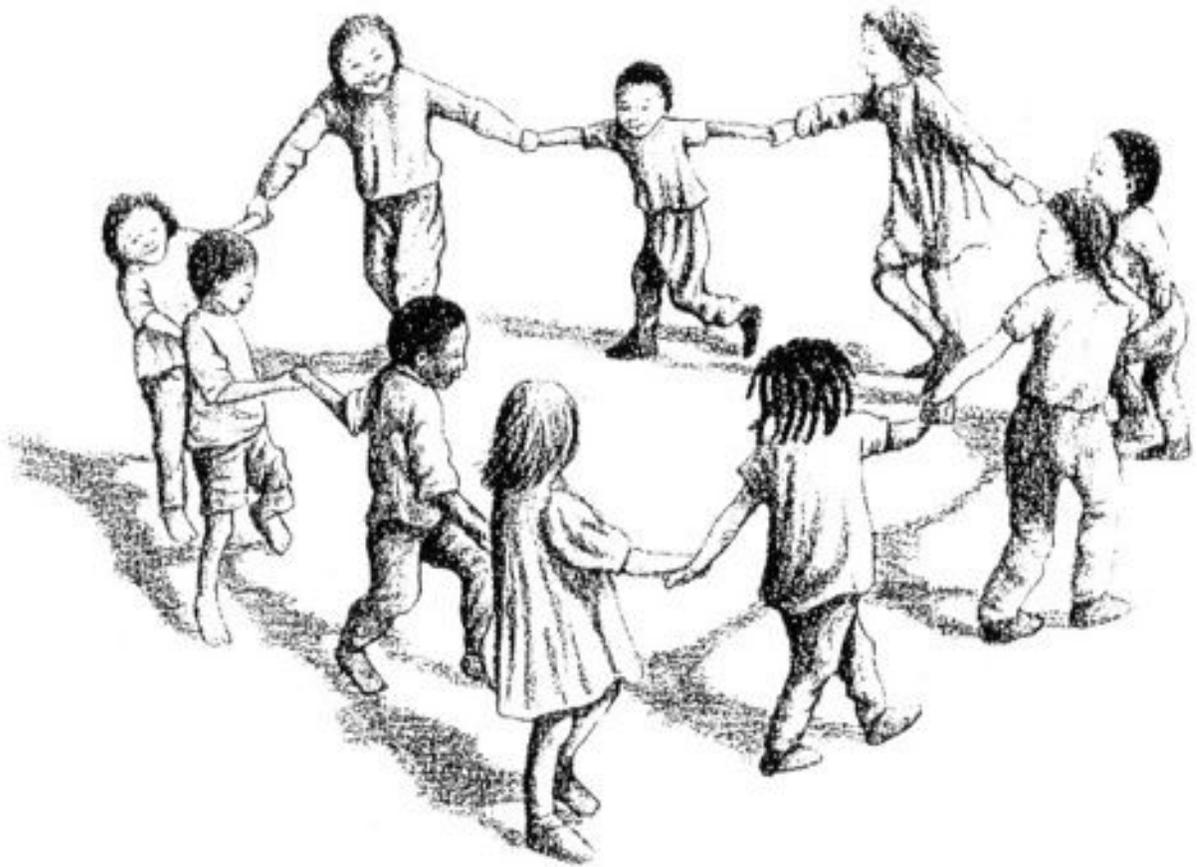


Kindergarten Handbook



SunRidge Charter School

The kindergarten offers a joyful, nurturing setting that inspires the imagination through creative play, storytelling, puppetry, music, movement and art. Emphasis is placed on the healthy development of the physical body through practical activities that include handwork, crafts, baking, cooking, gardening, digging, sweeping, nature walks and plenty of time outdoors. Responsibility for self and others is encouraged through attention to sharing, caring and taking care of our kindergarten classroom and play yard. The foundations of written language and literacy are laid with emphasis on the oral traditions of storytelling, puppetry, and song. The foundations of mathematics are nurtured through rhythmic movement, music, and the practical activities of cooking, sewing, gardening, and carpentry. Attention and care of the natural world and its beauty lay a healthy foundation for more precise scientific explorations in the later years.



Dear Parents,

We offer a warm welcome to you and your family. What an exciting journey you and your child are embarking on as you prepare for the kindergarten experience. We offer a warm and nurturing environment for your child, one that inspires imagination and creativity while providing plenty of opportunity for physical movement and activity. We invite you to join us in a partnership that will both nurture and support your child. This handbook offers a clear picture of our program as well as ways in which you can support the Kindergarten program at home. Please take time to read all the way through. We will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Life At School

Clothing: Children need to wear clothing appropriate for work and play. There will be a few opportunities for special occasion clothes.

We ask that you send your child to school in clothing that is clean, comfortable, and sturdy. Please avoid clothing with large logos, media or cartoon characters, or bold and distracting print and images.

Natural fibers: Clothing made from cotton and wool fibers have a warming and breathing quality, which is vital to the young child as their bodies are growing and developing.

Layers: Temperatures often fluctuate greatly from the start of the day to the end. Please dress children in layers that can come off as the day grows warmer (make sure arms and legs are covered at the beginning of the day). Children's midriffs must be covered at all times.

Label Clothing: Please label all outerwear such as coats, hats, sweaters and rain gear with child's name, as well as the items in their change of clothes bag.

Jewelry: We ask that jewelry be left at home. It can cause distraction and easily get lost or broken. If your child has pierced ears, please send them to school with studs only.

Shoes/Boots: Shoes need to be comfortable, secure and able to support the feet in running games. Please no light-up shoes, flip-flops, or clogs without back strap. Please provide a pair of rain boots to stay at school. Indoor shoes must provide traction and support for activities such as skipping, hopping, jumping, and dancing. For indoor shoes, avoid clogs or other shoes without a closed heel.



Rain Gear: We go outside every day rain or shine and the children may get wet and sometimes muddy. Please provide rain gear: raincoat, long enough to cover clothing and roomy enough for warm layers underneath, rain boots, and rain pants. Please, no umbrellas.

Hats: Please provide both a sun hat with a wide brim and a warm, snug-fitting hat that can remain at school. Choose simple styles, avoid costume and animal themes.

Change of Clothes: Please include in your child's change of clothes bag the following items: pants, shorts, underwear, socks, and a plastic bag. Check their change of clothes bag periodically to replenish as needed, and label every item.

Lost and Found: Each class will have a designated area for lost items. Twice a year, unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

Toys and Items from Home: We ask that toys and other personal items from home remain at home, and classroom toys remain at school.

Pets: Occasionally we will allow small pets from home to visit the kindergarten, but prior arrangements must be made.

Attendance/Tardiness: Regular attendance is important for healthy social development. Tardiness also affects your child's social development. When children are late, they miss out on vital social bonding that takes place first thing in the morning. School funding is dependent upon the daily attendance of each child enrolled, so we ask that you please try to arrange family vacation times to coincide with the school vacations.

Absences: If your child will be absent, please notify the office in the morning by calling 824-2844.

Emergency Forms: We must be able to reach a parent or responsible party in case of an emergency. Please keep your emergency card current, and include cell phone numbers.

Illness: Students must be fever free (without medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.

Please keep your child home if they have any of the following:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent cough
- Severe headache
- Earache
- Red, puffy, or draining eyes
- Wheezing, difficulty breathing
- Suspicious rash
- Temperature over 100 degrees
- Stomachache

Snack: Four days each week we provide a hearty, organic snack for the children which includes a grain. Water and herbal tea are provided. Once a week we have a soup-making day and ask that families bring organic vegetables to contribute. Once each week we ask parents to send a hearty snack and plenty of water. Individual snacks can be sent in a child size backpack.

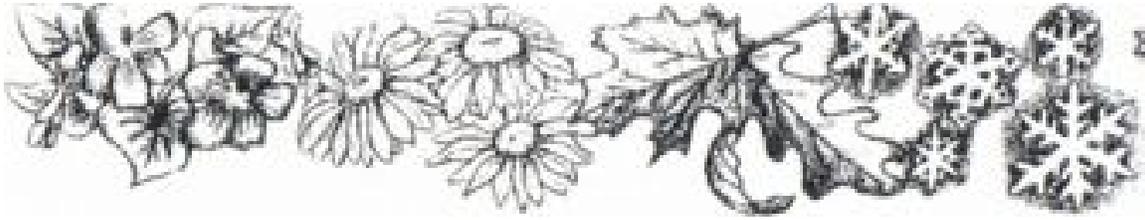
Field Trips: We plan field trips each year to visit farms and gardens in the community. Transportation is provided by either volunteer parent drivers or school bus.

Our district requires each driver to be registered with our school office in order to drive on a field trip. This includes driving only your own child. Our office staff can assist you with this process. Parents and siblings are welcome to join us, however, official chaperones can only have kindergarteners under their supervision, (not other siblings). There will be a small cost for these trips. Please note: as per district requirement, field trips begin and end at school.

Birthday Celebrations: We celebrate **five-year-old** birthdays with a story, songs, and birthday books. The **five-year-old** birthday is often celebrated together as a group to soften the level of direct attention the child has to bear; families are typically not present for this celebration.

Parents of the **six-year-old** child are invited to attend our celebration. The teacher will share a story and offer a gift of a birthday book made by the class. We invite the parents to share a story of the child's birth or younger years. The family is welcome to bring a treat such as fruit bowls or kabobs to share with the class on the day of the celebration. Please clear the treat you plan to bring with your child's teacher at least two days prior to the celebration.

Birthday Party Invitations: For any home birthday celebrations, please send invitations in the mail.



Festivals: We celebrate seasonal festivals together as a kindergarten community, as well as with the larger school community throughout the school year.

Parent Help: Parent volunteer efforts within the kindergarten and school community are essential to the success of our program.

Parent / Teacher Conferences: We hold conferences twice a year in fall and in spring. We meet with each child's parents to talk specifically about academic and social development. We have portfolios to share and offer an opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns. Sign up sheets, with dates and times will be posted in advance.

Community Bulletin: Outside the classroom is a bulletin board for class and school communication.

Phone: Messages during the day can be left at the office at 824-2844. Teachers have individual voicemail boxes where confidential messages can be left.

Before School: The Teacher's focus is on the children as they arrive in the morning, therefore the preferred form of any morning communication is by written note. If your child has had a particularly difficult evening, night or morning, a few written words to that effect will be helpful for us. We are able to offer brief check-ins after school and will be happy to set up conferences as needed.

Phone Tree: Teachers use group emails and the phone tree to distribute time sensitive information. Please pass along changes in phone numbers to phone tree leaders.

Parent Evenings: We schedule regular parent evenings throughout the year. These meetings are a blend of a "Window into the Classroom", artistic or musical activity, and educational topics. Waldorf methodology is deep and rich and these meetings provide us with the opportunity to share our knowledge about the developing child. Parent meetings are also an essential component in creating the partnership that will nurture and support your child. Our parent evenings help to build the foundation of the adult community at our school, providing a container to share the joys and challenges of parenting and teaching in these modern times. We ask that each household is represented at these meetings.

First Grade Readiness: Our guideline for entry into the first grade is that the child must be 6 years old by June 1st. We will have individual discussions regarding readiness during parent conferences.

Drop-off: Kindergarten classes are in session Monday-Friday from 8:30am -12:30pm. If you arrive before 8:30am, please supervise your child outside. Kindergarten children are not to be dropped off in the parking lot. All school rules apply to the playground before and after school.

Pick-up: Please wait outside until your child is released. If running late, please call the office, 824-2844, to let us know. If your child is not picked up within 10 minutes of dismissal time, expect a phone call from the school. If you need to pick your child up early, please let us know in advance and sign them out in the office. Children need to be with an adult until they reach their vehicles. When someone other than a family member will be picking up your child, please provide written communication in advance.

Kindergarten Play Yard Boundaries: The kindergarten boundary is the fence line of the kindergarten play yard. Kindergarteners spend the outdoor portion of the day in the play yard under the supervision of teachers. On occasion the children go on outings outside the play yard with their teachers. Parents can ensure a safe and secure environment by making sure the gates are closed and latched when entering and departing from the play yard.

Safety Considerations and Guidelines for the Kindergarten Play Yard

We want our kindergarten families to feel welcome to use the yard as a place to have lunch and for the children to play after school. We ask for your help in maintaining the established guidelines for the children while they are in our care and expect that these safety considerations will be respected and supported during non-school hours.

Our kindergarten play yard is defined by two separate play spaces, the “Redwood Garden” on the east side of Morning Star building, and the “Sycamore Play Yard” on the west side. We ask that you choose one side for your after-school time in the yard so that your child will be with you in an area that you can easily observe and supervise. We ask that the children do not run freely from one side of the yard to the other, and that they are especially mindful of the rope divider on the backside of the Morning Star classroom, or any area that may be roped off at any time.

The main hillside of the Sycamore Play Yard is off limits at this time as there is further work to be done to make this area a safe play space for the children.

Thank you for your support in helping us to keep the play yards clean, tidy, and ready for use the following school day. Please feel free to sweep or rake as needed. (Perhaps the picnic tables need to be wiped down or the hose needs to be recoiled and the children could help with

this.) If we all keep an eye on the play yards and help to maintain and tidy them they will remain a welcoming play space for the children each day.

Gates should remain closed at all times and will be locked after 3:30 and on the weekends.

Continuity of following guidelines: We ask for your support in maintaining respect for our equipment and play space. We ask that the children follow the same guidelines for safety while visiting before and after school, as in the regular school day.

Direct Supervision: Please keep a careful eye on your child, as well as other children, while in the play yard.

Attention to tone and content of adult conversations: Please save adult conversations for a time and space away from the children. Children can easily tune in to the mood and content of conversations in the yard.

Cell phones and Laptops: Please do not use cell phones or computer devices while in the Kindergarten yard or classrooms. (Exceptions can be made for occasional use of your phone as a camera.)

Standards for behavior: We strive to create an environment where each child feels safe and cared for. If you observe hurtful behavior, (e.g., hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, name-calling, teasing, or threatening language) please directly and kindly intervene and redirect the child. We encourage you to enlist other parents to help resolve issues that arise.

Tidy up

- Please help your child return toys and tools to their proper place.
- Empty sand or dirt from buckets, bowls, wheelbarrows etc.
- All buckets, rakes, shovels, etc. must be returned to their hooks.
- Please make sure hoses are rolled in a tidy coil.
- The yard should be left in a tidy fashion each day; please double check that the playhouse is left clean inside.

Play Cottage

- The cottage in the Sycamore Play Yard is to be used with care.
- Please no water or wet mud-play in the cottage.
- Please make sure table and chairs are put away in a tidy fashion.
- Children are not to climb the walls of the cottage, nor stand on the furniture.

Climbing Structure and Monkey Bars

- The climbing structure and horizontal bars must be used safely at all times.
- Only one child is to use the hand-over-hand horizontal bars at a time.
- No climbing or sitting on top of the hand-over-hand bars.

Water

- No water from sinks, hose, or pump before or after school, unless teacher gives specific permission.

Water Pump

- Wood chips, stones, sand and yard debris can easily clog and damage the pump.
- Only water is to go into the pump and the barrel that houses the pump.
- Only one child is to have their hands on the pump at a time.

Trees

- Climbing trees on campus is not allowed at any time.

Kindergarten Fence

- No climbing or sitting on the kindergarten fence.

Shovels

- Shovels are for digging. They must be at the child's side when walking.
- No throwing of, or running with, the shovels.

Sticks

- Children are to refrain from playing with sticks after school.

Tire Swing

- Adult supervision is required at all times while children are on the tire swing.
- Please designate one adult to monitor and remain close to the tire swing area.
- Only three children at one time are permitted on the swing.
- No hanging on the suspending chains.
- Children are to wait for their turn outside of the support bars, on the hay bales.
- They must sit on their bottoms while swinging, with their feet on the inside of the tire.
- The tire swing must not be in use while other children "shimmy" up the side support bars.
- Children are to hold on with both hands.
- No ropes or other equipment may be brought in the tire swing area.
- We encourage children to push others on the swing and request adults or older children refrain from pushing or riding the swing. We have taught the children to push with two hands directly on the tire. Please do not let them grab the chain and run in circles, it is too easy for them to lose their footing and get dragged by the momentum of the swing.

Communication: As in any aspect of human endeavor, clear communication is an ongoing goal. We hope you feel comfortable coming to us with your questions and concerns. If a difficulty arises, please come to your teacher directly, as soon as possible. We have established various modes through which to maintain open lines of communication.

Home Visits: Home visits help bridge the child's experiences at home and school. We will contact you prior to school starting to make arrangements. If we are unable to make a home visit prior to school starting, we will try to do so as soon as time allows.

Written Communication: SunRidge distributes a weekly school bulletin to all families via email. Please read it each week. Kindergarten letters will update you on what we are doing in the classroom and will provide details for upcoming kindergarten and school functions.

SunRidge Kindergarten Discipline Procedures

In an effort to keep the kindergartens at SunRidge a safe and productive educational environment, the following discipline procedures are utilized:

Regular Correction Techniques: In the kindergarten, teachers use verbal and nonverbal cues to redirect student behavior. Methods are respectful and sensitive to the individual student. The emphasis is on the positive behavior desired rather than on the student and what he or she has done wrong.

Possible Consequences: Verbal reminders, redirection into alternate activity, or separation from group activity are among the natural consequences for those who do not follow established procedures and/or do not respond to regular correction requests. At the discretion of the teacher, the parent will be notified and a child may be sent home in order to maintain a safe, orderly, and respectful environment.

- ❖ **Verbal Reminder:** A verbal reminder is a clear and direct verbal communication to the student that provides the child with a clear picture of what behavior is expected.
- ❖ **Redirection into Alternate Activity:** When possible, an effort is made to redirect the child to an activity in which they can be successful.
- ❖ **Separation from the Group or Activity:** If the child's behavior is disruptive to the group activity and the child is not responding to verbal reminders or redirection, it may be necessary to ask the child to sit out. The child would be invited back into the activity once they have demonstrated responsiveness to the teacher. If the child is unable to contain their behavior in an appropriate manner, it may be necessary for the teacher to engage the help of our administrative team for "calm and return" in the office. If none of these techniques are successful, the parents may be notified to pick up the child.

- ❖ **Sent Home for the Remainder of the Day**

The following behaviors in the kindergarten may result in a child being sent home for the remainder of the day:

- Especially graphic, threatening language to a teacher or other student.
- Actual or threatened behavior that caused, or could have caused, physical injury.
- Severe tantrum (screaming, kicking) that does not respond to teacher intervention.
- Leaving fenced kindergarten yard or the classroom building without adult permission.

- Hiding when class gathers or moves to another area.
- Refusing, in a confrontational or persistent way, to follow the teacher's requests or instructions.
- Spitting at another person.

If a child exhibits chronic behavior issues, the teacher will convene a Student Success Team (SST) meeting with parents and other support staff to help address the needs of the child and the class.

Student Success Team (SST): SunRidge offers additional support in the form of a Student Success Team meeting. A teacher or parent may request an SST to form a supportive network and to create an action plan to assist the student to attain maximum success. The team is typically composed of the Director, the Educational Support Teacher, the class teacher, and the parents.

SunRidge Parent Handbook: Please see the Parent Handbook for additional information regarding the SunRidge Community.

Life At Home

Three components essential to a child's healthy development are sleep, proper nutrition, and warmth. Providing these will give your child a gift for life.



Sleep: Young children need plenty of sleep, 12 hours, especially during the school year. Consistent early bedtimes (7:00pm) will provide your child with the restorative sleep they need and a nurturing rhythm to their day.

Before the age of 7, children are not as connected to their sense of warmth, so parents have to help them develop this sense by keeping them warm when the weather is cold.

Media: We provide a media free experience at school and ask that you do the same at home. In order to support the work of the kindergarten teachers to create and maintain an environment that cultivates imagination, wonder, and beauty, it is essential to make the necessary changes in your household(s) to eliminate your child's exposure to electronic media at this age. SunRidge defines electronic media as: all electronic screens, music, and/or phone technology, including handheld devices. This may take extra care in a household with older siblings.

Social Development: Cooperative, imaginative group exercises that focus on movement for the joy of movement itself meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of young children. During the school week, we suggest that families provide a quiet afternoon to give ample rest from a busy morning and to digest images from stories. Additionally, we request that you postpone involvement in competitive and or organized team sports or performance oriented activities since they awaken a self-consciousness in young children that is better delayed to a later stage of development.

Living Arts: Much learning takes place when children are invited to participate in practical and domestic activities such as: folding clothes, setting the table, cleaning, meal preparation, laundry, pet care, gardening, sewing, sweeping, machine repair, and woodwork. We encourage you to invite your child to work by your side at this young age to lay the foundation for healthy habits and independent chores.

Community: We like to think of the kindergarten as a single community of families rather than two separate classes. The kindergarten is also a part of the larger school community that is all working together to bring the children an education imbued with goodness, beauty and truth. You can support this effort by making connections with families outside of your child's class and by working to build community at all levels within the school.

The healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human heart the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the community the virtue of each one is living. – Adapted from R. Steiner

Revised March 2017

Suggested Reading ~

You are your Child's First Teacher by Rahima Baldwin

Parenting Well in the Media Age by Gloria DeGaetano

Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour by Susan Perrow

Free to Learn: Introduction to Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education by Lynne Oldfield

The Genius of Play: Celebrating the Spirit of Childhood by Sally Jenkinson

Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon

Lifeways by Davy and Voors

Festivals, Family and Food by Carney and Large

Seven Times the Sun by Darian

Children at Play by Britz – Cornilus

The Hurried Child by Elkind

The Way of the Child by Harwood

The fabric of Autism by Judith Bluestone

The Out of Sync Child by Carol Stock Kranowitz