



Unique Aspects of Waldorf Education.



Teachers

The class teacher teaches the main academic subjects, coordinates with specialty teachers, and provides the link between home and school. The class teacher encourages mutual respect, love and understanding, and a deeper recognition of each child's individual needs, which helps each child develop to his or her potential.

We expect teachers to stretch their own boundaries, deepen their understanding of child development, stay curious, and constantly learn new material.



The Class Teacher and 'Looping'

In the grades teachers "loop," staying with the same cohort for many years and some the full 8 years. They form a deep bond with and understanding of the personalities in their class and how best to reach each of them. Looping requires teachers to grow and change along with the students in order to lead. There is no covering the same material year after year. There is no phoning it in. Our teachers are given the freedom to craft and adjust their approach day by day to meet the needs of the children in front of them. This commitment deepens the vital bond between teacher and student, a key to success in the classroom.

The Main Lesson: Thematic Academic Studies

Main lesson is a uniquely immersive, thematic and interdisciplinary academic lesson led by the class teacher or a specialist for the first two hours of every day in every grade.

Main lesson subjects are studied in "blocks" of time from three to four weeks. At the end of a "block" of study, the subject rotates so that the block functions as a magnifying glass on a given subject over a period of time. This pattern of rotating main lesson blocks continues throughout the year.

The teacher facilitates the learning of the main lesson content through a variety of activities that engage multiple intelligences and allow time for in-depth study and absorption of the material.

Main lesson includes time during which children are guided to recall and retell the content from previous lessons. During the main lesson each child will create a guided written and artistic record of the content in a bound book, called the "main lesson book," that can be used for future reference and is forever treasured by the children.





The main lesson bookwork itself constitutes a robust learning experience. In scholarly fashion, teachers and students work with original source materials instead of textbooks. Students learn to think and express themselves in a multitude of ways, using both brain hemispheres. They gradually learn time management, reflection, comprehension, synthesis, critical thinking, disciplined recall and nearly every aspect of executive function is practiced.

Class Plays

Each grade performs an annual play. The class teacher chooses a play that is generally focused on a subject drawn from one of the main lesson themes during the year.

Costumes and sets come together in an adult collaboration between parents and teachers, sometimes joined by students and often with assistance from various specialty teachers.

The younger grades perform simple plays with each successive grade producing a progressively elaborate production. The first graders often speak and sing in chorus with very short, solo lines. The seventh and eighth grade play is generally a full-length, fully-staged, costumed and lighted performance with full seating for each evening performance.

The class play requires intensely collaborative efforts that culminate in an exhilarating sense of accomplishment for each class and student. Every student has a chance to shine and every student in the audience appreciates the dedication necessary to deliver a staged performance.

Specialists

Students are immersed in a fully-integrated learning experience through our rich array of 40 minute specialty classes that compliment and extend the core academic subjects. Classes are led by qualified specialists who help students develop practical and physical aspects of a challenging, yet enjoyable, well-rounded education.

Specialist subjects: French, S.C.O.P.E, movement/ gym, practical arts, music, circus arts and fine art. In the middle school there are additional specialists for the following subjects: math, Cyber Civics, health, oral and written language arts.

Movement

We offer a developmentally based physical education program with the aims of developing confidence and presence in one's own body, spatial awareness, coordination, strength, grace, and sportsmanship.

In the course of grades 1-8, the children become skilled at running, jumping, throwing, catching, skipping, and balancing. Traditional non-competitive circle and line games are themes of the early grades and the children learn how to play with each other rather than against each other.

Grades 3-5 also participate in circus arts.

Fifth grade students spend the year training for the Greek Pentathlon in connection with their studies of ancient cultures. In sixth grade traditional sports are introduced, and middle school students have the opportunity to compete with other local independent schools.



Music

Music is a defining element in Waldorf education. Class teachers sing and play music throughout the day to inspire and support academic learning. Our music specialist takes the children on a global journey singing songs from a variety of traditions and cultures, beginning with simple singing games in the early grades to polyphony in the upper grades choir. First grade students play the pentatonic flute and there is an option to add a string instrument in the third grade. In the upper grades students study music theory and play together in the school choir, plays and various ensembles.

Fine Arts

Drawing is treated as a communicative language and incorporated into every academic class and several specialty classes, rather than existing as a separate subject or as a stand alone class in the lower grades. In the middle school there is a fine art specialist. Drawing fluency is developed along with all other learning and can transcend, accentuate, compliment and demonstrate comprehension of any subject.

Watercolor painting is introduced alongside drawing and students develop a strong sense of color and learn to create form through the color. Students also learn to sculpt, first in beeswax and then in clay. By eighth grade students have a firm foundation in pencil, charcoal and pastel drawing, watercolour painting, and clay modeling, and they have come to perceive their surroundings in a more conscious way.

French

The focus is, foremost, on the importance of creating an environment that fosters the student's love of the language. Learning a foreign language is not only practical in today's global society, but it strengthens students' ability to listen, offers them flexibility in their thinking, and instills an appreciation for other cultures. Starting in Grade One, French is a daily part of the curriculum, using songs, rhymes, stories and puppet shows to establish a rich appreciation of Canadian French language and culture. In the upper grades, our French program builds on the love of the language and culture to introduce and solidify grammar, composition and oral expression. The net effect is that our students not only learn to speak and read and write French, they also learn to appreciate the culture and history that this beautiful language represents. French is offered three times a week from grades 1-8.



Practical Art

Another unique Waldorf class is the handwork and woodwork class. Students learn to make practical objects that unite both beauty and function using natural materials.

In the practical arts, many skills develop simultaneously and reinforce other subjects as well. The concentration and persistence that this work demands is rewarded by the pride in making something from start to finish all by hand. Students develop an awareness of design principles and learn to give form to their creativity. Recent brain research has found that the interrelationship of the hand and eye allows more neurological pathways to function. One could say that teaching handwork and woodwork to the young is training ground for thinking.



SCOPE

SCOPE is a character development program that is offered from grades 1-8. The majority of the programming takes place on Fridays for two periods but can include middle school clubs, buddy events and service hours outside of school.

Service Learning

Character Development

Outdoor Classroom

Project Work

Executive Functioning

To see a detailed breakdown of the SCOPE program please refer to the SCOPE brochure.

Come See Us for Yourself

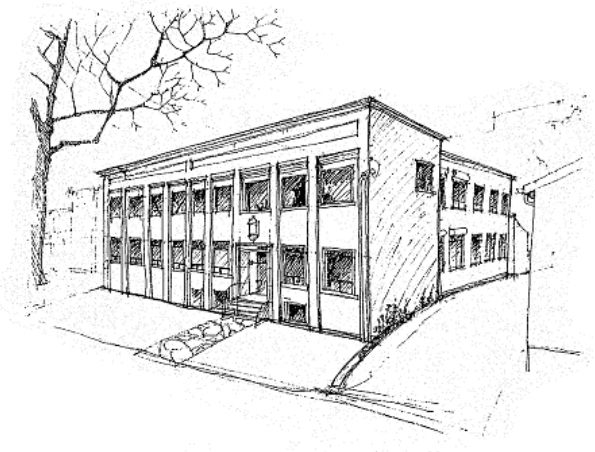
The best way to learn more about Waldorf Academy is to see to for yourself.

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or email: admissions@waldorfacademy.org

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