanced in the rhythm of the day. The rhythm of the week is also carefully planned. There is a certain dependability that the children can rely on knowing that bread baking occurs each and every Monday and painting each Wednesday.

These young ages are the best time for the child to live in his/her imagination. During play time the children become engaged in creating houses from cloths and play stands, performing puppet shows and plays with silks and dolls, and building with simple items such as sticks, stones and shells. It is also the time to develop social skills with playmates and teachers: the children learn to listen, to share, to help and to respect each other. Circle time - a time for traditional verses, poems, and beautiful seasonal songs and games, is also a part of the early childhood experience. All circle activities are learned through imitation. Through the rhythm of word, music and creative movement, we work towards the integration of the whole being of the child, right down to the fingers and toes. Quiet time and a snack complete with candles and lyre music, give everyone a chance to relax and breathe out before story time. The classic fairy/folk tales and nature stories are told in an artistic way that captivates the children and engages their imaginations. During this time there may be puppet plays or a simple acting out of the story by the

children. Our day ends with rousing outdoor play, which often includes climbing over and under logs, sliding/rolling down hills, digging in the garden and running through the yard with friends. The children then say goodbye to their friends and teachers and the joyful morning together ends.

*“Straight as a spear I stand.
My roots are firm in the ground.
Strength fills my arms and legs.
Warm is my heart with love.”*

Discipline and Suspension Policy

Our goal is to ensure that we provide a positive, safe and supportive environment for all of our children. However, there may be some children whose needs cannot be met within the context and resources of our small school. Our policy is designed to provide a mechanism by which parents, teachers and professionals from outside of the school can work together to assess these situations.

In an effort to be proactive, and to assess the appropriateness of our classroom settings for each child, we require that parents share information regarding prior assessments, special education services, individual education plans, or therapies that their child has received in the past at enrollment. This will help us to assess whether or not the child’s needs can be met by our school.

Teachers will keep a daily log book of observations and chart of inappropriate classroom behavior. This will allow parents and teachers to help identify and address patterns of disruptive behavior in the classroom as early as possible. The goal of this log book and chart is to facilitate communication between parents and teachers and to allow them to work together to address classroom issues. If a child’s behavior shows a pattern of disruption or compromises the safety of other students, his or her parents will be called immediately and asked to pick up the child from school. When possible, we may request a visit by the district psychologist and/or appropriate professional to the classroom. During this visit, classroom dynamics will be observed and follow-up discussions between parents and teachers may be recommended.

If it becomes clear that we cannot meet the child’s needs within the classroom or that their behavior is regularly compromising the safety of other children or the effectiveness of the classroom environment, we will meet with the parents to communicate that their child can no longer be enrolled in the school. As much support as possible to find the best alternative program that might serve the child better than the resources of our small school.

Festivals

Festivals have always marked the passage of time and change of seasons, underlining man’s sense of place in the universal order of events. Our thoughts and feelings often mirror nature’s rhythmically changing face. At Northern Lights School festivals play an important part in the education of our children. We celebrate festivals that originate from a variety of cultures and faiths around the world and

encourage parents to share with us any other traditions and celebrations that are honored in their homes. Unfortunately, this year our in-person festivals will be postponed until we see how the public health environment changes as the year progresses. Of course, we will be honoring the change in the seasons and traditional stories in the classroom, just not as an entire school body. A virtual replacement will be hosted to mark the significance that the festival honors.

Autumn

Once the days grow colder and the leaves begin their vibrant transformation, the children's attention is brought to *the Harvest Festival*. This is an all-school harvest celebration in which we acknowledge the end of summer, the arrival of fall, and the coming of winter. We share the story of St. Michael, an archangel mentioned in the Bible, Apocrypha and Koran. He appears as a spiritual figure and protector of humankind, inspiring strength, courage, and will throughout history. As the days of autumn are filled with glorious color we are reminded of the cold, dark winter ahead. We are drawn to the courage of St. Michael and are inspired to gather our own strength and prepare for the months ahead.

As the days grow shorter in November we sing songs about kindling our own inner lights and sharing our glowing warmth with others. The children make simple lanterns in preparation for our *Lantern Walk* in early November.

Thanksgiving, a time of giving thanks for nature's blessings is celebrated in different ways in each classroom through stories, songs, feasts and other activities.

Winter

Advent is a time of waiting and a special celebration of light. We wait for the birth of the baby that brings light and love to the world. We wait for the winter solstice when the days grow longer and the light grows stronger. We gather together for our *Garden of Light* celebration. Pine boughs are laid in a spiral pathway that leads to a large candle in the center, the place of light. Each child walks the spiral with his or her family, holding an unlit candle. At the center, the child lights his or her candle and walks back through the spiral pathway, leaving the candle along the way. As the sunlight gradually fades, the effect is a group light, a spiral of lights, shining into the winter darkness. This is a festival especially important for younger children. Its impact rests largely in the atmosphere created by the soft music and candlelight. It is a lovely and quiet ceremony.

Spring

In Spring nature breathes out, plants rise, and we experience the budding life of nature. The natural renewal of life in the spring offers the hope and courage required to face the chaos and destruction affecting all humanity. Ancient civilizations all over the world believed life was contained in the egg. In our classrooms, colored eggs, flowers, planting, and stories of new life in nature delight the children, and are symbolic of the possibility of mankind moving from darkness into the light.

Special Events

Responsibility for Children at School Events

Every school day, the children pass from the hands of their parents to those of the teacher and back again. This is how it should be, with the children constantly under the loving eyes of those who have responsibility for them. But what of those times when it is unclear who is carrying the responsibility, such as at a school event or festival? Accidents are more likely when adults are not fully conscious of the children's actions. ***Parents are responsible for their children at all events, except when the faculty is with the children as a class.***

Fundraising Events

Various fundraising events may be held throughout the year, such as: May Faire, pizza nights, raffles, flower bulb sales, etc. The specific fundraising events vary each year according to the needs of the school and the parent body. Families play a significant role in the fundraising needs of the school. Please do what you can to help.

Parent evenings

We will be offering parent evenings about different topics throughout the school year. Invitations will be sent by email, you can also look for more information on our Facebook page. With the public health crisis, these evenings may be hosted virtually.

Birthdays

Birthday celebrations are important moments for the birthday child. For the teacher, the birthday provides an opportunity to come to know the child more deeply, observing his or her special gifts, strengths and weaknesses. The teacher considers the child's growth in the past year. Parents will be contacted prior to the child's birthday celebration to collect a few pictures and stories highlighting each year of the child's life and prepare a special snack for the class.

Parents and Northern Lights School

By enrolling your child at Northern Lights School you have joined a community dedicated to nurturing children and providing them with the healthiest and best education possible. Parent participation is invited and encouraged. The concepts of independence and self-government demand participation by the parent body for on-going operational and special tasks. Of course, parents provide most of the financial backing for the school, but shared time, skills and creative ideas are needed as well in the areas of fundraising, festivals and community events. Parent evenings, study groups, meetings with teachers, education events and workshops provide you with a rich source of information about the pedagogical and philosophical background of our school. Our school library and bookstore are full of valuable resources about child development and Waldorf education. Great pleasure can come from seeing how the curriculum is so wonderfully in tune with the physical and emotional development and needs of your child. We encourage you to read and attend as many of our educational events as possible.

Supporting Our Curriculum at Home

The first step in providing a supportive home life is becoming familiar with our curriculum so that you can actively support what is happening in school. This can be done by reading about Waldorf education, upon which our curriculum is based, and attending our educational opportunities and events.

A rhythmic home life harmonizes with the school experience, strengthens the child and makes life easier for the whole family. Creating a rhythmic and calm ordering of the day can provide you and your child with a true sense of well-being, especially in today's hectic and fast paced world. Providing regular meal and bedtimes and having simple chores that are carried out each day are ways to begin establishing a family rhythm. Small gestures such as bringing candlelight and a verse to mealtime and bedtime can change these times from being chaotic and draining to being calm and healing. Simple rituals help to mark the milestones of the school day – a morning verse, transition songs when going from one activity to the next, and a poem to close the day. Are there special verses or songs you can incorporate into your daily home rhythms? Also the possibility for the child to play creatively, no matter what his/her age in the afternoon: outdoors, or indoors, with raw materials for creating, building and pretending. For the younger children, having things for school laid out by the door the night before is a big help and makes getting off to school more pleasant. Many children, initially tired or nervous at school, will settle down as soon as a routine of early bedtime/early rising is in place, thus avoiding all haste in the morning.

Waldorf-inspired education stresses the rhythm of the day, the week, the seasons of the year and the festivals that mark their change. Today, as parents and teachers, we walk nature's daily, weekly and yearly path with different levels of consciousness. It is our task to reawaken our interest in nature and create ever more meaningful celebrations for our time. In this uncertain and fast-paced technological age, the return to reoccurring celebrations can give our children a sense of security and teach them a love and respect for nature. As your family becomes acquainted with the many festivals of our school, you may want to incorporate more celebrations into your home-life. Your own family heritage and observations of nature can be your inspiration. You children will love decorating a room, baking treats, learning special songs or listening to seasonal stories with you.

Children and the Media

There are many noticeable physiological and developmental effects of television, radio, and feature length movies on young children: shortened attention span, reduced perseverance, less initiative, and flight away from the inner imagination. It can sap the child's creative energy, interfere with healthy social development and weaken academic performance. A child's imagination is the vehicle for learning and growth, and children need opportunities to develop this critical capacity. The television watcher is hindered in the ability to form and create his or her own images, for they are passively implanted. Television watching is a parental decision, and parents must decide what role it will play in their children's lives. The process of weaning your children from these influences takes courage and creativity on your part. Those parents who have done it find that their children learn to live richly in the drama of their imaginations and spend many hours absorbed in highly creative pastimes. Many parents in our school are very helpful in suggesting alternatives to television and would be happy to share their experiences with you.

Parent Attestation

Please return this signed document acknowledging that you have read and understand the contents of this Parent Handbook.

I _____, have read and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained in the Parent Handbook.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date _____



Infectious Disease/ COVID-19 Health Policy

Our priority is to ensure the health and safety of the children and staff every day that come to work and play at Northern Lights School. We will not be successful without your help! Our new guidelines are based on the DOH Interim Guidelines for Child Care Centers with consultation with our licensing agency NYS Office of Children and Family Services. These practices are subject to change as needed. We are asking each of our families to acknowledge and agree to the following procedures. This form must be returned before your child can return to our program.

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

Child's Name: _____ DOB: _____

I, _____,

*Parent/ Guardian
above*

Relationship to children listed

If my child(ren) or any person within my household show any of the following symptoms, I agree to keep them home for **24** hours or until the child is fever free, without fever reducing medication.

- Fever over 100.0
- Excessive dry cough
- Shortness of breath
- Lethargic, overly tired, unusually calm or quiet
- Mild respiratory illness/ issues
- Unexplained rash

- In contact with a person who has just returned from a quarantine state.
https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIzM671Z666wIVyJyzCh1z5gLuEAAYASAAEglwOvD_BwE

If my child experiences any of the above symptoms during childcare, I understand that either myself, or a person I have designated as an emergency pick up, *will arrive within one hour*. Administration may request a physician's note to return to care. I agree to inform the program if my child, or any family member, tests positive for COVID-19 so that the program can take necessary mandated steps. Your child's identity remains confidential. Out of respect for the other children, families and staff members, failure to abide by our policies or failure to disclose COVID-19 exposure or positive test of your child or family member may result in immediate termination from this program. I certify and acknowledge that I have read and understand the COVID-19 Health Policy and agree to the terms listed above.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Updated August 26, 2020