



**Wah'-shā Academy**  
CRESTED BUTTE · COLORADO

**Wah'-shā Academy K - 4**      **2021**



**FAMILY GUIDEBOOK**



# Welcome



## **Wah'shā Academy** CRESTED BUTTE · COLORADO

Tab 1

### IN THIS SECTION:

- Welcome Message
- School Mission & Vision
- Purpose
- School Contact

## **WELCOME**

We are here to serve you and your child to the best of our ability. Thank you for choosing our program. To give you an unforgettable and positive experience, we would like to establish a relationship with your child and parents and family alike. The road to this relationship begins with our guidebook.

As we expect to deal with various cultures throughout the running of our program, we have tried to make our guidebook as thorough as possible. However, any feedback as to how we can make our guidebook more helpful would undoubtedly be appreciated.

Please read through the following pages carefully. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

Thank-you,  
Regina Splees Tafoya, Director

## **MISSION & VISION**

Wah'-shā Academy's mission is to provide an alternative education opportunity that empowers students to embrace learning, achieve their personal best, and build their emotional, social, and physical well-being.

Our vision is to empower students through a gentle weaving of experiential, wilderness, holistic, and college prep learning styles. Therein acquiring, demonstrating, articulating, and valuing the knowledge and skills that will support them as life-long learners participating in and contributing to both the local and global community.

We also envision our students practicing the school's core values: Belonging, respect, responsibility, relationship, trust, and excellence.

## **PURPOSE**

- A) To have a program available in which all individual's differences are embraced and enhanced through a multi-age, multi-cultural, and holistic needs-based education.
- B) To provide extraordinary opportunities for our children; learn gratitude for all things; encourage the ability to think for oneself and follow through with needs-based action; and to grow into respectful, resourceful, responsible human beings with compassion for all life and for all things.
- C) To instill in our children the importance of environmental protection.
- D) To encourage the continual growth of educators and parents alike.
- E) To provide a welcoming and secure atmosphere in which all children and their happiness, adventurousness, inquiring minds, and enjoyment are fostered.

Wah' -Sha Academy is not in the practice of discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and special needs. Under USDA policy, discrimination is prohibited also on the basis of religion and political beliefs.

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**Wahsha.com**

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**State License #20201701254**

**DHS licensed: #1754694**

## Basic Information



Tab 2

# Wah'shã Academy

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### IN THIS SECTION:

- Arrival & Dismissal
- Daily Schedule
- Every-Day Necessities
- Supply List
- Attendance
- Assessment

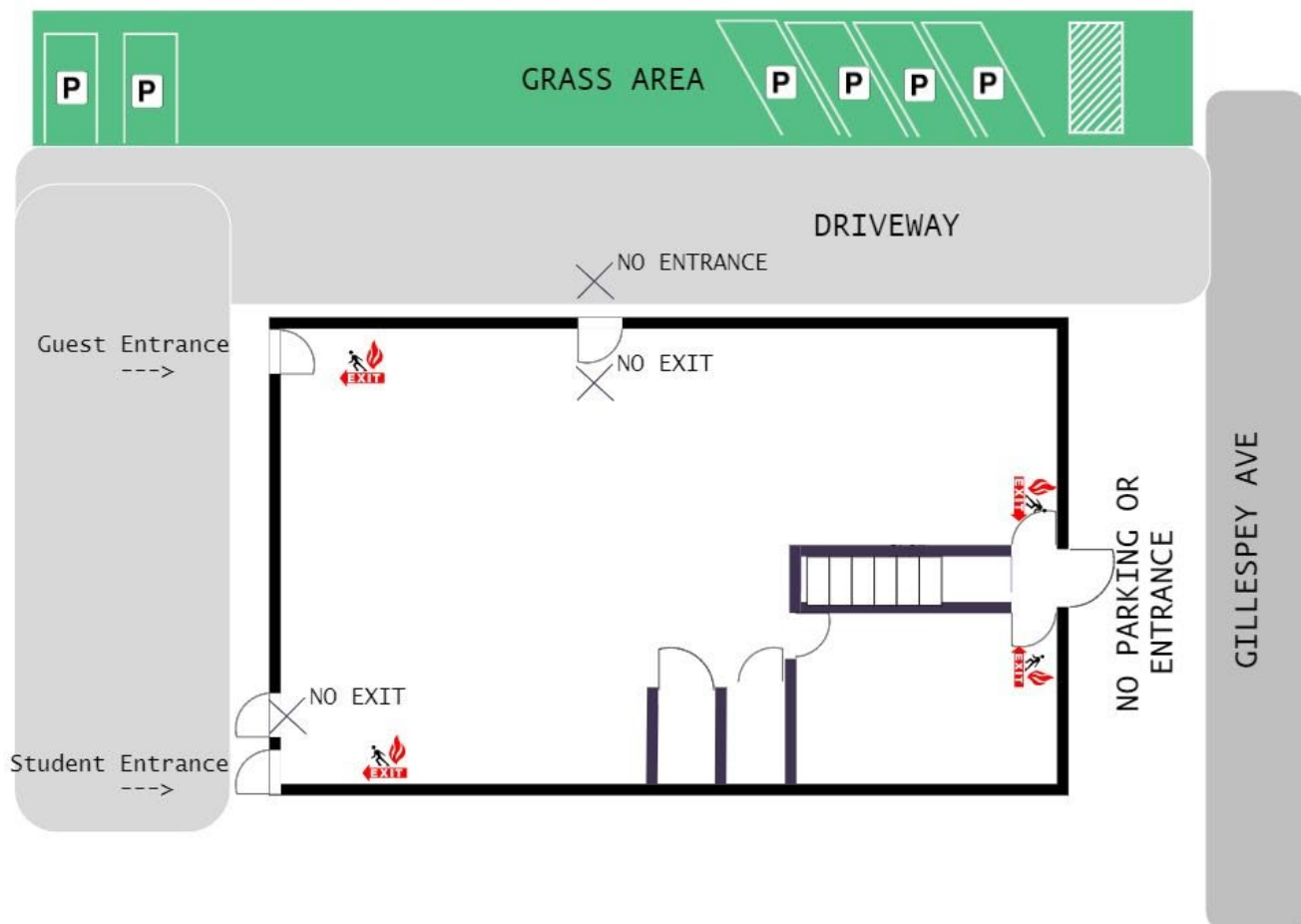
FAMILY GUIDEBOOK

## Arrival & Dismissal

- School Doors Open at **8:20 AM**, School Begins at **8:30 AM**, and Morning Gathering at **8:45**. Someone will greet the students at the doorway until 8:40. Please remember we must take a temperature during COVID-19 restrictions.
- If your child has experienced any discomforts the previous night or that morning (nightmares, vomiting, particularly bad mood etc.), please explain to a teacher, or send a message.
- Students arriving after 8:40 must have a guardian walk them to the doorway, and confirm that they have safely entered the classroom.
- Dismissal is at 3:30, Wednesdays at 2:00 (11:30 for kindergarteners)
- **3:35** marks the time for late fees to begin.
- Every 5 minutes incurs a \$10 late fee.

Our current location currently has limited parking.

We ask that you follow our protocol with mindfulness for safety:



## DAILY SCHEDULE

Daily routines enable young children to move through the day comfortably and with minimal stress. With the ordinary child in mind, we have developed a schedule which we believe to be suitable for Primary aged children. Minor changes may be made when a day comes that the following schedule is

**DAILY SCHEDULE continued**

Monday / Tuesday / Thursday/ Fridays	WEDNESDAY
8:45 AM Morning Gathering	9 AM Morning Gathering
9:10 AM Work Cycle begins (K-2: 20 Min. Literacy 3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> : 30 Min. Block)	9:15 AM Circle Time & Movement
11:00 AM Outside Time	9:20 AM Outdoor learning
12 NOON Lunch time & Free Time	12 NOON Lunch
1:00 PM Story time/Literacy/ Quiet time / rest time	12:45 Story time/Value of the month
1:25 PM Outdoor-indoor work time/ special projects (1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> : 30 min. Block Time 3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> : 30 min. Literacy)	1:15 KINDERGARTEN: Class meeting -> handwork 1 <sup>st</sup> - 4 <sup>th</sup> : Creative Hour/special classes
2:40PM Special Classes	1:50PM Short Meeting, Dismissal at 2PM
3:15 PM Class Meeting	<b>**Our meeting place may be different on Wednesdays. Please inquire as to where you will need to pick up and drop off your child on this day.</b>
3:30PM Dismissal	

**Fridays (MAY DIFFER DURING COVID and official launch of our Friday schedule is TBA)**

1. **The first Friday** of each month will be called 'children's day.' The children have the opportunity in the morning meeting, through conscious dialogue, to change up the schedule. On this day, the children will make their lunch at school.

2. **The second Friday** of each month will be "Journey's" day.

Each month we will take a Field trip.

A boxed lunch is required for this day.

3. **The third Friday** of each month will be 'Friends just like me' day. We will concentrate on cultural awareness by preparing activities, stories, and games from other countries. When possible, we will call in guest speakers from various countries to talk with and play with the children. **The children may have fun and come to school in the country's national dress highlighted for that month.** On this day, children will make their lunch at school.

4. **The fourth Friday** of each month will be "Project Day/Game Day."

On this day, either the students or the teachers will prepare a simple project, within guidelines outlined by the teacher to complete, and ultimately embraces experiential/project approach learning. A boxed lunch is required for this day

5. **The fifth Friday** of each month will follow the same pattern as the first.

Friday Take Home Pack: Your child will receive a bag to take home every Friday (or last day of attendance of the week). We will put in it all your child's artwork, any projects, observation / main lesson book, and language books when appropriate.)

**LUNCH SCHEDULE at a GLANCE**

Mondays:	Always bring a lunch	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Friday:</b>	<b>Lunch not required</b>
Tuesdays:	Always bring a lunch	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday:	Always bring lunch
Wednesdays:	Always bring a lunch	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Friday:</b>	<b>Lunch not required</b>
Thursdays:	Always bring a lunch	4 <sup>th</sup> Friday:	Always bring lunch

## Everyday Necessities

### Items your child may leave in his/her Box

#### 1. Extra clothes.

We highly recommend TWO SETS. Clothes should be packed in a small bag easily accessible for the child to retrieve by himself. One set can always be used for "accidents," which include playing in muddy areas.

Also, please keep a bag for soiled clothes. We will send dirty clothes home with the child. Please remember to bring another set of extra clothes and a bag on the next day.

#### 2. Toothbrush and rinse cup (**please write your name on them**) **This will be cleaned in baking soda on Fridays.**

#### 3. Water bottle. This will go home on Fridays.

Please make sure your child's name is permanently written on the bottom of the cup.

4. 'Park shoes.' (Optional) You may bring a pair of old shoes that may get dirty. Children will wear these to the park. **WINTER:** Make sure your child has appropriate snow boots as we walk and hike through the snow nearly daily. **LONG SOCKS AND SNOW PANTS ARE NECESSARY.** **SNOW MELT/WET SEASON:** Make sure to have rain gear that can get muddy, and bogs. **MARCH – SEPTEMBER:** please make sure to have sunscreen,

6. Indoor shoes (mandatory) Please supply your child with very light sneakers/ ballet shoes/slippers or the like to be worn inside only. This eliminates any potential outside germs from the classroom.

#### **7. All parents are asked to donate three boxes of tissues and rolls of toilet paper each year when first entering.**

\*\*Please make sure that ALL items, including clothing, have your child's name on them. Labeling everything is not as necessary in 2nd - 4th grades.

### Items to bring everyday

#### 1. Hand towel.

#### 2. Lunch (**please check the previous page for lunch days**)

A) Please make something that your child can eat easily by him/herself.

B) Please send a lunch box that your child can open and close by him/herself.

C) Please refrain from sending snacks with high sugar content. Know that students are allowed to snack in 5 minute intervals at anytime between 9:15 – 11:00. We will announce when we serve mid-morning snacks to the children.

Organic, low sugar foods will be used as much as possible. Drinks will include wheat teas (mugicha), green teas (midoricha), herbal teas, or water. Please let us know if any of these drinks are unacceptable to your child.

D) Please note that caffeine and sugar affect behavior in children. Not only can it lead to hyperactivity, but the opposite effect is also common: an unnatural lack of energy. While caffeinated, Green Tea has a very high vitamin C content and beneficial antioxidants that outweigh the amount of caffeine in one serving. Caffeine shows to have more impact on our body than sugar; however, research shows that sugar leads to cavities and diabetes.

E) Please try to send a well-balanced lunch. I have always recommended that an overload of protein and vegetables is better than an excess of any other food group.

F) It is always helpful to think about how much your child can eat. Packing too much food in a lunch can make a child feel overwhelmed.

G) Please don't forget spoons, forks, chopsticks and napkins.

**\*\*Cultures vary in eating habits. We are flexible at the Wah' -Sha Academy in allowing various lunches. Please inquire with the Director/teacher if there is a question as to what should be sent with your child.**



### **1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade STUDENT SUPPLY LIST:**

Each semester, there is a \$50 supply list which will include:

Personal supplies, that Wah' -Sha Academy furnishes, and each student may keep.

Students are responsible for the maintenance:

3 Ticonderoga #2 pencils (Sharpened)

2 individual pencil sharpeners with lids

2 pad of tracing paper

modeling clay

glue

Scissors

Lined paper & handwriting booklet

3 or 4 Main lesson books

Beeswax

Colored pencils

Block crayons

Paint brushes

watercolor

These supplies will be replenished with this fee as necessary. When there is no need for replenishment, the semester supply fee goes toward general art supplies for projects, and the upkeep of our Montessori Materials.

As children grow in the grades, the supplies will grow as well. i.e. rulers, compasses, etc.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Colorado Statute CRS 22-33-104 states that, regardless of public, private or homeschool:

- full-time kindergarten students are required to attend 900 instructional hours, and
- Primary Grades (1st – 4th at Wah' -Sha) must attend 968 instructional hours.

These hours are planned, teacher-pupil hours, and do not include lunch hours. The minimum instructional hours may be reduced by a certain number of hours for parent/teacher conferences, in-service staff programs, and closings deemed by the administration to be necessary for pupils' health, safety, or welfare. Taking into account these exceptions, each school schedule must include the following minimum number of hours of planned teacher-pupil instruction and teacher-pupil contact during the school year:

- Secondary schools: 1,056 hours
  - Elementary schools: 968 hours
  - Kindergarten: 870 hours for full time
- Regular school attendance is crucial to the development and education of children. There is an enormous impact on the student, the school, and the community when a student does not attend school regularly. Please note that there are exceptions, such as homeschool enrichment or sports program participation, which are carefully discussed and planned.

Among some of the reasons we stress regular attendance are:

### **EARLY DEVELOPMENT**

As a child learns to read and acquires basic math skills, he/she must practice those new skills daily. Regular attendance promotes further learning.

### **SOCIALIZATION**

Children begin to learn how to socialize with others, follow directions, and solve problems creatively while at school. If a child is not part of the classroom, some of these social skills cannot be practiced.

### **IMPACT ON OTHER STUDENTS**

When a child is continually absent from school, he falls behind in his classwork. He/she then requires extra time and attention from the teacher to catch up. This draws the teacher away from other students in the class who may also need assistance.

The school recognizes that parents have a vital role in supporting and encouraging good attendance and punctuality.

It is important for all children to attend school every day and to arrive on time. To have the best possible beginning to the school day, we have a soft start before our morning circle begins.

## Assessment

Wah`-Shă Academy is corresponding with four accreditation agencies, one of which we will be applying to for accreditation. The agencies considered are:

- the National Commission on Exceptional Schools.
- The Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- The Association of Colorado Independent Schools
- National Association for the Legal Support of Alternative Schools

All of these agencies oversee a school's assessment process. This is a lengthy process that often takes up to five years, as schools must be developed prior to application.

Currently, we are registering our students with West River Academy, [www.westriveracademy.com](http://www.westriveracademy.com), which is accredited by the National Association for the Legal Support of Alternative Schools (NALSAS), an organization that accredits alternative schools in the U.S. Their website is [nalsas.org](http://nalsas.org).

West River Academy is a Colorado corporation and a private school. This means that your family is in compliance with the compulsory attendance laws of the state and will not have to comply with the homeschooling laws. You will not have to file a Notice of Intent to homeschool with your school district each year. You will not have to do the testing or evaluations required at the end of grades 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. It also means that you do not have the right to attend public school part-time or participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities. Some students have been able to do this, but it is up to the school district.

Wah`-Shă Academy orders the transcripts from West River Academy who provides a template for us to enter the course names and grades that represent the learning that took place here at Wah`-Shă Academy. West River Academy then reviews our transcript and gives us feedback. Wah`-Shă Academy has the final approval that the transcripts are true and accurate.

Here at Wah`-Sha, we provide a 'narrative version' of assessment, and also keep standard assessments, as well as attendance, using a school management software. These can be taken to schools to which your child may transfer.

# Health, Wellness and Safety



**Wah'shā Academy**  
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## IN THIS SECTION:

- Covid-19 Policies
- Medical Treatment
- Medicine
- Sick Days & Injury
- Immunization  
Records/Insurance
- Disaster Plan

## **Covid-19 Policies**

Wah'-shă Academy understands the critical role school can play in childhood development.

Young children need interaction with peers to develop emotional intelligence, social skills, and compassion and understanding for others. We aim to provide these and more opportunities in an environment that may be safer than a traditional public school atmosphere.

There are always risks when gathering in a communal setting. We have developed a plan to keep children as safe as possible in these uncertain times.

- Our class size will be limited.
- We practice handwashing
  - upon arrival
  - before & after lunch
  - after any 'work' (activity), and
  - at the end of the day
- After handwashing, students dry their hands with an individual, one-use hand towels that are washed daily.
- Each table has a small hand sanitizer spray bottle to
  - use before any 'work' (activity)
- The staff wears masks regularly.
- Children will be encouraged to wear masks, particularly when a child has a cough.
  - There will be age-appropriate, science-based, and respect-based teachings regarding the importance of masks and why we may or may not opt to wear them at our particular school depending on our spacing.
  - There will be significant outdoor time, even during winter.
- We have TWO air filters: an Airpura UV614-V air purifier with HEPA and carbon filters set up in the classroom, and the IQ Air HealthPro series air purifier.
- Classroom materials will be cleaned regularly.
- Desks are wiped down after each use with vinegar and water.

- Floors are cleaned with non-toxic cleaners daily.
- Students are taught to close the lid of the toilet before flushing.
- Windows will be open
  - prior to school starting
  - during our after-lunch walk
  - after school
- We will be outside as much as possible and weather permits so that children are learning in nature and breathing fresh air.
- Inside, we will wear indoor shoes. This is not necessarily for Covid reasons, but as a precaution to avoid numerous germs from outside.
- Until further notice, students bring their snacks and lunch from home.
- We ask parents to help us keep vigilant and significantly reduce the number of interactions we have with others.

We will do temperature checks on each child and staff member as they arrive. Children with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be sent home. However, taking your own child's temperature at home will avoid unnecessary travel if your child has a fever and is sent home. If your child has a temperature or is otherwise ill, please do not bring them to school, but CALL to let us know if COVID-19 is suspected.

Students are required to be tested in suspect cases, and positive tests must be reported to the school immediately. Quarantine procedures must be observed. Any student with a positive test may not return until they can provide a negative test result. Home packets will be provided for the student, and any assistance we can give will be offered. For the remaining students, families will have a choice to remain in class or quarantine at home for 10 - 14 days. Everyone will be notified of each other's choices, and home packets will be provided for those quarantining at home, with the same assistance offered as the child who tested positive for Covid-19.

If your child has a negative test result or the illness is unrelated to COVID-19, please ensure any fever has subsided before having your child returned to school. Please see our policies for general illnesses for guidance. We strive to coordinate with all parents to help our community be stronger, safer, and more resilient during this current crisis and moving forward into the future.

## Medical Treatment

The health and safety of each child will be given up-most importance. We believe that the ratio of teachers to children allows us to watch carefully for any signs of dangerous play. Each teacher will be trained in CPR as well as fire, earthquake / avalanche, and first aid procedures.

Each teacher will wear a waist pack which holds a mini-First-Aid kit to the park and on outings. We also have a full service first aid kit in the building. This allows us to be prepared for small emergencies that may happen at any time.

**In case of sickness:** We will always try to contact a parent first. If a parent cannot be contacted, we will do our best to nurture that child until his/her mother comes for pick-up. If an illness is severe and considered an emergency, we will telephone an emergency contact. If no one can be reached, the Director or Head teacher will make a decision as to whether to call an ambulance or take your child to a nearby clinic. In the case of an ambulance, children will be sent to:

**Gunnison Emergency Health Emergency Medical Services:  
711 N. Taylor Street  
Gunnison CO, 81230 | (970) 641-7276**

If we feel a clinic is enough to suffice until pick up time, the following clinics will be used:

Gunnison Valley Family Physicians

214 6th Street, Suite 1  
Crested Butte, CO 81224  
Main Phone: (970) 349-6749  
Fax: (888) 540-4013

<OR>

Gunnison Valley Health Mountain Clinic (seasonal)

12 Snowmass Rd., Axtel 100  
Mt. Crested Butte, CO 81225  
970-349-0321

By signing the contract, you have indicated agreement with the above policy.

## Medicine

Even with a parent's permission, teachers & Assistants WILL NOT administer any medicines whatsoever. The Director or a county approved staff member can administer medication under specific guidelines. Parents will need pre-approval from the Director, and we will need to have a note from a doctor in such cases. Please ask for the necessary forms if your child needs allergy medication or any other medication.

In the case of approval:

The form includes information such as:

- The child's name, address and birth date
- The drug name
- The prescribed dosage
- The method of administration
- The time to be administered
- The side effects
- The prescriber's name and address

Medications must be in their original container and clearly labeled. Emergent, first line of defense medication will be stored unlocked but in a safe manner & inaccessible to children to allow for quick access in an emergency. General Non-prescription medication or holistic remedies will be accepted or given to children with permission by text or phone call, and requires with a one-time signed permission form by parents. The Center will keep accurate documentation of all medications administered. Included in the documentation are:

- The date the medication was administered
- The time it was administered
- The dose that was administered
- The signature of the staff administering
- Any comments

Parents will be notified when/if a child has been administered any medication.

## Sick Days & Injury

### Sick Days

One of our concerns is to keep all of the children at Wah' -Sha Academy healthy. We will do our share of frequent handwashing, regular cleaning of materials and our building, proper etiquette while handling food, and the bathroom's disinfecting.

We need your help in keeping children healthy as well.



**We ask that your child remains at home if he/she displays any of the following symptoms:**

- Three or more loose or watery stools
- Vomiting
- A temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater
- Pink discoloration of the white of the eye
- Evidence of head lice, scabies, ringworm, or impetigo
- Any unexplained rash
- A physical condition of any type that would not allow him/her to participate in the school activities or require that he/she receive extensive one-on-one attention.
- COMMUNICABLE diseases: (Mumps etc.) All communicable diseases are to be reported as soon as possible so that we can notify the other parents in the event of exposure.

**In case of injury**

For any injury, including scratches, we will contact a Parent immediately. That parent will need to come to Wah' -Sha Academy and decide whether the injury needs further attention. We may do this by texting a picture of the injury.

A) For what we may consider a non-emergency injury, and a parent cannot be contacted; we will treat the injury according to International First Aid Standards.

B) For what we may consider an emergency, and a parent or emergency contact cannot be contacted: we will call an ambulance to take your child to either Gunnison Valley Hospital or one of the clinics listed above.

C) In the case of a life-threatening injury, CPR or other life-saving techniques will be used until an ambulance (or caregiver) arrives.

By signing the contract, you have indicated agreement with the above policy. Parents will be required to assume responsibility for any expenses resulting from accidental injuries. Wah' -Sha will take responsibility for any accidents resulting from the obvious irresponsibility of the teachers.

**Immunization Records/Insurance**

We will need to have copies of your immunization records or exemption from immunization form for our records. These will be kept private and shown to only the teachers here at Wah' -Sha Academy.

They may be used in the case of a child being taken to a clinic. Insurance card copies are needed, as well. The insurance form is included in the application form for our school. These will equally be kept private and are essential in the case of an emergency.

## Insurance

Wah' -Sha Academy will be listed under the following insurances:

1. Group Accident & Liability Insurance

Some people may wish to take on private supplementary accident insurance in addition to ours. If you have any questions, we may refer you to our insurance agent.

## Disaster Plan / Storms

### PREPARATION

In the unfortunate event of a disaster not limited to a fire, rare tornado or even earthquake, the following will be prepared:

- Wah' -Sha Academy is registered with Notify Me! Gunnison Valley emergency notification App.
- A floor plan of the school with clearly marked exit plans will be posted at three different entrances in the school. Both on-site AND off-site evacuation plans will be indicated on the floor plan.
  - Crested Butte South Red Mountain Park playground is our off-site evacuation site.
- Each child of capable age will be trained on the emergency evacuation procedures during their first three months with us. We will conduct fire drills monthly and other disasters at least every 6 months.
- Children's emergency cards / documentation will be kept in a safe-box ready to be taken in

the event of evacuation from the school.

- A cell phone will be on the teacher's body, or very close at all times.

- The following supplies will always be on hand:

- \* first aid kit / medical supplies \* flashlight with extra batteries \*

- battery operated radio with extra batteries

- \* hand sanitizer / disinfectant / cleaning agent (eco-friendly items)

- \* hand towels OR tissues / wet wipe \* disposable cups / water / non perishables

- \* blanket \* vehicle keys

- I will take care to always have 1/2 gallon or more of gas in my car.

- THREE fire extinguishers are available, the locations being indicated on

the floor plan • a plan for turning off gas, electricity, and water is in place

- A) Center: Wah' -Sha Academy will retain the responsibility of all children on-premises until they are released to a parent, caregiver, or other designated person, or until they have been transported to an official evacuation center. In such a case, staff members will remain with children until all have been reunited with their families.
  
- B) Staff: All staff will remain on the premises as service workers until all children have been returned to their home, and it has been deemed safe to travel. Staff will be subject to whatever tasks are assigned by the person(s) in charge and may not leave the premises until the Director gives them official permission to do so,
  
- C) Parents and Caregivers: Parents or those responsible should NOT telephone the center. They should listen to the radio for progress reports on whatever disaster is taking place. Follow official instructions as relayed by officials via the radio.

Staff will telephone parents or emergency contacts when it is safe to do so. If parents and caregivers are able to reach the center without danger to themselves or interference with disaster workers, they should come to pick up their children.

A GOOD SOURCE FOR GUNNISON COUNTY

- a) [KBUT, 90.3 FM, Aspen, CO | Free Internet Radio | TuneIn](#) (internet link) 88.7 in Gunnison

**Fire**

All staff is trained to follow the following pattern:

1. Save life (all persons in immediate danger will be saved)
2. Sound alarm (voice shouts – We have 4 fire detectors as well)
3. Report Fire (one staff member will call 911)
4. Contain fire (staff must close all windows and doors while leaving the building. A fire extinguisher may be used if safe)
5. Evacuate (children will meet at designated emergency locations as noted on page 19. When attendance has been taken, the children will be escorted to the park at CB South until deemed safe.
6. Evaluate (The Director or Headteacher will evaluate the situation and make a decision to,
  - A. return to the building, or
  - B. call parents to come and pick up their child.

Similar patterns are utilized for other emergencies.



# Special Services and Events



## Wah-shā Academy

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### IN THIS SECTION:

- Birthdays
- Observation Booklets & Albums
- Celebrations
- Volunteering & Fundraising

Tab 4

FAMILY GUIDEBOOK

## **Birthdays**

Children's birthdays will be celebrated individually or as a group, depending upon the number of students with a birthday within a month. Parents will be asked to bring a small, healthy snack for each child. Each parent should also prepare a picture of your child for each year of his/her life including a birth picture. Teachers will prepare pictures for succeeding years. On a separate piece of paper, please write a short synopsis of the child's life during the year each picture portrays. We will celebrate in this way from early childhood through 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **Observation Booklets**

We will keep an observation booklet for your child. It will be sent home twice a month on Fridays and on holidays. Please remember to bring it back on Mondays. We try to do observations for each child twice a week.

## **Albums**

This service is strictly optional. During school hours, we will take pictures of the progress and projects of your child. We will also take pictures at parties, special events, and friends. All these pictures are placed in a very nice hard cover album with captions describing each picture. The cost for this service is \$175 per year for a physical album, and \$125 per year for a digital album. The price includes album, pictures, and disc. (Pictures are taken with digital camera)

## **Celebrations**

We will hold two - four parties a year according to season. These festivals are annual festivals that are separate from the celebrations we will schedule throughout the year, during school hours, in conjunction with our studies at the time.

Autumn: Harvest Festival: Late October or early November

Winter: Winter Solstice Labyrinth Walk

Spring: May Day Celebration

Summer: July / August family camping trip for those in town.

Field Day: 1<sup>st</sup> week of June / 1<sup>st</sup> week of October (sports Day)

Parents will be expected to work in teams to help put together our festivals. Your cooperation is highly appreciated in our effort to give our children a great time. Our festivals will be as large and open or as small and closed as our school size dictates. Our intentions are to celebrate, not exhaust.

## **Fundraising**

Fundraising will be vital for school growth. The school's highest fundraising priority and sincerest philanthropic efforts will be through unrestricted, tax-deductible donations made annually. These dollars will be applied to the school's operating budget to make "magic moments" for your students. Annual Fund allows the school to say "yes" to opportunities.

We will be working hard this year to develop a strong strategy that will focus on gifts/pledges in September and October. **Every gift, no matter the size counts.** Gifts of \$2,020 (significant to the school's founding in 2020) or more will be considered leadership gifts and donors will be invited to a what we hope to become a traditional dinner event in November.

Some donors, foundations, & corporations restrict gifts to scholarships, endowment, programs, professional development, and technology and capital improvements. These gifts are closely aligned to school priorities.

We are currently working on a package, 'Ways to Give' which we intend to debut in September 2021. Our Director's training is currently through NAIS (National Association of Independent Schools) and CASE (Council for the Advancement and Support of Education) which we hope to become members of in the near future.

## **WAYS TO VOLUNTEER**

We currently do not have a mandated volunteer program for Wah' -Sha Academy, as do many private schools. For future reference, I have added the number of hours a volunteer position may hold.

- ➔ Please note that volunteers must sign in at the office, and documentation may be required as per the Dept. of Human Services. Please ask.

### Driving for Field Trips:

- All field trips, no matter actual time committed, count as 4 hours. All drivers must provide a copy of valid drivers license, current proof of insurance, and current registration.  
Gasoline cost and any field trip fees may or may not be covered for the family.

Teaching / SUBSTITUTE Teaching (must be willing to have background check, CPR, and be fingerprinted):

- An elective class (e.g. cooking, jewelry-making, foreign language, drama, music...);
  - An ongoing core class such as music and movement; An after-hours class;
  - Subbing: This is an on call position, and will be traded for before or after hours only.  
While some days may be scheduled well in advance, there may be a month when no subbing is required.

General:

- Cleaning classrooms on a daily basis (1 hour daily) and at parent workdays if needed;
- Maintaining the grounds, including any gardens; \* Laundry and water
- Construction projects; \*Errands/Shopping for supplies (if teacher specifically requests);
- Providing snacks, preparing meals
- Fundraising, including developing and implementing fundraising opportunities; •  
Event participation such as annual fundraiser or any other fundraising  
and/or community activities.

Administrative:

- Tracking volunteer hours; \* Working on policy documents;
- Preparing for and running parent meetings; \* Committee meetings when necessary.

Public Relations/Fundraising:

- Press releases; \* T-shirts;
- Designing flyers, etc;
- Distributing flyers;
- Grantwriting;
- Help w/Open House and other community events.

**Sponsors & Investors**

Wah' -Sha Academy is actively seeking investors and sponsors. We currently have ONE! With a bank letter of support. If you know anyone interested in sponsoring us, please let the Director know. Thank you very much!



# Goals and Philosophy



## Wah'-shā Academy

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### IN THIS SECTION:

- Aims and Goals
- Verse & Spirituality
- Curriculum / Pedagogy
- Specific Components in our curriculum
- Values & Communication

Tab 5

This section is for Parent Education purposes. We HIGHLY encourage you to read this section for valuable insight into what lies at the core of Wah' -Sha Academy.

## FAMILY GUIDEBOOK

**"Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire." W.B. Yeats**

**"Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." *John Dewey***

**"The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Lao Tzu Lee**

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**Our key aim, within our mission and vision, is to create a warm, welcoming, and secure atmosphere where all children and their happiness, adventurousness, inquiring minds, and enjoyment are fostered. In this way, we can strive to gain wisdom of the world and create connection with each other or each other's ideas and goals.**

**One key aspect of our curriculum that we hold precious in fulfilling our mission is our multicultural 'weavings:'**

Many scholars have addressed the aims, goals, and purposes of multicultural education. An analysis of their work suggests five significant student outcomes that Wah' -Sha Academy adopts:

1. All students should be encouraged to affirm themselves as unique individuals. They should accept and respect the differences shaping the individual identities of other students. Banks (1999) has written: "The claim that multicultural education is only for ethnic groups of color and the disenfranchised is one of the most pernicious and damaging misconceptions with which the movement has had to cope" (p. 5).
2. Students should learn about their group from the school curriculum and about the diverse groups in American society to have a basis of appreciation and respect for cultural diversity. Pai and Adler (1997) have described the value of this outcome for students and adults: "Appreciating different cultures, which should be viewed as pools of collective experiences, knowledge, wisdom, and the vision of other people, can make our own lives richer" (p. 122).
3. Students should engage in intergroup dialogues that promote cross-cultural communication skills and reduce biases and prejudices. Gorski (2006) has written that multicultural education must: "institutionalize inclusivity, to engage a broader set of worldviews that, woven together, provide all of us with a deeper understanding of the world and ourselves" (p. 69).
4. Students should learn to be critical thinkers able to analyze historical and contemporary issues in order to make intelligent decisions about problems and conflicts. Appleton (1983) addressed the need for historical analysis: "Multicultural education must deal with the social and historical realities of American society and help students gain a better understanding of the causes of oppression and inequality and the ways in which these social problems might be eliminated" (p. 216).
5. Students should engage in activities that address social justice issues and be encouraged to develop and implement strategies to respond to such issues in their school and their community. Banks (2006) described the relationship between diversity and social justice: "Diversity . . . provides schools, colleges and universities with an opportunity to educate students in an environment that reflects the reality of the nation and the world and to teach students from diverse groups how to get along and how to make decisions and take actions in the public interest" (p. 144).

## Multicultural Goals

- To respect and appreciate cultural diversity.
- To promote the understanding of unique cultural and ethnic heritage.
- To promote the development of culturally responsible and responsive curricula.
- To facilitate acquisition of the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to function in various cultures.
- To eliminate racism and discrimination in society.
- To achieve social, political, economic, and educational equity

Wah' -Sha identifies more specific aims for students as:

- be lifelong learners
- be passionate
- be ready to take risks
- be able to problem-solve and think critically
- be able to look at things differently
- be able to work independently and with others
- be creative
- care and want to give back to their community
- persevere
- have integrity and self-respect
- have moral courage
- be able to interact with the world around them well
- increase their resilience and become individuals who are more confident, capable, and willing to help themselves and others when faced with a crisis
- speak well, write well, read well, and work well with numbers
- **truly enjoy their life and their work.**

## Secondary Goals

Our secondary goals are based on the assumption that growth is a sequential and orderly process. Children do indeed pass through development stages that occur in fairly predictable sequences in their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Adults are responsible for nurturing and assisting the child through the stages of his or her growth.

**\*\*Here at Wah' -Sha Academy, we will make every effort to create an atmosphere where the children can reach their goals as **naturally** as possible. (Developmentally Appropriate Practice)** This means that activities will be student-centered allowing for each individual's own pace along with the teacher's encouragement. These goals **will generally not** be met through prepared lessons only or forced methods.

We prepare our classrooms and curriculum so that your child will learn through **both** his/her own will and by teacher-directed lessons. Our teachers are responsible for observing each child and taking notes to ensure that the goals, as outlined above, are met.

## Physical goals

Teachers will challenge each student in the use of and discovery of his body. Depending on the developmental stage of the child, appropriate activities (jumping, climbing, hiking, skating ...) will help each child continue to develop a) an awareness of his / her body, b) gross motor skills, c) fine motor skills, and d) self-help skills as they move up through the grades.

## **Social and Emotional Goals**

We will guide each student in improving self-control and an awareness of their emotions and interactions with other people. Appropriate activities, conversations and conflict resolution (role play, storytelling, discussions ...) will help each child to:

- Establish trust in his/herself and others.
- Recognize and identify his/her own emotions.
- Become aware of the feelings of others.
- Become an active member of a group.
- Develop a higher degree of autonomy and independence, and finally.
- Learn to respect others while acknowledging social and cultural customs.

These skills increase with each year of growth and repeated activities that deepen a student's understanding.

## **Living Values**

Each month we feature a theme based on values. We believe that maintaining a basic set of values is the key to personal growth, multi-cultural awareness. Our method is to draw the values that are already there inside the child, out of the child, and avoid putting OUR ideas into the children's mind. Our founder is trained and certified as a regional trainer to implement Unesco's Living Values program which focuses on the following values: (<http://www.livingvalues.net/>)

Simplicity | Responsibility / self reliance | Happiness / patience | Humility | Honesty / Respect | Peace / fairness| Love / compassion | Tolerance | Cooperation | Unity / commitment

The purpose of **Living Values: Educational Program** is to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person, recognizing that the individual is comprised of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

Aims of the educational program are:

- To help individuals think about and reflect on different values and the practical implications of expressing them in relation to themselves, others, the community, and the world at large;
- To deepen understanding, motivation, and responsibility with regard to making personal and social choices; • To inspire individuals to choose their own personal, social, moral, and spiritual values and be aware of practical methods for developing and deepening them; and
- To encourage educators and caregivers to look at education as providing students with a philosophy of living, thereby facilitating their overall growth, development, and choices so that they may integrate themselves into the community with respect, confidence, and purpose

## **Academic Goals**

### **Reading:**

Reading should be an exciting discovery for the child and can occur in a similar way as the child discovered writing. He may be looking at what he has written and realize that he/she can read what he wrote. When reading is discovered and not taught, the child can have a lifelong love of reading.

Reading allows the child to connect with the thoughts of others from the past and the present. It helps the child develop his personality and his/her intellect. The child will read to get

information in the same way they see the older children and adults of their society. Once we open up the world of books to the child, the sky's the limit. Some children are so excited by the ability to read, and they read and read and read! Reading will continue at school and home whenever they have the time.

For the child who reads, we must provide numerous good books. We need to be sure we have a great variety. Children enjoy books about people, other places, animals and birds and flowers, and events from the past and everyday life. The child recognizes the enormity of information possible to get from reading. In today's world, the information age, the ability to read means the child will read all the things of interest to him.

Reading opens the door for your child to enjoy a lifetime of learning. The ability to read and comprehend text is essential as your child enters the middle and high school years when an enormous amount of information is learned by reading texts. Even more importantly, the ability to use language to communicate is essential to psychological development.

At Wah' -Sha, we begin with the comprehension of and retelling of stories. We learn that stories can shape our understanding of our present through the accounts of people in our past, sharpen our imagination, develop our vocabulary and strengthen our spoken word. Then, we take our students along a journey of

- identifying key ideas and details of stories;
- retelling stories; identifying characters, settings, and major events;
- relating the relationship of illustrations to a story;
- understanding the central messages of stories;
- distinguishing between fact and fiction;
- identifying the person who is telling the story;
- reconstructing stories from diverse cultures and points of view;
- identifying the parts of stories such as introductions and conclusions;
- identifying patterns of events; and
- understanding inferred meanings that are not explicitly stated.

### **Counting:**

Number itself cannot be defined. And, the understanding of numbers grows from experience with real objects but eventually, they become abstract ideas. It is one of the most abstract concepts that the human mind has encountered. No physical aspects of objects can ever suggest the concept of number. The ability to count, compute, and use numerical relationships is among the most significant among human achievements. The idea of number is not the contribution of a single individual. Still, it is the product of gradual, social evolution. The number system, which has been created over thousands of years, is an abstract invention. It began with the realization of one, and then, more than one. It is marvelous to see the readiness of the child's understanding of this same concept.

The ability to count is essential in child development. Still, we also believe it has a great impact on the ease of future learning and work. Counting is the first step toward understanding mathematics that will translate into the future ability to function in society, manage money, and make wise financial decisions. Our students will be able to count by 1s, 2s, 5s through to the 10s; write numbers; understand place values; understand, write and manipulate decimals; and understand, write and work with fractions.

### **Shapes:**

Another integral part of child development is recognizing and manipulating objects in the environment and making connections between objects and actions. These skills allow your child to develop higher-order thinking skills, which aid in critical thinking and problem-solving. By the end of elementary school, your child should be able to

- recognize shapes,
- partition shapes,
- recognize shapes in patterns and use shapes to form patterns,
- combine shapes to form new shapes,
- understand angle concepts and measurements,
- and draw shapes, angles, and lines.

### **Mathematical Goals: Overview:**

Arithmetic deals with shape, space, numbers, and their relationships and attributes using numbers and symbols. It is a study of the science of pattern, including patterns of all kinds, such as numerical patterns, abstract patterns, and patterns of shape and motion. Throughout the Wah' -Sha curriculum, we closely follow the Montessori approach, Visual Math approach and Singapore math approach, all of which presents to the child: arithmetic, geometry, statistics, and calculus. The primary class concepts are numeration, the decimal system, computation, arithmetic tables, whole numbers, fractions, and positive numbers. We offer arithmetic to the child in the final two years of the first place of developments from age four to age five and six.

From first to fourth grade the students will deepen their understanding of and cover basic numeracy, the four operations into the millions, fractions and decimals, geometry, measurements, a pictorial link from concrete to abstract math, practical application of math with word problems, and math facts practice for computational fluency.

### **Science:**

Science is about the world, not mere words to be memorized. We enable children to understand and appreciate the natural world and the crucial role of science and technology in enabling humans to flourish. In contrast to other programs, which often rely on textbooks to transmit disconnected scientific terms and formulae, our science curriculum starts with children observing the natural world's phenomena. We then classify, describe, and sketch our observations. Often, our student's studies retrace the historical logic of scientific discovery. In the process, students come to appreciate the wondrous world in which we live. They gain a profound understanding of, and respect for, the life-sustaining role of scientific discoveries and technology in their lives.

Our science program has three main goals:

- **To make careful, curious observers of the world out of our students.**
- **To develop a foundation of scientific observations and vocabulary.**
- **To develop a fundamental conviction that science can help us understand and live in this world.**

### **History & Geography**

Connecting history to a student's unique life is at the core of our approach to history. That said, we transition into history and the vibrant stories of our past by pulling from

the Waldorf tradition of sharing numerous fairytales and nature stories during the K-2 years before fully immersing the students in the stories that make up our history. By and large, fairy tales have an enormous and irreplaceable value in the life of a child. They educate, support and liberate the emotions of children. Fairy tales provide a unique way for children to come to terms with the dilemmas of their inner lives.

**IF YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO BE INTELLIGENT, READ THEM FAIRYTALES. IF YOU WANT THEM TO BE MORE INTELLIGENT, READ THEM MORE FAIRYTALES –  
ALBERT EINSTEIN**

And here is a tale:

Once upon a time, people began telling stories around the fire. The stories were as deep and dark as the woods where talking animals, elves, fairies and other enchanting characters lived. As time passed, the stories were collected and written down. Many were made into movies. And then parents began asking: what is it about fairy tales? Aren't they too violent and scary for impressionable children? And are Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, and Cinderella good role models? But that was far from the end. No matter how politically incorrect stories about evil stepmothers, damsels in distress, and cannibalistic old women may be, fairy tales are here to stay. And that's a good thing, say the experts. "They work through so many personal and cultural anxieties, yet they do it in a safe, 'once upon a time' way," says Maria Tatar, a professor at Harvard College who writes about, and teaches classes on, fairy tales. "Fairy tales have a real role in liberating the imagination of children. No matter how violent they are, the protagonist always survives."

They tell us our history, they **describe where we live, what our values are and ultimately who we are.**

As we introduce stories departing from legend, myth and fiction, we ask students to empathize with the motivations of people of the past. For example, if we are telling the story of Confucius, we might ask the students, 'If you saw so many people fighting against each other, what would you do?'

Children acquire a vast base of knowledge about the world, from its geographic features to how different cultures throughout the ages and throughout the world have satisfied the basic needs (such as food, shelter, clothing, and transportation). Elementary students will learn to observe, categorize, and integrate their knowledge.

Wah' -Sha Academy also aims to bring field trips, music, the arts, language, and wilderness awareness to weave these mediums into the fabric of their core academics.

We will make maps, paint them with watercolors, or shade their elevations carefully with colored pencils. This is a preface to middle school where students spend a week in the wilderness and map their area using mapping instruments. Every January, each age level will embark upon a Calendar project.

They draw prehistoric animals on timelines of life. For example, they paint the saber-tooth tiger they are researching on large-scale paper after writing down their research on the animal in their best cursive handwriting. Depending on the children's interest and their teachers' inclinations, you may see them knitting or crocheting while a teacher reads a story to a group of children. We also weave art into the curriculum through the practice of main lesson books.

Whether it is clay, paint, poetry, or dancing, the purpose of the arts is to develop an expression for what they are learning. Our wilderness awareness curriculum aims to cultivate both healthy relationships with and a deep understanding of nature, community, and self. Students will learn vital skills such as knowing the four directions, what plants are edible or medicinal, tracking, and fire-starting.

### **Verse and Spirituality**

Wah' –Sha is not directly associated with any specific religious organization. The spiritual element that is woven into our daily rhythm at school is an integral part of holistic pedagogy. This element is incorporated through the use of fairy tales, legends, and myths that speak to the divine spark within all humanity; through music, art, and dance that open the heart to the beauty of creation; and through the loving respect that the teacher brings to the learning process itself. We seek to instill within students a sense of wonder and reverence for all creation.

Jerry Mintz, Founder of the Alternative Education Resource Organization, defined Spirituality in the holistic education movement like this:

A basic premise of holistic education is the belief that our lives have a meaning and purpose greater than the mechanistic laws described by science and greater than the 'consensus consciousness' of any one culture. This transcendent purpose is a creative, self-guiding energy that we ought not attempt to suppress. No ideology, no social order devised by wealth- or power-seeking factions should be allowed to corrupt the delicate, miraculous unfolding of this creative energy. . . . Ultimately, a spiritual worldview is a reverence for life, an attitude of wonder and awe in the face of the transcendent Source of our being. (1990)

Wah' -Sha Academy believes that Spirituality is the attitude, and the practice, of suspending our imagined reality to stand in wonder and awe at that which unfolds and emerges beyond our conceptual grasp. While we recognize that this attitude may be questioned by some, the concept is not meant to interfere with any belief system with which a student may come to us. Our Founder and director has taught Atheists, Catholics, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindu believers. Teachers at Wah' -Sha will be trained to hold space for these beliefs and use Spirituality to bond us.

Our multi-cultural education allows for this to happen naturally.



Every morning we will lead students in silent meditation very similar to a 'sit spot' in Wilderness awareness training, or zazen.

Silence is a wise sage who brings us the knowledge to which our ears are deaf. The languages of creation are many and varied. We may hear them if we listen. We show the children how to listen with our 'very souls'. At this time, we ask the children to give thanks for a brand new day. We may repeat a verse such as:

Quiet now, we pause to rest,  
Silence is our tranquil nest.  
Our movement stilled, our voices cease,  
We bathe our souls in quiet peace.

In regards to Spirituality, we stress the following concepts:

\*\*Now, and for each moment, we should be thankful for all life and all things.

\*\*The ability to think for oneself and follow through with positive action.

\*\*Grow into respectful, resourceful responsible human beings with compassion for all life and all things.

### **VERSE**

The Verses that we speak before many activities are not prayers associated with any one religion.

For our kindergarteners, verse helps the young children transition smoothly from unstructured play to the more structured classroom activities. Primary students use verse to set their intentions for the day or the task ahead of them. Verse brings the class together in unity, in strong, meaningful words and affirmations that help build strong characters and caring individuals.

### **Our Verses for each activity of the day:**

#### **Kindergarten Morning Verse:**

Good Morning Earth!  
Good Morning Sun!  
Good Morning to the rocks, and  
The flowers every one.  
Good morning to the Beasts,  
And the birds in the trees.  
Good morning to you, and good morning to me.

**Primary Morning Verse (1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>):**

**WE ARE TRUTHFUL**

We are truthful and helpful  
And loving in trust  
For our heart's inner sun  
Glow brightly in us.  
We will open our hearts  
To the sunbeams so bright  
And we'll fill all the world  
With our heart's inner light.

**Math Verse (Primary)**

One and one and one make three  
Up and down the old oak tree.  
Six is two and two and two  
Apples for friends and me and you.  
Three and three and three are nine  
Counting counting all the time.  
Twelve is four and four and four  
A dozen eggs and not one more.

**Language (Primary)**

Once I spoke the language of the flowers,  
Once I understood each word the caterpillar said,  
Once I smiled in secret at the gossip of the starlings,  
And shared a conversation with the housefly  
in my bed.  
Once I heard and answered all the questions  
of the crickets,  
And joined the crying of each falling dying  
flake of snow,  
Once I spoke the language of the flowers. . . .  
How did it go?  
How did it go?

### **Storytime**

When the sun lights up the sky  
I eat my lunch and my space I beautify.  
I ready myself with greatest care,  
I brush my teeth and comb my hair.  
Then off to Story House I go,  
To hear the stories that I love so.

### **Art: "Colorful Journeying"**

With my crayons I will go,  
Journeying o'er the bright rainbow,  
Red and yellow, green and blue,  
Orange and purple, that will do,  
Now let's see where they take me to.

### **Watercolor Painting**

Now I take the brush so gently  
In my hand with loving care  
Watch the color flow so softly  
On the paper clean and clear.

### **Handwork**

"The Little Men"

Oh! Where are the merry, merry little men  
To join us in our play?  
And where are the busy, busy little men  
To help us work today?  
Upon each hand a little band  
For work or play is ready.  
The first to come  
Is Master Thumb;  
Then Pointer, strong and steady;  
Then Tall Man high;

And just close by  
The Feeble Man doth linger;  
And last of all, so fair and small,  
The baby -- Little Finger.  
Yes! Here are the merry, merry little men,  
To join us in our play;  
And here are the busy, busy little men,  
To help us work today.

### **Mealtime Verse**

Thank you mother earth, thank you shining sun,  
Thank you to the rain giving blessing to the grain.  
Thank you to all mothers, thank you to all fathers  
Joy and love for all joy and love for all they've done.  
So strong and healthy I will grow,  
And loving in life from my heart I will show.  
Blessings on our meal. Blessings on our meal.

### **Parting Verse**

All my doing now has ended  
What I have learned I'll put to rest,  
Always knowing, always seeing  
That I have done my very best.  
Wisdom, love and strength may grow  
And I shall bless all those I know.

Merry we have met, and merry we have been,  
Merry we will part, until we meet again!

## **Curriculum /Scope & sequence/ Pedagogy**

With our unique weaving of

- Montessori,
- Waldorf,
- Masterful teaching practices (experiential education),
- Multicultural education practices, and
- Wilderness Awareness learning styles,

Wah' -Sha Academy establishes an environment that promotes genuine connections and relationships, authentic learning experiences, and plain old fun!

### **Holistic Threads**

In the Montessori Curricula, techniques and materials satisfy the primary child's natural tendency to learn by doing. Children work individually and cooperatively with materials that pique their curiosity and enhance their experience. This practice develops independence, coordination, order, self-discipline, and concentration.

There is nothing quite like the authentic Montessori Method for the earlier grades. This unique approach enables children to discover their true potential and develop an organized, engaged, and focused mind.

We balance our Montessori approach with both an imaginative and teacher-directed Waldorf-style. Our Waldorf style also includes self-directed playtime and includes teacher-directed story times, circle times, and main lesson blocks. Often, We give Montessori presentations using the rich stories used in the Waldorf traditions.

The room is a peaceful quiet under the hum of activity and focus, whether the children are engaged in Montessori materials, traditional age-appropriate play, or the main lesson. Your teacher will speak and sing softly throughout the day as the children move about freely with a comfortable confidence and interdependence.

One of the Waldorf philosophy's unique aspects is that it recognizes the essential spiritual nature within each human being. Although Waldorf schools are not directly associated with any specific religious organization, this spiritual element is an integral part of Waldorf pedagogy. We weave this into our day through the use of fairy tales, legends, and myths that speak to the divine spark within all humanity; through music, art, and dance that open the heart to the beauty of creation; and through the loving respect that the teacher brings to the learning process itself. Waldorf education seeks to instill within students a sense of wonder and reverence for all creation.

Together, this creates our unique home-like setting of natural/wooden materials, the smell of fresh bread or soup, and how the teachers move about the room doing purposeful work. These different styles are woven together, much like a marriage. They contribute to the kind of learning and play that brings about a deeper level of social,

emotional, and academic learning that is a pervasive undercurrent in our classroom's daily rhythm.

### **Wilderness Awareness Thread**

Gratitude practices, storytelling, singing, sensory awareness practices, nature awareness games, questioning, and tracking are core routines that shape the outdoor learning experience that complements Montessori and Waldorf practices. These habits help us raise our awareness, be receptive to teachable moments, and let curiosity lead. We will engage in numerous nature walks, developing familiarity with the four directions, plant and animal awareness, and 'sit spot.'

### **Multicultural Threads**

Multicultural Education at Wah' -Sha consists of strategical lesson planning. Each grade will follow a similar lesson plan wherein each month features a country in the world and a core universal value or need to take an in-depth look.

Each month we will introduce age level games, food, music, festivals, and art from the featured country. As there are nine months in the school year, We will feature a country from three continents once, and some continents will feature two different countries. Wah' -Sha Academy fully recognizes that many countries worldwide are bound by political borders that do not always represent the numerous cultures that may reside within borders and sometimes even cross borders. We will make a great effort to include different viewpoints and studies within our history, literacy, and science blocks, featuring the work of men and women throughout the world.

### **Masterful Teaching Thread**

Our Masterful Teaching component can be described in this quote by Daniel Coyle, 'the Talent Code:'

*Experiences where you are forced to slow down, make errors, and correct them—as you would if you were walking up an ice-covered hill, slipping and stumbling as you go—end up making you swift and graceful without your realizing it.*

It is an intricate system for teacher professional development. Teaching comprises of both 'skill and will,' and we recognize that teachers possess varying degrees of each. When we consider where an individual teacher falls on a simple matrix of skill level and will level, we can create a new way to think about that teacher's professional development needs.

It is as critical to provide teachers with differentiated leadership as it is to provide students with differentiated instruction. As we gain teachers, we will tailor our leadership approach to the 'skill and will' of the individuals we are leading. We believe this is key to helping all teachers embrace change and significantly improve their practice in alignment with Wah' -Sha Academy's holistic practice.

Together, child and teacher passions, with core routines, drive our learning culture. They are partners in cahoots, feeding inspiration, intrinsic motivation, respect for self and others, and a reverence for our home, Earth.

Research shows that, while adhering to a daily rhythm, children who immerse themselves in a natural and ever-changing environment have more opportunities to learn new things in new ways. Being outdoors provides an expanded opportunity for physical exploration. Inspiration is everywhere in the change of seasons and cycles of life. Children develop a bond with nature as they begin to understand their place within it. A hearty dose of curiosity and respect for nature develops, laying a foundation for future scientific investigation!

Teacher-directed learning comes during individual Montessori presentations, storytime, literacy hour, music, and circle time.

**Our Curriculum FEATURES:**

Music Together

Sonrisas Spanish

Jolly Phonics and Oxford Reading Tree Literacy Hour (utilizing Orton Gillingham approach)

Suzuki Pre-Recorder

Mindfulness practices

conflict resolution & Living Values Education

**More Specifically, the components and Scope & Sequence of Wah' -Sha Academy are:**

**PLAY** Our definition of play consists of actions that the children think up entirely on their own. Undisturbed play, as opposed to teacher-directed play, is essential for the young child. It is through play that a child learns social and language skills. We have an imagination room where the children play as they like. Each month we outfit the room with various items for the children to explore. For example, one month we may have the wooden railway out, another month dress-up clothes etc. We have found that the children explore each play item to its fullest when no other toys is distracting the children from concentration. We also frequent the park for outdoor play. All play is, of course, carefully observed to ensure children's safety.

### **Multi-age groupings**

Multi-age classrooms provide a heterogeneous mix in which children can collaborate and socialize. These inter-age relationships strengthen the entire community.

Older children are seen as role models within the community. They support the growth and development of younger children through socialization, assisting with new work, or teaching skills they have mastered themselves. They can also work with younger students in the curriculum areas because they may need more practice, without stigma.

Younger children follow the example set by the older students and have peers to work within the curriculum areas in which they may be more advanced. This multi-age community provides opportunities for all individuals to learn from each other, leading, sharing, or serving as role models. It also develops an appreciation of differences.

Within this supportive, inclusive community, children work through the curriculum at their own pace, accelerating during some tasks, or taking additional time with others.

At Wah' -Sha Academy, the goal is to eventually group 3 – 6 year-olds, 6-8 year-olds, and 8-10 year-olds. First/Second grade and 3rd/4th grade will join together for main lesson blocks while moving at their individual paces in math and literacy, which will be held as a small group or individual instruction.

Until Wah' -Sha is full, we will proceed in a slightly more 'Montessori way' of multi-age classrooms. This means that students will receive individual instruction/presentations either in small groups or individually.

### **Practical Life**

(3 – 6) The young child finds unique and fulfilling qualities in the tasks that adults consider ordinary—washing dishes, paring vegetables, polishing shoes, etc. They are exciting to children because the various activities allow the children to imitate adults. Imitation is one of the strongest urges during children's early years.

In this area of the classroom, children perfect their coordination and become absorbed in inactivity. They gradually lengthen their span of concentration. They also learn to pay attention to details as they follow a regular sequence of actions. Finally, they learn good working habits as they finish each task and put away all the materials before beginning another activity.

(Primary) Within the Primary program, the Practical Life curriculum expands from the foundation laid in Early Childhood. Practical Life at the Primary level shifts from a focus on self-care and fine motor skills, to skills that help children connect with their interests in the outside world, organize their time, and participate in their community.



While self-care and appropriate social interactions continue to be supported, lessons that teach responsibility are the focus. Use of tools, such as work plans, to support organization and time management skills, are incorporated into the daily routine.

Teachers and students often work together to post reminders about assignments, projects, and ideas. Using these, children make independent work choices, prioritize activities, and meet deadlines.

### **Sensorial Activities**

(3 – 6) The Sensory materials in the classroom help the children distinguish, categorize, and relate new information to what they already know. This process is thought to be the beginning of conscious knowledge. It is brought about by the intelligence working in a concentrated way on the impressions given by the five senses. Activities include sorting out shapes, smelling games, listening games, feeling exercises etc.

(Primary) We continue with the sensorial materials laid out in the Early Education years and expand these lessons by adding a 'data collection' component where children log their results. Main lesson blocks will include many sensorial activities directly related to the content area being studied.

### **Language**

(3-6) Children have the opportunity to teach themselves how to read and write. Children learn the phonetic sounds of the letters before they can learn the alphabetical names in a sequence. The phonetic sounds are given first because these are the sounds they hear in words that they need to be able to read. The children first become aware of these phonetic sounds when the teacher introduces the vowels and consonants with sandpaper letters.

All instruction is individual, which takes advantage of the children's greatest periods of interest. Reading instruction begins on the day when the children show interest in wanting to learn a word or use the sandpaper letters. Writing almost always precedes reading. First, children use cut-out letters to form words and gradually write on paper. Children are encouraged to read about what interests them. Their phonetics skills give them the means of attacking almost any new word so that they are not limited to a specific number of words that they have been trained to recognize by sight. When a child begins to read, we will send home readers for the children to use on Fridays.

(Primary) The Primary language curriculum focuses on further developing the reading and writing skills of the Early Education level. The child explores written language factually through journal writing, letters, research, and creatively through story writing, poetry, and drama. The technical aspects of language – spelling, grammar, syntax, punctuation, and capitalization are taught separately and are applied to the student's written work. Through the combination of the Montessori materials, Oxford Reading Tree, and Waldorf curriculum, the student realizes that language is a powerful tool of

communication. Through language, we can learn about the world, past and present, and we can use it to express our own thoughts and ideas.

Curriculum includes:

- Story of communication in signs
- The development of written language
- Word study
  - o Roots of words
  - o Suffixes and prefixes
  - o Synonyms, antonyms, homonyms
  - o Compound words
  - o Syllables
  - o Contractions
  - o Phonograms
- Grammar
  - o Parts of speech (nouns, adjectives, etc.)
  - o Types of sentences
  - o Sentence analysis – simple sentences
  - o Sentence analysis – compound and complex Sentences
- Writing skills
  - o Different forms of writing: fiction, expository, letters, poems, etc.
  - o Cursive writing
  - o Punctuation, capitalization
  - o Spelling
  - o Editing
- Literature
  - o Poetry, drama, short stories, short novels, mythology
- Spoken Language
  - o Presentation of reports, reading aloud, discussion, drama

**RESEARCH SKILLS** Helping students develop the skills they will need to explore and investigate independently is a cornerstone of our education. In the Primary class, the students begin to learn the basics of conducting their own research. These skills are taught in the context of research projects that the students themselves devise, with guidance from the director or directress.

- Navigating books
  - o Tables of contents, indices
  - o Alphabetical order and guide words
  - o Dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, encyclopedia
- Expressing thoughts in original terms
- Techniques for organizing information coherently
- Illustration and model-making
- Presenting research to peers

At Wah' -Sha Academy, we make time for formal group lessons, 20 minutes four times per week, in literacy utilizing the Oxford Reading Tree.

## **Technology**

\*\* At Wah' -Sha Academy, we avoid using technology as either a teaching method or a research method for students. Our curriculum brings technology in at the Middle school level, which would begin at 5th grade.

## **Mathematics**

(3 – 6) It has been demonstrated that if children have access to mathematical equipment in their early years, they can easily and joyfully assimilate many arithmetic facts and skills. Dr. Maria Montessori designed concrete materials to represent all types of quantities after she observed that children who became interested in counting like to touch or move the items as they enumerate them.

By combining materials, separating it, sharing it, counting it, and comparing it, they can demonstrate the basic operations of mathematics to themselves. This variety maintains the children's interest while allowing for necessary repetition. This practice using concrete materials, will prepare your child for elementary math which is taught in abstract form.

(Primary) The work completed in Early Education classes provides a foundation for the Primary work in math. Students at the Primary level have the enormous intellectual ability and love to work with big numbers. They continue to use materials when working with math, but the materials require an even greater abstraction of the principles.

Curriculum includes:

- The story of numbers (history and development of number systems)
- Numeration and place value
- Operations / Arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division)
  - o With whole numbers
  - o With common fractions
  - o With decimal fractions
- Laws
  - o Commutative, distributive, associative laws
- Factors and multiples
  - o Prime numbers
- Squaring and cubing
- Square root
- Measurement
  - o Length, time, temperature
- Divisibility
- Word problems
- Money
- Congruence, similarity, equivalence
- Lines of symmetry

- Parts and properties of:
  - o Lines
  - o Angles
  - o Polygons
  - o Circles
  - o Geometric solids
- Perimeter
- Area
- Volume

### **Environmental Awareness**

Our environmental program is an ongoing process and not a theme for a day, week, or month. For example, whenever we go to the park, we bring a trash bag for garbage. All garbage is separated into seven categories.

Children aid us in making homemade cleansers from vinegar and baking soda etc. We collect used paper and use it to make our own paper for the children to use in the art center. All teachers are encouraged to attend environmental workshops for continued learning. Our teachers will present more complex issues regarding the environment in the Primary Grades.

### **CULTURE – THE SCIENCES, GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

The children understand the world around them by exploring other countries, their customs, food, music, climate, language, and animals.

This helps raise their consciousness about other people, gain an understanding and tolerance, and, therefore, compassion for all the people in the world : Our culture area will be prepared with a number of activities for the children to explore the world around them. Activities may include maps, timelines, picture files, discovery projects, experiments etc.

Primary students are curious about the world and universe. They are intensely social, and they are discovering the power of their rational minds and their imagination. We take advantage of all of these characteristics in presenting the sciences, humanities, and arts. Small group lessons, the freedom to collaborate, and charts and timelines that create a strong visual impression are all designed to appeal to and inspire six to nine year old students. The lessons and curriculum are integrated so that the child can see the complex interdependencies in our knowledge.

We start by giving a general framework and then slowly help the child fill in the details. The student will see the same kinds of topics each year, drawing more connections, branching out into different directions, and going deeper each time. Classification work, especially in botany and zoology, appeals to students of this age and allows them to hone their understanding, begin to organize their knowledge intelligently and make finer and finer distinctions.

History work is based on the fundamental needs common to all human beings and the cultures that have arisen as different ways of satisfying those needs. The students follow up on these lessons in various ways - research and writing, creative handwork and model making, work with timelines and charts, and hands-on experiments.

Curriculum includes:

#### Chemistry and Physics

- The story of the formation of the universe
- The solar system
- States of matter
  - o Solids, liquids, gases
  - o Degrees of rigidity
  - o Viscosity
- Density
- Combining and separating substances o Solutions, mixtures, chemical reactions
- Crystallization
- Magnetism
- Gravity and weight Geography and Earth Science
- Composition of the Earth
- Plate tectonics
- Air
  - o Properties of air
  - o The winds
  - o High and low Pressure
  - o Erosion
- Water
  - o The River
    - Parts of
    - Establishment of cities
    - Rivers of North America
  - o Erosion
  - o Water and ice
  - o Rain and the water cycle
- Climate Zones, people and vegetation
- Ocean ecosystems
- Political geography
  - o Countries, capitals, bodies of water
- Land and water forms
- The Sun and the Earth
  - o Day and night
  - o Seasons
  - o Climate zones Biology
- Botany

- o Needs and parts of the plant
- o Classification of plants
- Zoology
  - o Five classes of vertebrates
  - o Function of body systems
  - o Invertebrates
  - o Habitats
  - o Food chains
- The Human Body History
- Story of the coming of life
- Evolution and the timeline of life
- The story of the coming of human beings
  - o Study of early humans
- The fundamental needs of humans
  - o Nourishment, transportation, defense, clothing, shelter, arts and culture
- Measurement of time
- Ancient civilizations

### **Music and Movement**

Music is fundamental in the classroom. It is both spiritually and emotionally therapeutic for children. We use it for language building, greetings, clean up, background music, an integral part of the cultural curriculum, and simply, for celebration and fun. All types of music are integrated into the curriculum.

\*\*\*One day a week is specifically set aside for a special music program which is progressive in both language building, skills incoordination, and other important skills in development.

Recorder: Our 1st and 2nd graders will have a time during the day for learning the pre-recorder.

In 3rd and 4th grade, students will use a soprano recorder.

(Primary) The music program is an opportunity for students to gain an appreciation of music. The students gain exposure to different musical genres and study music's history and its development through time. Our music program teaches students that music is an integral part of their lives. Students are introduced to the following elements of music:

- Dynamics
- Pitch
- Rhythm
- Notation
- Harmony
- Melody

The students are involved in various activities such as

- Choral singing
- Movement (including dance and games)
- Playing rhythm instruments
- Listening
- Ear training exercises

--> **Recorder:** Our 1st and 2nd graders will have a time during the day for learning the pre-recorder.

In 3rd and 4th grade, students will use a soprano recorder.

### **Cooking and Nutrition**

The children learn what foods they need to remain healthy. On certain Fridays, they will be cooking nutritious foods according to season and revolve around cultural studies.

### **Arts and crafts**

The children are free to use the art center as they please. Both the young child and the primary student find great joy in creating something of their own. The students are exposed to a wide variety of hands-on experiences with various media. These include painting, sculpting, sewing, paper-making, marbling, papermâché and origami. Students are also introduced to techniques such as pointillism, impasto, and shading. They learn about artists and their work, often with a chance to try to work in a similar fashion.

The importance of the process and enjoyment in doing something is stressed, and not the end product.

Occasional projects will be on display for the children to do if they like, and once a month, the children will engage in teacher-directed projects. At this time, the children may be divided into skill levels.

Some specific skills that the students will learn throughout early education and primary care:

- Colors: primary/secondary, warm/cool, color mixing, complementary colors
- Composition and design
- Lines, space, and form
- Clay work, including pinch pots and coil pots
- Symmetry
- Mask making
- Paper art and three-dimensional sculptural designs
- Painting
- Watercolors
- Pastels
- Acrylics
- Genre painting:

- Weaving
- Mixed media
- Mosaics
- Bookmaking
- Salt-flour relief
- Sewing
- Pencil, pen, and ink
- Design and architecture

### **Enhanced Core Spanish as a Second Language**

Wah' -Sha Academy will offer both our early education program (projected to open in 2023) and Primary grades Spanish classes that will focus on building all language components: speaking, reading, and writing. We may add Japanese once or twice a week.

We will utilize the comprehensive Sonrisas Spanish curriculum, whose methodology provides students with a developmentally appropriate and comprehensive Spanish language education. It enables them to become effective Spanish communicators, globally literate citizens, and lifelong language learners. We feel that this program complements the styles of teaching at Wah' -Sha Academy.

Sonrisa Spanish utilizes the following strategies:

#### **TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE-TPR**

Developed by Dr. James J. Asher, TPR models the way children learn their first language. TPR works by placing the language in a physical context that allows for comprehension without translation. Done effectively, with lots of repetition, TPR develops comprehension and verbal skills. It is appropriate for young learners as it is very kinesthetic. TPR also helps teachers achieve a recommended goal of using Spanish at least 90% of the time when teaching. The Sonrisas curriculum incorporates TPR into the songs, games, and activities for each lesson.

#### **THE NATURAL APPROACH**

Developed by Dr. Stephen Krashen and Spanish teacher Tracy Terrell, the Natural Approach supports the idea that children learn a language only through acquisition instead of learning. Learning requires a focus on form, i.e., on grammar, while acquisition requires a focus on meaning. Meaning is achieved by giving learners lots of comprehensible input. When students are exposed to this input in fun and practical contexts, acquisition is inevitable. In the Sonrisas Spanish Curriculum, teachers use movement and gesture, repetition, everyday objects, and illustration to give students lots of comprehensible input in fun and practical contexts throughout the songs, games, activities, literature, and art projects. Students acquire Spanish naturally and easily, and this allows for a lesson that requires little or no translation, further reinforcing the goal that teachers use Spanish at least 90% of the time.

#### **THE WALDORF FOREIGN LANGUAGE APPROACH**

Used consistently and with great success since its inception in the 1920s, the Waldorf approach is based on the idea that foreign language acquisition's primary purpose is to develop the ability to communicate. A big part of this development is raising one's social conscience by cultivating an interest in and a respect for other cultures. Indeed, through acquiring foreign languages, we nurture a cultural understanding of other peoples. When children are exposed to another language, they are building much more than linguistic ability. Their minds are opening to a very different way of thinking about and seeing the world. The thematic content of the Sonrisas lessons and the activities used have been chosen with a eye towards this openness.



## READING CHILDREN'S SPANISH LITERATURE

Reading children's Spanish literature is a critical aspect of the Sonrisas methodology. A prerequisite for an effective Spanish lesson is the opportunity for students to connect with the content of the lesson. Children love books, and a great book creates an immediate connection for them. We have taken a lot of time to find quality children's books to use in our lessons. The literature included in our storybook sets is authentic children's Spanish literature, not basal readers, so students have the opportunity to engage with the content of the lesson through an authentic Spanish experience.

## USING THE THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

In the 1980s, Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner developed the theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner broadened the traditional definition of intelligence to encompass nine distinct intelligence areas such as kinesthetic intelligence and interpersonal intelligence. The theory of multiple intelligences has been a useful tool for educators, giving a clearer picture of students' strengths and weaknesses. The Sonrisas lessons use a diversity of activities to target the multiple intelligences and ensure that each student is engaged with the concepts and vocabulary in the lesson at one time or another. Through this design, the Sonrisas curriculum helps set up each child for success.

## CONSISTENT ROUTINE AND STRUCTURE

Every lesson in the Sonrisas Curriculum has the same structure—Circle Time, Story Time, and Art Time. Children thrive when they have routine and structure. Language acquisition increases when children are able to take risks and experiment with language—and that happens when they are in a safe and comfortable environment. The Sonrisas Curriculum creates this by providing a consistent routine and structure. Students can predict what is going to happen next, and they know what is expected of them

Scope & Sequence for level 1 (pre-K – 2. We project to go through TWO levels of this program through 4th grade):

1. Me llamo	19. Arriba y abajo
2. Hola y adios	20. Mi casa—un repaso
3. ¿De qué color es?	21. Salta, ranita, salta
4. ¿Cuántos hay?	22. Escucha
5. Las formas	23. Tengo hambre
6. ¿Qué día es hoy?	24. Yo veo
7. ¿Cuál es el mes?	25. Yo puedo
8. Las estaciones	26. Yo quiero
9. ¿Qué tiempo hace?	27. El Dieciséis
10. Mi cuerpo	28. Halloween/¿Cómo está la calabaza?
11. La ropa	29. El Día de Los Muertos
12. Mi familia	30. El día de acción de gracias
13. Buenas noches, buenos días	31. La Navidad
14. ¿Dónde está?	32. Las Posad
15. ¿Qué te gusta?	33. El día de San Valentín
16. Grande y chiquito	34. La Pascua
17. Bueno y malo	35. El Cinco de Mayo
18. Limpio y sucio	

## The Waldorf Influences: The Main Lesson

We will be weaving the following pedagogy into our Montessori methods by:

1. Using the storytelling of Waldorf Practices during Montessori presentations
2. Slowly introduction the Main Lesson Block
  - a. First and Second Grade will have 2 – 4 Main Lesson Blocks during the year
    - i. Remaining lessons will be presented as Montessori single or group presentations or projects.
    - ii. Our Morning gathering serves as the “Warm Up” component of a typical Waldorf Main Lesson.
  - b. Third and Fourth Grade will have 3 - 6 Main Lesson Blocks during the year
    - i. Remaining lessons will be presented as Montessori single or group presentations or projects.
    - ii. Our Morning gathering serves as the “Warm Up” component of a typical Waldorf Main Lesson.
3. The ‘head, heart, and hands’ philosophy within the Waldorf Pedagogy naturally happens throughout the day, even within a Montessori school, though it typically is not defined as clearly as in a Waldorf School.

A typical Waldorf day is divided into three main parts: head, heart, and hands. The Head lesson is also referred to as the Main Lesson and is typically implemented first in the morning. After a break, the Heart subjects follow. Heart subjects include drawing and painting, drama, eurythmy, foreign language, music. The afternoon is reserved for Hands. This is PE, dance, handwork (knitting, woodworking, etc.), gardening, and other types of gross motor skill occur.

At Wah' -Sha, this means that the 'head learning' occurs during the teacher-directed main lesson block and during the primarily Montessori style' exploration/work time.'

The Main Lesson is made up of FOUR components.

1. The Warm up
  - a. This consists of verse, poetry, mental math, circus arts, songs...
2. Review / Practice
  - a. Here we prepare a creative review of the previous day's new content using games, art, song, drama, Q & A ...
3. Bookwork
  - a. The student writes and illustrates the lesson's content into their books.
4. New Content
  - a. New material-the lesson of the day-based on the academic subject that we are studying for that month.

In short, the essential elements of a main lesson block are the seven lively arts (plus one): storytelling, movement, music, speech, drama, painting, drawing, and modeling.

To truly acquire knowledge, and not simply memorize it for an upcoming test, a student of any age needs time for that seed of knowledge to take root. Waldorf education uses the block

structure of learning to make sure that students have the time they need to experience true learning and find relevancy and interest in the topic at hand. We call this academic learning block Main Lesson, and Wah' -Sha Academy will be utilizing this method in a slightly altered during 1st – 4th grade. The first and second grades will have a shorter main lesson block and a more extended 'exploration/work period.' In contrast, 3rd and 4th grade will begin to shift to a longer main lesson block time.

Subjects like reading, math, history, and science are taught in the block method.

Teachers typically present new concepts in three or four-week blocks to provide an in-depth learning experience of a single subject. In a block system, students are immersed in one subject at a time to fully focus on the content area and gain a complete understanding before moving on to the next course of study.

This method helps students, who may not enjoy a particular subject focus on improvement. Teachers have found that many students cannot simply tune out during a 30 to 40-minute class each day, but are instead immersed in the topic for several weeks.

This method helps teachers use a multi-sensory and multi-activity learning approach because the time allotted allows them to engage the children with a wide variety of activities to increase student motivation and interest in the topic.

This method also makes little use of worksheets, and there are no textbooks to be read. The teacher reads the source material and presents it to students in an engaging and relevant way. Skill practice comes in the form of hands-on, project, and process-based learning versus memorization and mimicry.

While teachers ultimately decide when and how to present material, there is a typical three-pronged approach to each Main Lesson and a three-day approach to new material presented.

Each day's lesson is structured to contain activities that typically begin with recitation, music, movement, and recall of the previous day's lessons. After this, new material is presented through story and lecture. For the latter part of the lesson, the newly introduced material is worked on and practiced through a relevant activity.

While this is a typical structure of a Main Lesson block during the day, the week itself leans into a structure as well. New material is often presented on a two or three-day cycle that focuses on engaging storytelling and lecture at the beginning of the week. The following day focuses on recalling the previous day's material and a deep dive into a practical application of the topic, which is often done through hands-on activity. And finally, on the final day of a topic, the student practices recall again and composes and summarizes the material learned into their Main Lesson book.

Every Main Lesson features work in the Main Lesson book, which is created by the student. The student writes and illustrates the lesson's content into their books. This content consists of relevant illustrations, stories, notes, and summaries, all written by hand.

In the early grades, the students imitate the teacher in the creation of their main lesson book. In grades 3-4, the students help create the main lesson book's content, as a class, with the

teacher's guidance. In middle school, or grades 5-8, the students take notes while the teacher lectures and go over these notes individually. When the teacher checks the content, the students are given more freedom within the creation of their books because the writing is their own and the illustrations. This makes both the book and the content of the lesson their own. It also brings personalization, beauty, joy, and relevancy to lessons.

For an example of possible Main Lesson structure and content, let's consider an upper grades week in a math block. Suppose the math block is focused on geometry and the week's lesson is platonic solids. In that case, the teacher may begin the block that week with a story about Plato and his theory of forms. Students may open each day with a recorder song or scale from the era in which Plato lived. The teacher may engage students in the practice of drawing platonic solids.

As the week continues, the students will learn more details about platonic solids, such as their formulas, through lecture. They will recall what they learned and begin an in-depth project to create their own 3D models of platonic solids. Finally, the weekends with students presenting their model work to the class and writing and illustrating the week's lesson's details into their Main Lesson book.

Main Lesson, and the block style of learning, is a process-based learning method, used in many schools and universities today. It is a meaningful alternative to results-based teaching that focuses on test results. Rudolf Steiner was an early adopter of the block and process method of teaching and believed this teaching style gave students the time and space they needed to find meaning and purpose in their education. He also wanted to be sure each teacher had the time to engage a student's head, heart, and hands so that they could learn and be inspired by the material for a lifetime.

The curriculum at a Waldorf school can be seen as an ascending spiral: the long lessons that begin each day, the concentrated blocks of study that focus on one subject for several weeks. Physics, for example, is introduced in the sixth grade and continued each year as a main lesson block until graduation.

As the students mature, they engage themselves at new levels of experience with each subject. It is as though each year they come to a window on the ascending spiral that looks out into the world through the lens of a particular subject. Through the main-lesson spiral curriculum, teachers lay the groundwork for a gradual vertical integration that deepens and widens each subject experience and, at the same time, keeps it moving with the other aspects of knowledge.

All students participate in all basic subjects regardless of their special aptitudes. The purpose of studying a subject is not to make a student into a professional mathematician, historian, or biologist, but to awaken and educate capacities that every human being needs. Naturally, one student is more gifted in math and another in science or history, but the mathematician needs the humanities, and the historian needs math and science. The choice of a vocation is left to the free decision of the adult, but one's early education should give one a palette of experience from which to choose the particular colors that one's interests, capacities, and life circumstances allow. In a Waldorf high school, older students pursue special projects and

elective subjects and activities, nevertheless, the goal remains: each subject studied should contribute to the development of a well-balanced individual.

If the ascending spiral of the curriculum offers a "vertical integration" from year to year, an equally important "horizontal integration" enables students to engage the full range of their faculties at every stage of development. The arts and practical skills play an essential part in the educational process throughout the grades. They are not considered luxuries, but fundamental to human growth and development.

The following is a general Curriculum for the Waldorf style of teaching. What does not get taught directly in a main lesson, will be available as a Montessori material in the classroom. The two curriculums, in addition to standard private school curriculums, will be woven carefully each year to balance main lesson blocks with individual learning.

## **GRADE 1**

**Central theme:** Fairy tales, fables and myths from around the world

**Math:** Number patterns, manipulate numbers up to 24 with the four processes of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division

**Language Arts:** Letters of the alphabet; word families; exercises in reading, writing, and speech; story properties; drama

**Science:** Nature studies and nature walks

**Foreign Language:** Spanish songs and poems

**Art:** Form drawing, watercolor painting, crayon illustration

**Music:** Pentatonic flute, singing in unison

**Handwork:** Knitting

**Eurythmy and movement**

## **GRADE 2**

**Central Theme:** Legends, saints, fables

**Math:** Place value (1–1,000), addition and subtraction of large numbers by carrying and borrowing, regrouping, number patterns, all four arithmetical operations, multiplication tables

**Language Arts:** Phonetics; reading and writing letters; words and sentences; drama; reading in groups; library time

**Science:** Animal behavior, gardening, nature studies and nature walks

**Foreign Language:** Spanish songs and poems

**Art:** Form drawing, watercolor painting

**Music:** Recorder, singing in unison and in rounds

**Handwork:** Crocheting

**Eurythmy, movement and games**

### GRADE 3

**Central Theme:** Stories from the great teachers of the past (Old Testament / Native American Origin stories / Asian origin stories, etc.)

**Math:** Calculate with time, money, measurement; continued practice with the four arithmetical processes and the multiplication tables.

**Language Arts:** Reading, composition and grammar, cursive writing, spelling, drama, library time

**Science:** Farming and gardening

**Foreign Languages:** Spanish beginning vocabulary

**Art:** Watercolor technique, drawing

**Music:** Recorder, choral singing, string instruments

**Handwork:** Knitting and crocheting

**Eurythmy, movement and games**

### GRADE 4

**Central Theme:** Norse mythology, Native American stories, the animal kingdom

**Math:** Fractions, long division, averages, factoring, simple geometric forms

**Language Arts:** Grammar, composition, research project, drama

**Science:** Animal physiology, environmental science

**History & World Cultures:** Massachusetts history and geography, map making

**Foreign Languages:** Spanish vocabulary development

**Art:** Watercolor, form drawing, clay modeling

**Music:** Recorder, choral singing, string ensemble, scales, notation

**Handwork:** Embroidery

**Eurythmy, movement and games**

### Wilderness Awareness Curriculum

*"I went to the woods because I wanted to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." – Thoreau*

We start with meaningful relationships and follow threads of connection with our natural landscape. This is the integrative platform and doorway into our curriculum which is mapped out using the Eight Shields model. The curriculum flows with natural cycles and includes both conceptual knowledge of ecology as well as practical skills for surviving and thriving.

Reconnecting with the natural world in this culture of learning supports the social-emotional development of children in ways that aren't as easily replicated on the playground or at recess.

Throughout the year, your child will get to explore and engage with place-based topics like:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Core Routines             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Sit spot</li> <li>o Stories</li> <li>o Music making</li> <li>o Expanding our senses</li> <li>o Questioning and tracking</li> <li>o Animal forms</li> <li>o Wandering</li> <li>o Mapping</li> <li>o Exploring field guides</li> <li>o Journaling</li> <li>o Survival living</li> <li>o Mind's eye imagining</li> <li>o Listening for bird language</li> <li>o Thanksgiving</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Book of Nature             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Hazards: A call to be alert and to use common sense</li> <li>o Motivating Species: Things to catch, eat, climb, and tend</li> <li>o Mammals: and other hard to see, yet totally tack-able critters</li> <li>o Plants: Nature's grocery store and medicine cabinet</li> <li>o Ecological indicators: How it all works together</li> <li>o Heritage Species: Wisdom of our ancestors</li> <li>o Trees: tools of human survival</li> <li>o Birds: messengers of the wilderness</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Natural Cycle             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o East: Excitement and Inspiration</li> <li>o Southeast: Orientation and motivation</li> <li>o South: Focus and perspiration</li> <li>o Southwest: Relaxation and Internalization</li> <li>o West: Harvest and celebration</li> <li>o Northwest: Release and Reflection</li> <li>o North: Distillation and Integration</li> <li>o Northeast: End and Beginning</li> </ul> </li> <li>· Indicators of Awareness             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o East: Common Sense</li> <li>o Southeast: Aliveness and agility</li> <li>o South: Inquisitive focus</li> <li>o Southwest: Caring and tending</li> <li>o West: Service to the community</li> <li>o Northwest: Awe and reverence</li> <li>o North: Self-sufficiency</li> <li>o Northeast: quiet mind</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>** And LOTS of games to play for outdoors, that coincide with many of our games introduced for cultural awareness!</p>
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## **Living Values**

At Wah' -Sha Academy, we will be implementing a 'Lite version' of the Living Values Education Program that I helped develop in the 1990's in Japan. Much of the program will be implemented through the storytelling already imbedded in our curriculum, role play during morning gathering, and through the verbal communication of the teachers.

### **"Learning about self and wisdom of life"**

Nonviolent communication is a way of being and communicating, and our Living Values educational component is a fluid strategy that brings our needs and values to the forefront of our student's awareness. We focus on 9 – 12 values that have been named by people all over the world as the values they most treasure. Our strategy is based on, but not limited to our strategical practices that have shown great success in our founder's experience in Japan where she was on the developing team of this educational model. These strategies may change slightly or greatly based on the needs at the time.

Our approach creates a strong learning environment that enhances academic achievement and develops students' social and relationship skills that last throughout their lives.

Our thriving environment is achieved through the modeling of values by staff throughout the school. Some of our practices, like conflict resolution quickly liberates teachers and students from the stress of confrontational relationships, which frees up substantial teaching and learning time.

It also provides social capacity to students, equipping them with social and relationship skills, intelligences and attitudes to succeed at school and throughout their lives.

our aim is to raise standards and expectations by promoting a school ethos which is underpinned by core values. These values support the development of the whole child as a reflective learner within a calm, caring, happy and purposeful atmosphere.

The framework of Living Values offers a foundation for the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of students. Our morning gatherings, closings and lessons focus on the values progressively and with repetition so that our students deepen and challenge their understanding. Through exploring a selection of values in depth, students learn what these mean to them and their lives, and what application they have for other people and the wider world. The enactment of these values is not always shared because of each of our unique experiences in life, however our behaviors, language and reflection on relationship across the school enables students to develop both their cognitive understanding and their personal 'Inner Curriculum.' Moreover, the practice of Living Values infuses the ethos and culture of the school, meaning that a child's entire school experience furthers their spiritual, social and cultural development.



Through the chosen range of values, which could change over the years, students learn about healthy lifestyles, developing relationships and respecting differences between people, playing an active role as community members and developing confidence and responsibility to make the most of their talents and skills. Students, more often than not, find the values education accessible and enjoyable because of their well-developed ethical vocabulary and reasoning skills.

Children will learn that Wah' -Sha Academy's values underpin everything our school does and this gives a meaningful context for supporting their understanding of how each individual's own value system underpins everything they do within the family unit, local community and society. All curriculum areas provide a vehicle for furthering understanding of these concepts so that students can embrace these concepts with enthusiasm and demonstrate a good understanding of their application to their own lives.

The skills and attributes developed through the teaching of values are known to enhance the curriculum and students' learning behaviors, and raise attainment, attendance and wellbeing.

### **Values/needs-based Education works through:**

#### Values Consciousness

Teachers think more deeply about their teaching and the values that they model both in and outside of the classroom.

#### Wellbeing

In thinking about and enacting values, students develop self-worth, empathy and responsible personal behavior. Evidence shows that values and needs-based education has a very positive effect on students who are 'at risk', marginalised or disadvantaged. There is compelling evidence that the impact of wellbeing is experienced by teachers, parents and families, in classrooms and across whole schools.

#### Agency

Agency is the capacity of individuals to be self-led, to act independently, to make choices and act on them. This curriculum component has the capacity to strengthen student agency when it involves various forms of giving, outreach and working in the community. For instance, through values action projects that allow students to enact their values in a way that is personal, real and deeply engaging.

#### Connectedness

Living values education builds strong and wide-ranging connections between teachers, students and parents. It supports student engagement in learning, improves parent engagement in their children's learning and allows teachers to develop new relationships with their students, each other and the parents and families in their school community.

### Transformation

Change and transformation are at the heart of our program and is the result of teachers and students being urged to engage in continuous reflection on the actions they implemented in their schools. Key changes are seen in professional practice as well as personal attitudes, behaviors, relationships and group dynamics. Transformations are experienced and observed by teachers, students and parents alike.

### Achievement

As a result of the above, many schools that implement this practice report improvements in a wide range of individual achievement and academic attainment. Students report a deeper engagement in and connection to their learning and demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities this entails for themselves and others.

### **Children's Needs**

In order for the school's purpose to be effective and for the values to be meaningful to the pupils, the staff understand that the basic needs of children are (not limited to):

- To belong
- To be loved.
- To have trust in their teachers, families and community.
- To feel secure.
- To be valued.
- To have balance (of activities) – active/passive; quiet/talking; communicating/reflective; taught skills/exploratory work.
- To have support in developing relationships.
- To develop self-awareness and a knowledge of the world outside of themselves.
- To have creative experiences, including external exploration and internal reflection.
- To be fully involved in the process of education.

## **Teacher Behavior**

In order to try to meet the needs of children, staff try always to be consistent in their own behavior and in their expectations of the children. They:

- Value all the children.
- Display great patience and listen carefully to children.
- Focus on and emphasize behavior that is connective.
- Face reality and help pupils to come to terms with difficult issues as they arise, such as death.
- Allow and acknowledge anger.
- Only disapprove of poor behavior, never the child.
- Try to make time for one another.
- Are mutually supportive.
- Speak quietly and avoid shouting.
- Are valued by the governors and the community.
- Have a good sense of humor!
- Communicate with parents to ensure that they appreciate the school's values and to ensure that there is a common understanding.

## **Student skills**

Throughout the school, the development of the following skills which contribute to reflective thinking about values are encouraged:

- Displaying helpful and respectful communication to others, even when angry.
- Listening carefully to and thinking about what others are saying.
- Reflection.
- Empathy and tolerance.
- Using imagination.
- Utilizing various techniques for calming oneself.
- Stillness.
- Being able to express feelings constructively, thereby learning to manage feelings and resolve conflicts through discussion, understanding and practice.
- Articulating thoughts clearly in order to enhance communication skills.
- Walking quietly about the school building.
- Developing positive attitudes to work and play.
- Accepting personal responsibility for actions.
- Care and respect of other people's property.
- Celebrate with vigor

### **Some Activities that promote Reflective Thinking**

Teachers are especially mindful of the activities that promote positive thinking and incorporate these into their teaching as much as possible. These include:

- Creating a peaceful climate in the classroom and on the school site.
- Providing spaces and objects in the classroom that allow for respite or relief from any anxiety.
- Taking children to beautiful places to experience peaceful places and encourage them to value them.
- Students set their own targets for their work and behavior.
- Students are involved in the assessment of their own work.
- Giving opportunities for decision making.
- There is no behavior policy or discipline policy. Our 'inner curriculum of values' IS our policy.
- Giving time in class for students to respond to some of the basic needs within us: friendship, love, co-operation, clarity for understanding.
- Allowing children to sit and work in silence to think through their own thoughts.
- Helping children to be relaxed and unstressed but focused on their activities.
- Including visualization as a teaching technique to help in the development of imagination and memory.
- Opportunity for role-play so that skills associated with negotiation, co-operation and assertiveness are developed. This helps children to understand the potential consequences of giving way to peer pressure.

### **Implementing the Values-based Education Program**

- Values are introduced in our morning gathering, daily, so that children become familiar with the language and ideas.
- An example week: start on Monday with a story, Tuesday with a skit, Wednesday with a role play, Thursday with a review, and Friday with a short discussion.
- Posters and quotes directly related to the value of the month are displayed around the classroom. Students may take part in making these.
- Opportunities are taken to discuss values throughout the curriculum.
- During our gatherings (circles), students are invited to create or do away with rules, if they like.

## Direct Communication

Teacher's will be trained in the following practices as our primary way of communicating with each other and students, and resolving conflict.

### **nonviolent communication and Empathy** (key practice at Wah' -Sha Academy)

Nonviolent Communication (NVC), also known as Compassionate Communication, is a way of relating to ourselves and others, moment to moment, free of past reactions and thoughts of the future. It is a communication based on 'being present' in each moment and creating a quality of connection that gets everyone's needs met through compassionate giving. By learning to identify your needs and express them powerfully and with meaning, as well as understanding and being present to the needs of *others*, you can stay connected to your authentic truth and create a life that it is more fulfilling. For me, it is one human strategy for integrating, or LIVING if you will, the Word, and the way of Christ.

NVC practice is a combination of finding ways to be present in the moment, and learning a set of skills based on a foundation of empathy and honest expression. We learn four skills that help us create a quality connection based on empathy and compassion: making an objective observation, identifying needs, identifying feelings or body sensations, and making choices and requests.

### **EMPATHY**

\*\* excerpts taken from <http://www.worldempathy.org/>,

and workshops given by Regina Splees\*\*

I believe empathy to be an energy rather than a particular form of speech. In NVC, we often use the term "giving empathy" or "receiving empathy." These are labels for understanding which person is the focus of the empathic attention. Our aim is to focus this energy on empathically connecting rather than on thinking that we are giving some 'thing' to another. As Marshall Rosenberg says, when the giving is fully from the heart, there is no telling who is the giver and who the receiver. Instead, we enter into an "empathic space" together.

Empathy can be likened to 'Deep Listening', a practice which is difficult to define and best understood when practiced. 'Deep' asks us to 'go beyond'. It refers to the complexity and boundaries that go beyond our ordinary or habitual understanding of something we see, hear or experience. When joined with 'listening', we practice carefully taking in the words, sounds, gestures, expressions, and environment of any situation and go beyond, entering an 'empathic space' as described above. We can then respond with compassion, calmness, and clarity of the mind. Deep Listening can be a

form of meditation in itself; when our attention is directed to the interplay of sounds and silences – a sound/silence continuum of sorts. Sound is not limited to musical or speaking sounds, but is inclusive of all perceptible vibrations. Jon Young, founder of the wilderness awareness school and ‘Kamana training’ calls this ‘doing a sit spot’. This is something Native Americans have been doing since as long as their history remembers. According to Young in his book, “Animal Tracking Basics”, *‘A sit spot is simply a place on the landscape that you feel connected to and are drawn to visit. It is a place of solitude and stillness where your senses are activated and your mind is engaged in processing the nuances and rhythms of nature. The routine of frequently visiting your sit spot can sharpen your tracking skills like nothing else. With time, your chosen place will become as familiar as your own bedroom. A recent dig or broken limb will grab your attention as if someone had moved the furniture in your bedroom during your absence. As you seek to discover exactly what occurred, layers of learning will unfold to reveal the intricacies of the lives of animals and their relationship to the landscape, one another, and you.’*

Animals are Deep Listeners. And so are humans. When we enter an environment where there are birds, insects or animals, they are listening to you completely. You are received. Your presence may be the difference between life and death for the creatures of the environment. Listening is survival and can truly enhance the quality of our life!

Many liken empathy to standing in someone else’s shoes, understanding the feelings and values of another person’s perspective at any given moment. It begins with an internal choice to see from a different point of view, to understand another side of a story. When we hold this energy that we call empathy, we find ourselves in a state of being fully present to each other’s feelings and needs. Empathy is not agreement, but rather a willingness to fully understand how things look from someone else’s point of view. To create empathic connection, one need not have ever been in the same situation of the person you are listening to - in other words, even if one has never had a child, this does not mean that they would be unable to empathize with a parent, for example.

Empathy is being present to what the other person is experiencing, not being triggered by it or even trying to fix it. When we allow the person who is before us to simply be - without our values, judgments or decisions to be placed upon them, we are offering ourselves in what some have called unconditional love. Connecting with open-hearted curiosity accesses our natural ability to respond with compassion and clarity. It’s an experience of mutual giving and receiving.

Empathy is the meeting ground where the needs of all are acknowledged and understood. Though empathy may seem like a selfless act, it is not. When we deeply understand another, the other person is now far more open to hearing and understanding us. Empathy gives us a much greater chance of bringing our own needs and values to actuality.

The focus in empathy is on *connection*, not on accuracy. If the person does not connect with our guess, he or she will let us know and we can then make another guess based on this new information.

We link people's feelings to their own needs (met or unmet). In making an empathy guess, we try to keep ourselves out of the guess. In doing so, we help both of us to remain clear about the source of the person's feelings and give ourselves more room to hear those feelings without either "defending" ourselves or "attacking" the other person.

### **Common misperceptions (based on [worldempathy.org](http://worldempathy.org) )**

Empathy is not Sympathy

Sympathy entails a quality of support that requires a degree of agreement with the other person's views. Empathy means we fully let in what the other expresses, without agreeing or disagreeing with the content of the expression. Empathy implies seeking to understand, not seeking agreement or disagreement.

Empathy is not "Niceness"

If by being nice, we mean polite "proper" behavior, empathy can often be the antithesis of "niceness". Empathy calls for our authenticity, that we acknowledge what is often kept hidden by the polite, nice world, bringing those uncomfortable issues to the forefront.

Empathy is not Passivity

Being empathetic does not mean I become a limp noodle without my own needs and expression, or indifferent to conflict. Empathy is an active process of presence, listening, observing and internally opening to someone other than our selves.

Empathy is not the same as Love

If love is the giving from our hearts without expectation, empathy is a quality of being fully present to another person, focusing on the other, which often opens our hearts to such giving. In fact, empathy moves us to the center of conflict. Human beings disagree, misunderstand, react and so forth. Our world is full of examples of this. Empathy works directly with this noble truth. By deeply understanding another, we can reduce misunderstanding, see clearly how our views differ, and build trust through the truly courageous act of letting another human being fully into our awareness and maybe even our hearts. It doesn't mean we agree or disagree, sympathize, lie down, or be polite; we simply give another the gift of our presence and understanding.

## Empathy is not Naive

Empathy is exactly the opposite of naiveté, empathy ends naiveté. How? Because when we fully receive another person, seek to understand, the maximum amount of information is brought into the open. It means we are now aware of another's needs giving us the maximum opportunity to act on accurate information at the deepest level of trust, opening to the greatest possibility of resolution. What we have done is relieve ourselves of the naive idea that some problems are unsolvable, that violent disagreement is inevitable.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

**The Conflict Resolution Process:** First, the children in conflict are asked if they want help in resolving the problem or if they are willing to work on a solution. If they do, a conflict managers/mediator (teacher) sits with them. We often sit in between the children, holding each of their hands for support.

If one or both students say they do not want help, and they are not willing to listen and talk, then they are choosing the Standard Conflict policies of the school.

The mediator (teacher) or “peer mediators” (another child) are there to help the students who are having the conflict solve it. They are to listen to their replies, and direct them to listen to each other rather than interrupting. The peer mediators are to encourage the students to listen carefully without interruption, and then repeat to each other what they heard the other say. Their job is to appreciate the disputants’ listening and problem solving skills, and to avoid taking sides or expressing any kind of judgment or opinion. They also avoid blaming, accusing, and moralizing. They are there to help the students resolve the conflict. It is easy to slip into old verbal patterns, so we do what we can to remain present!



- ❖ A mediator can start with either the more visibly upset student or the other, asking the one to state what happened.
- ❖ Then we ask the second student to listen and repeat back what he or she heard. (He or she is guided to NOT contradict, argue, or blame, but simply to repeat.)
- ❖ The same question of what happened is then posed to the second student, and the first student is to listen carefully and repeat.
- ❖ The next question asked each student is, "How were you feeling when that happened?"
- ❖ Again, each listens and repeats what the other said. The peer mediator can also use active listening responses as each student talks about his or her feelings.
- ❖ Next, the conflict manager / mediator helps each to guess the other's needs behind the action and feeling / emotion.
- ❖ After that, they are asked what they would like to stop happening.
- ❖ After they each answer and have repeated back what the other said, then they are asked what they would like to happen instead.
- ❖ The students are then asked if they can agree to do what the other suggested.
- ❖ If they are not happy with that suggestion, they are asked to generate other solutions, and the conflict manager / mediator may offer suggestions.
- ❖ They are then asked if they can make a firm commitment to try and commit to what they both agreed.
- ❖ When both have agreed, then the conflict resolution mediator may offer some words of encouragement, gratitude, reflection and all return to the regular school activity.

### Conflict Resolution Process: Summary of Steps

The mediator asks each child the question:

*Are you willing to work on a solution? If the answer is “yes,” continue.*

Ask each student one question at a time, and wait for their response.

The other student listens and repeats what was said.

*Please tell us what happened.*

*How did you feel when that happened?*

*What is it each of you are needing? (What are the needs behind the actions)*

*What would you like to stop?*

*What would you like her/him to do instead?*

*Can you do that?*

*Can you make a firm commitment to that which you have both have agreed?*

### **Conflict Resolution as a means to Systemic Change (shift in paradigm)**

Conflict resolution provides an alternative to punitive or authoritative style discipline. Youth who grow up in circumstances in which they are socialized to a power-over environment will not be brought readily into submission by such punishments as time outs, detentions, suspensions, (at home) spankings or even expulsion. We believe alternatives that lead to long-term changes in attitudes and behavior can lead to more healthy and connective relationships. Conflict resolution programs are an important part of those alternatives because they invite participation and expect those who choose to participate to plan more effective and doable action, and then commit to an agreement. With the help of parents making this a way of life at home, these skills and knowledge learned from conflict resolution, and empathy, form the basis for peaceful, harmonious, and productive communities, not just here at our school, but in the circles of relationships that the children create after they leave our program.

Systemic change calls for cooperation to be the normative expectation, and **for adults to interact non-coercively with youth**. Change cannot be realized apart from creating a shared vision by everyone including parents, siblings, immediate community. Conflict resolution, when implemented not only as a curriculum to be experienced, but as a lifestyle to be lived by both adults and youth, fosters continuous academic and social growth. It is choosing ‘being nonviolence.’ When we say Being Nonviolence we mean that with all our heart, mind, and intention we are choosing a way of life that is on a path of learning, developing, and cultivating practices of nonviolence. It is not always ‘nice’ or ‘gentle.’