

SGWS Back-to-School 2021-22

We hope your children have had a summer filled with time for movement, relaxation, and creativity. We would like to take a moment and welcome all of our new families while saying welcome back to our returning families!

Our summer has allowed for reflection, balance, professional development, time away from work to renew, and preparation for this fall. Our plan for 2021-22 allows for a broadened curricular and social/emotional experience for the children and families in comparison to the 2020-21 school year while continuing to focus on safety for all.

Reflecting on 2020-21

Much of the parent feedback we have heard in regard to the 2020-21 school year revolved around the children's curricular, social/emotional experience, and safety during the pandemic. Some of the feedback we received includes:

- A feeling of isolation during online learning,
- Concern about reduced social experience due to cohorting when learning was in person,
- Lack of relationship development between older/younger students through our grade school "buddy" system,
- Loss of curricular experiences such as singing and wind instruments,
- Loss of community events for families and greater community,
- Effectiveness of risk mitigation strategies during in person learning,
- Ability for wide variety of family/community members to see/attend plays due to use of Zoom,
- Convenience of Zoom for some parents/guardians to attend meetings

Moving Ahead for 2021-22

- Spring Garden Waldorf School is prioritizing in-person learning for the 2021-22 school year,
- Students will return to a pre-pandemic schedule with a full curriculum experience on a weekly basis,
- Online learning will be available for quarantined students/classes in Grades 1-8, early childhood families will be provided with a packet for at home learning during quarantine,
- Grades 3-6 will have strings class and grades seven/eight will have combined orchestra classes,
- Children in all grades will sing in their respective classes and choral class with combined choir for grades five/six and seven/eight are reinstated,
- Athletic programs are reinstated following CYO and CDC guidelines,
- We are working on a plan to provide a mental health professional onsite on a routine basis as a resource for students/staff,
- We are allowing for increased community interaction based on the local viral spread and prioritizing a focus on in person meetings/events. In an effort to

balance community building and risk mitigation, we will be easing into community events in smaller groups,

- Risk mitigation strategies that were in place for 2020-21 were effective. There was no “in school” spread of COVID-19. We recognize the Delta variant may affect spread in schools. We will continue to follow CDC guidelines for K-12 schools and seek guidance as needed from Summit County Public Health.
- Our [Health and Safety Plan](#) allows for increased cohort size, singing and recorder/wind instrument playing, choir for the upper grades, community building, quarantining and a tiered and responsive approach to masks. Please click on the above link for more detail. Masks will be worn indoors for this school year and outdoors when local spread is substantial or high.

Parent/Guardian Support

We continue to be grateful for the support of our parent/guardian community as we move into the 2021-22 school year. Only 22% of our student population is eligible for vaccination due to the age of children we serve. While the health risk to younger patients is lower, this is the population that is now more susceptible to infection. Each family’s efforts, when combined as a whole community, will help us minimize quarantining and avoid becoming a source of COVID infections for the greater community. Changes may be made to our Health and Safety Plan at any time to be responsive to current conditions.

Please monitor your child(ren) daily for symptoms and keep them home if they are sick. Rapid COVID-19 test kits are available for use by parents, faculty, and staff.

In Conclusion

While the pandemic has been a challenging time for our community and we all desire normalcy, we are grateful to be returning to a school year in which we are able to balance expanded curriculum and social opportunities with maintaining the health and healing of the children, faculty, staff and community at large. Waldorf education seeks to foster empathy and cultivate cooperation. We know that our collaborative light of kindness and compassion expands and grows when we work together. This has been a learning opportunity not just for us adults, but for our children as well.