

# FAMILY HANDBOOK



Syringa Mountain  
S C H O O L

*Cultivating the Head, Heart and Hand.*

# Mission & Vision

## *Cultivating the Head, Heart and Hand.*

Syringa Mountain School offers education guided by the Core Principles of Public Waldorf Education. With a focus on liberal arts and arts-integrated education, we also incorporate sustainable living practices and experiential learning in a K-8 public school setting. Each child will impart meaning and direction to their lives, through cultivating their intellectual, physical, emotional, social and creative capacities in natural learning environments. Through a supportive community of peers, parents and teachers, each child will become a confident, self-directed and engaged learner, invested in his/her own education.

Syringa Mountain School provides a challenging integrated educational program through a whole-child approach to learning. By integrating traditional Waldorf methods and curriculum with the Idaho State Standards, children will emerge from Syringa Mountain School with a life-long passion for learning, well prepared for the transition into other academic programs, as creative thinkers, engaged citizens with a strong work ethic, and prepared to become stewards of the earth and its many diverse communities.

Syringa Mountain School embraces the key aspects of the local sustainability movement, providing students and their families with an increased connection to their local environment. By utilizing the rich community resources of Blaine County, and through ongoing cultivation and development of the school's garden and farm, all children will be enabled to deepen their connection with the earth, self and community.

### EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

*"I believe that Waldorf education possesses unique educational features that have considerable potential for improving public education in America... Waldorf schools provide a program that...not only fosters conventional forms of academic achievement, but also puts a premium on the development of imagination and the refinement of the sensibilities."*—Elliot Eisner, Professor of Education at Stanford University and former President, American Association for Educational Research

Syringa Mountain School's curriculum places equal emphasis on a strong academic foundation, artistic expression, social development, and attention to the needs of each child. Waldorf education engages a child's intellect, imagination, will and sense of aesthetics. How a subject is taught is equally important as what is taught, hence the use of movement and arts in the curriculum. The research-based, time-tested pedagogical methods designed by Dr. Rudolf Steiner are at the heart of this mode of education. Waldorf methods inspire student volition, inquisition, and creativity because classroom activities involve three key areas—the head (thinking), the heart (feeling) and the hands (willing).

*An educated Syringa Mountain Student will demonstrate:*

### REVERENCE AND STEWARDSHIP:

A sense of reverence empowers students with the ability to develop an understanding and appreciation for the interdependence of all life. Students with a strong sense of reverence reflect this knowledge through conscientious respectful actions involving themselves, other people, and the world around them. They have appreciation for truth, beauty and the world. They connect with others. They are compassionate, communicative, grateful, and strive to build interdependent relationships, which positively impact the world.

#### **CREATIVE AND IMAGINATIVE THINKING:**

Creative and imaginative thinking empowers students with the ability to think unconventionally, to question assumptions, and to imagine new scenarios. Imaginative thinkers craft astonishing work because they recognize their creative capacities and celebrate them through a variety of artistic mediums. They also act on opportunities and show willingness to take reasonable risk.

#### **CRITICAL THINKING AND GOOD JUDGMENT:**

Critical thinking and sound decision-making empower students with the ability to assess the credibility, accuracy, and value of the information that barrages them every day. Critical thinkers and wise decision-makers analyze and evaluate information while still honoring their intuitive capacities. They think through solutions and alternatives and explore new options if their approaches don't work. This often entails working well with diverse peoples to make reasoned, ethical decisions and take purposeful action.

#### **LITERACY:**

Literacy empowers students with the ability to read, write, listen and articulate in compelling ways. Literacy goes beyond the traditional meaning to also include people who are mathematically competent, scientifically and technologically adept. They develop their creative and physical abilities as well.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY and SELF-RELIANCE:**

A strong sense of responsibility empowers students with the ability to be vital, disciplined, and hard-working individuals. Responsible people take initiative, self-regulate, and are fully accountable for their own actions. They honor their capacities and have a *can-do* attitude. They follow-through on commitments and honor their word.

#### **LIFE LONG LEARNING:**

Students in the 21st century must be joyful, confident, self-motivated, aware, inquisitive, resourceful, and persistent people if they are to know how to best learn and therefore thrive in an ever-changing world.

## **Chain of Communication**

We believe in compassionate and clear communication that is transparent. Communication is a critical part of creating trusting, caring, and effective relationships together and in creating a supportive educational environment for our students. The accompanying communication chart is intended to guide communication when an issue arises that requires resolution or when, in effect, free and uninhibited communication is in danger of being

interrupted. Our experience has been that when such issues do arise, they are most effectively resolved by following the “Chain of Communication” represented by the chart.

If a student experiences a problem or faces an issue that he or she believes requires resolution, the first point of contact should be that student’s teacher. If the problem remains unresolved, then the issue is to be taken to the Director of School. It is vital for every student to understand that he or she should always feel free to speak with any member of the faculty or administration concerning a problem.

If a parent or a teacher has an issue that he or she believes requires resolution, the same “Chain of Communication” should be followed. It is particularly important for parents to go first to the teacher involved, although the Director of School and Board Chair is also always available.

In the case of a grievance with any faculty or staff member, all faculty & staff should address their concerns to the Director. In the case of a grievance with the Director, all faculty and staff should address their concerns to the Faculty Board Liaison or College of Teachers Chair or Chair of the Board.

The Director of School will make final decisions concerning curriculum, school operations, and administrative issues. The Board is responsible for major school policies.

Communication is—by definition—a mutual and dynamic process. Good communication does not always result in agreement. The “Chain of Communication” ensures that everyone who wishes to speak will be heard. It is inevitable that some who are heard will not hear, in return, the answer they wish to hear. That too is a circumstance vital to healthy communication.

Ultimately, if all members of the school community communicate directly and responsibly, it will be rare for an issue to reach the bottom line of the chart. More importantly, responsible and direct communication will guarantee a healthy school environment.

Level 1: School Official (Informal and optional – may be bypassed by grievant)

Individuals with a grievance is encouraged to first discuss the issues with a Syringa Mountain School employee with the objective of resolving the matter promptly and informally. Employees with any complaint or grievance are encouraged to first discuss the problem with the Director or their immediate supervisor with the objective of resolving the matter promptly and informally. However, grievances under this section should be discussed with the Director, supervisor or designee not involved in the alleged discrimination or harassment.

Level 2: Director or Director’s Title IX Designee

If a certified staff member feels that a grievance was not satisfactorily resolved at Level 1, or if an individual elect to bypass Level 1, he/she may file a written, signed statement of the grievance with the Director or the Director’s Title IX Designee (hereafter Designee). The

statement must fully set out: (1) the nature of the grievance; (2) the remedy requested; and (3) the signature of the grievant and the date. The Director or Designee has the authority to investigate all written grievances. If possible, the Director or Designee will resolve the grievance. If the parties to the grievance cannot agree on a resolution, a written report of the investigation shall be prepared by the Director or Designee which shall contain: (1) a clear statement of the allegations of the grievance and remedy sought; (2) a statement of the facts as contended by each of the parties; (3) a statement of facts as found by the Director or Designee and identification of evidence to support each fact; (4) a list of all witnesses interviewed and documents reviewed during the investigation; (5) a narrative describing attempts to resolve the grievance; and (6) the Director's or Designee's conclusion as to whether the allegations in the grievance have merit.

If the Director or Designee believes the grievance is valid, the Director or Designee will recommend appropriate action.

The Director or Designee shall complete the investigation and file a report within (60) days after receipt of the written grievance. By mutual consent of both parties, this time can be extended. A summary report shall be sent to the parties of the grievance consistent with confidentiality requirements of federal and state law. The recommendation(s) of the Director or Designee shall be implemented.

### Level 3: Board of Directors

If either party is not satisfied with the recommendation(s) by the Director or Designee, either party may make a written appeal within ten (10) days of receiving the summary report of the Director or Designee to a panel of Directors, and/or Supervisors or designees – as determined by the Board. Within fifteen (15) days of receipt of the appeal, the panel shall review the Director's or Designee's recommendation(s) and may hear and consider any additional information that may exist regarding the allegations. If a Director has been involved in any of the previous steps, that individual shall not participate in the review of the appeal. Within ten (10) days of convening, the panel shall issue a decision regarding their findings. The decision shall be submitted to the Director and the parties of the grievance. Upon approval of the Director, the decision shall be implemented.

The decision of the Directors and the Director, with regard to implementing the decision, is a final decision and is not appealable, except that the grievant may, in writing, request that the Board review the record of the grievance procedure to ensure that Board policy, as set forth in this document, has been followed. The grievant is not precluded from filing complaints at any time during or after the grievance process with state or federal agencies.

### Timelines

The timelines set forth in this policy may be waived at the discretion of the Director or Designee if such waiver is determined to be in the best interest of the individuals involved.

### Employee Actions

All employees of Syringa Mountain School shall be responsible for acting in accordance with this policy.

## Review and Prevention

The Director or Designee will review the grievance in relation to current Syringa Mountain School policies and practices to determine if there are steps which Syringa Mountain School should take to prevent a recurrence of a similar type of discrimination or harassment.

Grievance: a complaint alleging a violation of any policy, procedure, or practice which would be prohibited by Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Section 504, the ADA, and other federal and state civil rights laws, rules and regulations.

Grievant: a student, parent/guardian, employee or visitor of Syringa Mountain School who submits a grievance.

On school premises or at any school sponsored activity, regardless of location: shall include, but not be limited to buildings, facilities, and grounds on the Syringa Mountain School campus, school buses, school parking areas; and the location of any school sponsored activity. This includes instances in which the conduct occurs off the school premises but impacts a school related activity.

Procedure History: Adopted on: 4.1.14 Revised on: 4.1.22

## School Calendar

The school calendar is maintained on the [website](#). You can access the school calendar any time by going to the school website and clicking on the “[Calendar](#)” button.

### DAILY SCHEDULE

	Start Time	Dismissal Time
Kindergarten	8:00 a.m.	2:30pm
1 <sup>st</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> Grades	8:00 a.m.	2:45 p.m.

## Contact Information

Faculty and Staff contact information is maintained on the [website](#). You can access the contact list on by going to the school website and clicking on the “Faculty/Staff” button.

### Main Office

Position	Name	Phone	Email
Front Desk	Daniel Edwards	208-806-2880 x1	dedwards@syringamountainschool.org
Director of School	Christi Thompson	208-806-2800 x3	cthompson@syringamountainschool.org

## Board of Directors

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
Chair	Mike Allaire	mallaire@syringamountainschool.org
Vice Chair	Sarah Seppa	sarahseppa@syringamountainschool.org
Treasurer	Sandi Viau	sviau@syringamountainschool.org
Secretary	Jennifer Barrett-Neet	jbarrett-neet@syringamountainschool.org
At Large	John Casey	jcasey@syringamountainschool.org

# Our Organization

### **SCHOOL ORGANIZATION:**

Syringa Mountain School is a free, public charter school authorized by the State Charter School Commission. The authorizer has provided the authority to operate as a charter school within the district boundaries but can also enroll students from other districts should there be availability. The authorizer provides oversight, ensuring the tenets of the charter are adhered to.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that the school's practices are consistent with the vision and mission of the school. It approves all personnel, financial/budget, curriculum, instruction, calendar and policy and procedures for the school. The Board ratifies the annual budget. A copy of the Board of Directors Bylaws, meeting agendas and minutes are posted on the school website.

### **THE COLLEGE OF TEACHERS:**

The College of Teachers delivers the educational program. The College of Teachers meets regularly to discuss important instructional issues. The College of Teachers also assumes a wide range of roles to support school and student success. Whether these roles are assigned formally or shared informally, they build the entire school's capacity to improve.

### **PARENT ASSOCIATION:**

The Syringa Mountain School Parent Association serves as an essential support group formed by family members. The Parent Association upholds the mission and vision, promotes the school's educational program, contributes to the physical maintenance of the school, conducts fundraising efforts, coordinates volunteers for festivals and events, and generally provides support to families. All parents/guardians are encouraged to attend and participate in Parent Association Meetings. Parent Association information is available on the school website.

### **CLASSROOM LEAD PARENT:**

Each class has at least one Classroom Parent. He/she provides support and facilitates communication at all levels for the classroom teacher and families. He/she provides direct teacher and classroom support; such as organizing field trips, room volunteers, class

meetings, play performances, and class projects. He/she maintains a classroom contact list. He/she coordinates the class parents to assist the teacher on class projects, plays, field trips, and festivals. He/she assists the teacher in keeping the class parents apprised of news and events. He/she encourage participation in community and school-wide events.

## School Policies

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Students are expected to be at school and in class on time. **SCHOOL FUNDING DEPENDS ON STUDENTS BEING IN SCHOOL.** Any student arriving five minutes or later to school or late to a class will be marked as tardy. The school believes that consistent attendance best supports student learning.

However, we also understand the occasional necessity for absences. The school should always be notified by e-mail ([dedwards@syringamountainschool.org](mailto:dedwards@syringamountainschool.org)) or by phone (208-806-2880) of any student absence. The school believes that absences of greater than ten (10) percent of the days in any term will have a significant negative impact on a student's education.

The school recognizes the difference between excused, acknowledged, and unexcused absences. Planned absences will require the submission of an Excused Absence Form for approval by the Director of School. Students or their parents should notify teachers, and all groups with whom they are working, by email at least one week in advance of their upcoming absence. Students should connect with teachers upon return from any absence.

### **EXCUSED ABSENCES:**

Excused absences are absences from school that cannot be avoided. In the event that these absences can be anticipated, students should communicate in advance with their teachers and the Secretary of School.

Students who are ill, but still able to work at home, contact their teachers. Upon return to school after an illness or excused absence, students should schedule an appointment with their teachers to make sure that all assignments are understood and that a timetable for completion of work is agreed upon. Teachers will endeavor to assist students as best they can to learn missed material but will not be required to re-teach entire classes/units. Students will be expected to make up work expeditiously.

### **ACKNOWLEDGED ABSENCES:**

Acknowledged absences from school can be anticipated and involve some degree of choice on the part of the student and his or her family. Examples of acknowledged absences are family trips for vacations and some medical appointments.

One week before missing school for an acknowledged absence, students must report their intention to their teachers and school administration. Teachers will apprise students of any essential work he/she will need to complete while they are absent. Teachers are not obligated to teach material that students have missed as a result of an acknowledged absence.



**TARDIES:**

If a child is late, the child must first get a late pass from the school office before the child goes to class. It is imperative to knock and please wait for a teacher to respond. This may take a few minutes if the class is in the middle of an activity. Parents are asked to notify the front office the same day as the tardy the reason for the tardy. The parent may come to the attendance office, e-mail, text or phone.

**EARLY DISMISSAL:**

When a parent or guardian plans to pick a child up early, parents need to send a notice at the beginning of the school day to the teacher. Students may go on walking field trips and the student may not be on campus unless the teacher is notified prior to leaving. Parents must pick up the child at the front office (not the classroom) and sign out the student.

**TRUANCY:**

Failing to attend classes or class activities are examples of truancy. Unexplained absenteeism may result in reporting to outside agencies.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

Appointments for students should be scheduled outside of school hours, whenever possible. If an appointment (doctor, dentist, physical therapist, etc.) must be scheduled during school hours, parents should send an e-mail to the teacher ahead of time. Any student who leaves school during the day must sign out at the Front Office, and sign back in upon return.

**VISITORS:**

Students who wish to bring a visitor to school must request permission from the Director of School and the classroom teacher. The student should introduce the guest to his/her teachers at the beginning of each class.

**DISCIPLINARY POLICY:**

We recognize that children will make mistakes, and, at times, their behavior will fail to meet the Accountability Expectations of Syringa Mountain School. The school makes every attempt to respond to mistakes as opportunities for student growth.

Students are expected to be accountable for their words and actions. Students are also expected to accept responsibility for their actions, accept the consequences of their actions, and refrain from engaging in inappropriate conduct in the future. Staff and faculty must handle such situations in a fair manner that corresponds to the severity of the behavior, accounts for the age or developmental stage of the child. Parents, and other members of the school community, are expected to support, or at the very least, accept the consequences of student's inappropriate behavior. In some cases, students will be required to participate in the Disciplinary Committee Process.

**SOCIAL MISCONDUCT POLICY:**

Social misconduct is defined as conduct or behavior that violates any school rule or policy or that may physically or emotionally damage any person, or the general welfare or educational environment of the school. In addition, the school expects all students to be honest in their relationships with the faculty, the administration, and with one another. Social misconduct can include a wide range of behaviors, including, but not limited to:

Examples of conduct that may physically or emotionally damage a person include:

- Physical or emotional bullying, including “hazing”
- Abusive language, including profanity
- Sending abusive notes or electronic messages to harass or intimidate
- Racial, ethnic, or religious harassment
- Sexual harassment

Examples of conduct that may damage property include:

- Vandalizing the school or its property
- Stealing or intentionally damaging another’s property

Examples of violations of school rules or policies include:

- Violating other significant school rules related to academic honesty, facilities use, responsibility, and/or safety that have been communicated to students orally or in writing
- Engaging in acts of academic dishonesty or lying to a member of the faculty or administration.

### **PROCEDURES FOR ACTION IN CASE OF MISCONDUCT:**

Cases of misconduct will be resolved either by the teacher or Director of School. The Director of School will notify the student’s parents as soon as possible, and the student, his or her parent(s), and the Director will meet to discuss the violation. The Director of School may discuss the case with others he or she believes can assist in making a decision concerning how to resolve the issue.

If, in the conclusion of the Director of School, the misconduct in question may result in suspension or expulsion, the Director of School will refer the student to the Discipline Committee for review. Only the Discipline Committee, in concert with the Director of School can impose suspension or expulsion.

The Director of School has the discretion to impose up to a two day “Disciplinary Leave” in cases that are not referred to the Discipline Committee. The Leave will not be considered an official suspension.

The Discipline Committee is comprised of a minimum of three members:

- The Director of School
- Two members of the faculty or staff (the Director of School may, at his or her discretion, invite a member of the wider community who is not employed by the School to serve on the Committee.)

A member of the faculty or staff may be chosen by the student to guide him or her through the process. This person will be present during the Committee’s deliberations regarding the student’s conduct but will not participate in the imposition of disciplinary consequences. In the event that the student selects the Director of School who would normally serve on the Committee, another faculty or staff member will replace him or her on the Committee.

In case of a referral to the Discipline Committee, the Committee will meet at the earliest reasonable time. The student’s parents are entitled to be present with their child at the

meeting of the Discipline Committee but may not represent their child. The Committee may request others to provide information at the meeting.

The Discipline Committee will, at the conclusion of its meeting with the student, deliberate in closed session (with only Committee members and the student's faculty representative) to determine if a student has engaged in misconduct, and if so, to decide what consequence to impose. The Committee may recommend sanctions including, but not limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, exclusion from various school events, mandatory community service, probation with or without conditions, mandatory referral to a counseling program, suspension with or without conditions, or expulsion. The Committee's recommendation to the Director of School will be a consensus decision.

The Discipline Committee, in concert with the Director of School, may also decide that the offense is not serious enough to warrant action and refer the case back to the Director of School for resolution.

The Committee will consider all relevant guidelines in making its recommendations. These include, but are not limited to:

- The severity of the offense
- The extent of the injury to person or property or to the school
- The character and reputation of the student, including whether the incident is a first or repeated offense
- The precedents of prior decisions in cases of relatively similar circumstances
- The relative culpability between or among students
- Whether the student was truthful from the beginning about his or her involvement (dishonesty at any point in the process is likely to result in more severe sanctions)
- The age and the developmental level of the child.

All decisions of the Director of School and the Discipline Committee are to be written and delivered to the student and to his or her parents as soon as it is practical. In addition, the Director of School will notify the student, his or her parents, and the faculty, within one day of the final decision made.

No disciplinary decision is subject to review by the school's Board of Directors.

#### **SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY:**

When a parent is on site with their child, they are responsible for their child's safety.

Here at Syringa Mountain School, we adults are united in our love and care for the children. Here are some ways to stay involved:

- Read email updates from the office as well as our school newsletter
- Attend a parent evening hosted by your child's teacher
- Attend a Parent Association meeting
- Become involved in directly supporting your child and your child's teacher

The most essential form of parent participation starts (at home) with supporting your child to be a successful student. This includes making sure he or she gets plenty of sleep, arrives

to school regularly and on time, comes with a healthy lunch, and completes homework (where age appropriate).

### **LUNCH, SNACKS AND FOOD ALLERGIES:**

Please make sure your child has an adequate breakfast at home.

All grade students need to bring a mid-morning snack and need to bring a healthy lunch. Send wholesome ingredients such as fruits and vegetables, and as little processed sugar as possible. No gum, candy, soda, or unhealthy foods – these will be returned home if unopened.

We have limited resources to cook or reheat lunches so avoid those choices unless the teacher has an agreement with the class in general. The young child, especially, benefits greatly from a lunch kept warm in a Thermos.

Help us in our effort to reduce waste by sending snacks and lunches in reusable containers with reusable utensils in lunch boxes void of media or commercial images. Our students typically eat in their classrooms. Some of our students have food allergies therefore we discourage sharing of foods. Your child's teacher will notify you if there are any food restrictions in the classroom to ensure all of our students are safe while at school.

### **SAFE SCHOOL ZONE:**

Syringa Mountain School is a drug and weapon free campus. The school is committed to support the health and welfare of its students, whether on or off campus. There will be no possession or use of tobacco products, alcohol, or the illicit use of other drugs by any adult member of the school community (board members, faculty, staff, students, parents, or other participating individuals).

### **MEDICINE & MEDICAL CONDITIONS:**

Parents have the primary responsibility for their child's health and should provide the school with information about their child's medical condition. Parents should obtain details from their child's General Practitioner (GP) or pediatrician, if needed. Parents should provide the teacher and administration with full information about their child's medical needs. Any medicines, even non-prescription medications needed by the child must be accompanied by written directions from the child's doctor.

### **PRESCRIBED MEDICINES:**

The School will only store, supervise and administer medicine that has been prescribed for an individual child by a doctor. Parents should ensure that the supplied container is clearly labeled with the name of the child, the name and dose of the medicine and the frequency of administration. Medicines must be in the original container as dispensed by a pharmacist in accordance with the prescriber's instructions.

### **Emergency Procedures for individual students:**

In the event of a health emergency, procedures listed on your medical waiver will be consulted and every effort will be made to contact a parent so that they may accompany their child to the hospital. If a parent is unable to get to school, a member of staff might

accompany a child taken to hospital by ambulance. Health professionals are responsible for any decisions on medical treatment when parents are not available.

### **ALLERGY POLICY:**

A life-threatening allergy is considered an allergy that can lead to anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is an immune system response that can cause the throat to swell shut or blood pressure to drop, leading to a heart attack. The only way to avoid an anaphylactic attack is to avoid the allergen/trigger that causes the reaction. Parents of children with life threatening allergies must meet with their child's teacher, the school director in order to develop an emergency action plan. A 504 plan is strongly recommended. Children with severe allergies need to have epinephrine (EpiPen) available at all times. All staff will be trained to recognize the symptoms of anaphylaxis and to administer EpiPen.

Classrooms at SMS that have students who have been identified with life-threatening allergies may maintain an allergen free zone. The school will inform all members of the classroom if there are any food restrictions in your child's classroom. Children with severe allergies are also instructed not to trade food. Furthermore, all food brought to school for celebrations may need to be allergen free and clearly labeled as such.

### **DUAL HOUSEHOLD POLICY:**

Syringa Mountain School welcomes a diverse range of families. The school will make every effort to communicate equally with every household. We ask that in all situations, parents, faculty, and administration work in the best interest of the student. If your child lives in dual households, we request that each parent/guardian fills out a Dual Household Form.

In addition:

- The school finds that it is essential that information about a child be shared openly and consistently with both parents. Therefore, we do not provide separate parent/teacher conferences or special meetings regarding the child for separate households unless absolutely necessary.
- The school requests both parents' contact information to allow the school to communicate equally to all households.
- The school's primary point of contact is custodial parents. It is the custodial parent's responsibility to communicate information to step-parents or other interested parties.
- The school asks that both custodial parents sign all emergency forms to assure that there is agreement with regards to emergency contact and health information.
- Both custodial parents are required to sign the enrollment forms.
- The school will abide by all court orders if we have a copy of them on file, but ask that parents work together to allow for seamless flow of school operation.
- Unless the school has received legal documentation, either parent may pick-up the child or designate others to pick up their child from school.

## **Student Dress Code**

Students will wear clothing that is appropriate for our learning environment and are expected to exercise good judgment in selecting clothing for school and school events.

Children are expected to dress neatly, cleanly, warmly and modestly. Students work and play hard, and clothing may become soiled so keep this in mind when dressing your child for school. We wish to discourage focus on superficial, outward differences and protect students from influences that tend to prematurely push them into the world of adolescence before they are out of grade school.

#### SHOES

Students change into their indoor shoes when they arrive at school and wear them while inside the school building. Both indoor shoes and outdoor footwear should support the foot and fit snugly so they do not fall off during active movement. Loose sandals and flip-flops are not permitted. Please have your children wear socks every day. Each student needs to bring a pair of indoor shoes at the beginning of the school year to leave at school.

#### HATS

Students are not permitted to wear hats or hoods in the classrooms and common areas **unless** approved by the teacher. They are allowed outside for sun protection and warmth in the winter.

#### WEATHER

Students go outside every day so prepare your child for changing weather including rain and snow. Please dress children in layers, as we can experience many different types of weather in one school day – for example, a good undershirt and long underwear (during cold months), a long sleeve, light sweatshirt or sweater and a coat. Please have your children wear socks every day.

Please Note: Parents are asked to send and leave at school one long sleeve and one short sleeve shirt, a pair of undergarments, a pair of pants, and a sweatshirt. If a student is dressed inappropriately, or needs a change of clothes for any reason, he or she will be asked to change into one of these items. Please provide a cloth bag with the child's name, for these items to be contained within in the child's classroom.

We strive to be a model of quality and beauty in the educational process and to create an atmosphere of care and respect in all that fills the lives of students at our school.

If you, or your child, are confused about dress expectations, please ask your child's teacher. Please make it clear to your children when you or they purchase clothes, which clothes you consider appropriate for school and meet the above criteria. We want the school environment to be conducive to learning and ask parents to collaborate with us regarding our expectations for dress.

## Field Trips & Festivals

#### FIELD TRIPS:

Classes may go for a walking field trip or go on hop on a Mountain Rides bus as part of their daily activity at the school. Parents sign an acknowledgement when enrolling a student giving permission for students to go on these educational jaunts. Parents will be notified when these are scheduled by classroom newsletters. If a parent knows they need to take a student out early on any day, they need to send a notice to the class teacher, so arrangements can be made to pick up the child early.

#### **OVER NIGHT FIELD TRIPS:**

Parents must sign a field trip permission form every time a class goes on an overnight field trip. One copy of this form stays in the office and one copy goes with the teacher. These permission slips detail where the class is going, the cost of the trip, and what the children need to bring with them. The form also contains the parents' signatures and emergency contact information for parents. Unless public transportation is being used, we most commonly rely (with much gratitude) on parent drivers. These are the requirements for parent volunteers who drive on field trips:

- 1) Every driver on a field trip, whether parent or teacher, must photocopy his or her driver's license and proof of car insurance, and leave it with the office before embarking on the field trip.
- 2) Teachers are responsible to ensure that all parent drivers have completed requirement number one before departing campus. The office will keep this information with the copies of field trip permission forms.
- 3) All parent drivers should have with them directions to the field trip location and the contact information of the teacher leading the field trip.

#### **FESTIVALS & CEREMONIES:**

The festivals serve as an opportunity for the entire school community to join together in seasonal celebrations. Planning and working together in anticipation of the festival and celebrating during the festival creates bonds among the entire community. The festivals serve as an important bridge between home life and school life. Before each festival is celebrated, information about it will be included in the newsletter and school website. These festivals would not be possible without the participation of the children and their families. This is a listing of possible festivals, but specific events will be decided each year in conjunction with the Staff and Parent Council. OPENING CEREMONY; HARVEST FAIRE; LANTERN WALK; WINTER SPIRAL; MAY FAIRE; CLOSING DAY

## **Enrollment**

Syringa Mountain School is a public school of choice chartered by the State of Idaho. Each spring we open a three-month enrollment window. The dates of this window will vary by year but open enrollment usually begins in the first week of February and concludes at the beginning of May. During that time, any interested family may fill out the initial enrollment

forms located on our website under “Enrollment”. The State requires that we conduct an annual lottery when demand exceeds the number of available spots.

There are two scenarios for enrollment:

1. Not Full By Enrollment Deadline:
  - At the end of the enrollment deadline, if the demand for a given grade does not exceed the initial capacity of the school, then all children who submitted enrollment requests for that grade will receive admission.
  - We will continue to accept enrollment until we reach capacity.
  - If we continue to receive enrollment requests once we are full, we will establish a waiting list.
2. Demand Exceeds Capacity at Enrollment Deadline:
  - If at the enrollment deadline, demand for space for a given grade exceeds capacity, we will hold a lottery for that grade. More information is available on our website regarding lottery priority.

### **MID-YEAR TRANSFERS:**

Students wishing to transfer to Syringa Mountain School after the start of the school year must complete the following steps:

1. Schedule a day and time to tour the school with your student. Contact the front office.
2. If it's decided that SMS would be a good fit for your student, determine student start date with Class Teacher, family and Director of School.
3. Schedule an interview to discuss your child's needs, your motivation for transferring schools during the school year, and to answer questions about Syringa's offerings.
4. If special support is indicated, meet to discuss with the Special Education Director.
5. The registration packet must be completed prior to enrollment.

## **Educational Guidelines**

### **HOMEWORK:**

Homework can be an integral part of the curriculum at Syringa Mountain School and should be a natural extension of the school day. It is framed by the philosophical ideal that we wish our children to be excited about learning and confident in their abilities as students. Our curriculum teaches to the head, heart, and hand of the child and homework should be balanced in the same way. Finally, rhythm between activity and quiet, in-breath and out-breath, is important in all that we do at school. It is our intent that homework will fit into a similar rhythm at home.

We value homework for it can also strengthen the bridge between school and home by providing parents with a glimpse of the work being done at school. However, homework should include only work that a student can do by himself or herself.



**ACADEMIC REPORTING:**

In order to continually monitor student progress, Syringa Mountain School holds parent/teacher conferences twice a year. Student reports are mailed or emailed home K-8. Student reports contain attendance records (grades K-8), a rubric of specific standards and narrative evaluations.

**ACADEMIC CONCERNS:**

Please contact your child's teacher with concerns or questions regarding your child's academic status. If you feel that your child is not succeeding to standard or the academic reporting shows concern, it is best to meet with the teacher to discuss and determine an academic plan together.

**MEDIA AT HOME:**

The cumulative effect of repeated exposure to television, video games, movies, radio and computers can negatively impact a child's development. Your child's teachers will be providing information regarding media use and your child's education and engaging you in a dialogue that we hope will be stimulating and rewarding. Our goal in doing so is to do our utmost to create a learning environment that is conducive to active, imaginative learning.

Our recommended guidelines regarding media use are as follows:

- For children in kindergarten: None, or as little as possible.
- For children in grades 1 - 3: No television, video games, computers or movies during the school week; minimal parent-directed media use on weekends and vacations.
- For students in grades 4 - 8: No television or video games or computers in the morning before school; minimal parent-directed media use during the school week; parental involvement in determining appropriate media and computer-use choices at all other times.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION & INTERVENTIONS:**

Syringa Mountain School may conduct annual hearing and vision testing. In addition, we participate in the federally mandated Child Find program, designed to identify children who may need special education services.

The school's small size, student-staff ratios, and looping model allow educators to develop special sensitivity towards individual student needs and backgrounds. This translates into a nurturing learning environment with low-stress levels and maximized success. However, some students will invariably need additional individual support. Our goal is to meet the needs of all our students through the use of a three-tiered system of support.

**Tier I: Prevention**

Tier I include high quality classroom instruction delivered by qualified teachers and regular assessments of all students to monitor their progress toward reaching grade level benchmarks. Teachers are trained to address different learning styles of their students and

the classroom teachers work closely with the specials teachers to ensure a unified, supportive learning approach for all of our students.

#### Tier II: Identification and Selected Interventions

Beyond academic performance, teachers look for other signals of need as we recognize that there are many factors that affect a student's performance. Selected interventions are implemented by teachers for students who are not experiencing success in any of SMS's offerings. The teacher will work closely with staff, parents and the child to intervene on their behalf.

#### Tier III: Student Study Team Intensive Interventions

If there is minimal or limited success or no improvement during the first two tiers of support, the student will likely be referred to the Student Study Team (SST), for further assessment. The school will follow the state SST processes with appropriate documentation and referral to special education assessment for services when indicated. Assistance will be requested/contracted when needed.

Care Team: To ensure that no student "falls through the cracks" a standing committee known as the Care Team—comprised of staff members, the Student Support Coordinator and the Director meet regularly to monitor all students' progress and to advocate for students. The Care Team uses a systematic problem-solving approach to assist students with any concerns that are interfering with success. Parent input may be solicited for the Care Team process.

#### **STANDARDIZED TESTING:**

As a public charter school, we are required to administer standardized tests annually. Currently, K-3 grade students are individually interviewed in the fall and the spring to assess their pre-reading and reading skills using the Idaho Reading Indicator (ISIP). Students in grades 3 through 8 are tested in the spring in English Language Arts and Mathematics using a computerized test. Additionally, 5th & 8th grade students are also tested in Science using a computerized test.

In addition to meeting state requirements, these tests can be a valuable tool to the school, when viewed in light of our multi-faceted approach to assessment. The message being conveyed to students in our classrooms is that the purpose of the testing is to help the student drive their learning through skill-based activities in the classroom. Our expectation is that the students will approach their experience of standardized testing in the same joyful, confident way that they approach any other aspect of their school life. As a parent, we ask that you foster this attitude as well. If you have any questions about your child's standardized test scores, please speak with his or her class teacher.

Notices of times for standardized tests, hearing and vision tests, and any other screenings will be given in the class newsletter.

#### **FERPA:**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their

children's education records. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's education records maintained by the school within 45 days of a request made to the school administrator. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records without copies. Schools may charge a fee for copies. Parents or eligible students have the right to request in writing that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

### **COMMUNICATION:**

**Home Visits:** To build a bridge between the child's school and home life, teachers value the opportunity to visit your home as part of the educational experience. Children often forge a special connection with the teacher who comes into their environment—the home. The teacher is able to experience the child in the home setting and thereby gain a deeper understanding of the child. This helps to expand the teacher's ability to appreciate the child's way of being and behavior in the classroom.

**Parent/teacher conferences and conversations:** We have regularly scheduled dates throughout the school year for parent-teacher conferences. There may be other times that teacher or parent would like to share observations with respect to a child's participation in our program. At such times, a parent-teacher conversation may be arranged by appointment – email seems to work best. If there are attendance or discipline problems, additional parent/teacher conferences may be required.

**Bi-Monthly Newsletter:** Two newsletters are sent out monthly via e-mail with notices and updates about upcoming events, classroom activities, and committee/faculty/board business. Should you not have an email address or would prefer a hard copy, have your name placed on the “hardcopy list,” so you can pick one up at the office at your convenience, or it can be sent home with your child.

Our website: [WWW.SYRINGAMOUNTAINSSCHOOL.ORG](http://WWW.SYRINGAMOUNTAINSSCHOOL.ORG) The website is the “go to” resource for information, forms, updates and upcoming events.

**School office:** Syringa Mountain School has an open-door policy. You are always welcome to visit the school office. For specific meetings with the Director of School, please call ahead to make an appointment to ensure availability. Otherwise, we are happy to provide you information, clarity and conversation in person at the front office.

## **Operations & Miscellaneous**

### **TRANSPORTATION:**

Syringa Mountain School does not currently provide school bus service to our students. We partner with Mountain Rides and support car-pooling options for our families. Our goal is to reduce the number of cars coming onto our campus as much as possible. The benefits of doing this are tremendous: less stress for families; stronger community connections; less

pollution, and improved relations with our neighbors. We ask that everyone make a concerted effort to car pool or bus pool as much as possible.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE AND SNOW DAYS:**

Announcements regarding school closure due to weather conditions, lack of electricity, or other unplanned closures will be made on KMVT, Facebook, and phone call in the mornings as soon as conditions have been checked. Once the children are at school, school closures that occur during the school day will be announced by **phone call** and via email.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

Standard Response Protocol (SRP)

A critical ingredient in the safe school recipe is the uniform classroom response to any incident. Weather events, fires, accidents, intruders and other threats to student safety are scenarios that are planned and trained for by school and district administration and staff.

The Standard Response Protocol (SRP) is based on the response to any given situation. SRP demands a specific vocabulary but also allows for great flexibility. Execution of the action is performed by active participants, including students, staff, teachers and first responders.

- **Lockout** is followed by the Directive: "Secure the Perimeter" and is the protocol used to safeguard students and staff within the building.
- **Lockdown** is followed by "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight" and is the protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep students quiet and in place.
- **Evacuate** is followed by a location and is used to move students and staff from one location to a different location in or out of the building.
- **Shelter** is followed by a type and a method and is the protocol for group and self-protection.

Communication to local Law Enforcement Agency would then be "We are under Lockdown." There may be situations where both Lockdown and Lockout need to be performed. We are in "Lockdown and Lockout" would be conveyed to emergency services or 911.

In the event of an emergency, an emergency text will be sent to your cell phone number on file, as well as an email through our online marketing communication provider, Mail Chimp. We will also contact KECH and KSKI radio stations to inform parents and give instructions.

## **Development**

### **FUNDRAISING:**

Philanthropic support sustains the excellence of our Waldorf educational and extra-curricular programs. The Board and its Development Director recognize that our

constituency is small, that resources are limited, and that continuous fundraising can lead to donor and volunteer fatigue. Therefore, we have created an annual plan for fundraising campaigns.

Unlike Blaine County district schools, however, SMS does not receive any funds generated by Blaine County property taxes, such that our funding comes out to approximately \$10,000 less per student than district schools receive. The result is that we need to fundraise every year in order to be able to offer our inspired Waldorf program!

The following are the different kinds of fundraising in which we engage:

- Grants: Individual teacher grants, school grants, academic and other grants are all applied for throughout the school year.
- Class level curriculum-based fundraising: As a rule, we discourage student participation in fundraising. In some instances, involvement in certain money - making activities and money management will occur if it is aligned with grade level pedagogy. Money made by class-based fundraising activities is typically used for class trips, which are also supported by fees paid by parents.
- Annual Fund provides board, staff and community members to make a gift to the school at whatever level they are able, with an emphasize on 100% participation. Funds typically support our students directly, by going toward areas that have been identified as priorities by the staff. Donations can either be made as a pledge paid out monthly over the year or as a one-time donation.
- Capital Campaign contributions: Planning towards our future, these donations are set aside for long-term capital improvements and expansion plans.
- Event-based fundraising
- Donation of Property: We accept property donations at the school. Furniture, books, and other items that could be useful in our school environment as well as items that may be re-sold for operations funds are welcomed.

For additional information on ways to give, contact the School Secretary.

## Technology Policy

*Must be Signed by Student and Parent/Guardian Each School Year.*

*ALL students and parents must sign this form in order to access computers. Computers must be used for State Testing.*

Technology is limited in K-2 grades and used for ISIP testing. Technology is used with upper elementary (3-8) as appropriate. State Assessments, book reports, typing practice, and controlled research are all appropriate examples of technology use.

This acceptable use agreement defines the responsibilities that each member of the community must accept in order to use the School's technology resources. All members of the community agree to follow school rules and commit to the school's

values. Parent signatures are required each school year verifying they have read and comply with the student handbook requirements.

### **ACCOUNTABLE USE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- I continuously represent the school whenever and wherever I use e-mail and Internet resources, even if I am using these resources away from or outside of the School's network.
- Any violation of the rules will result in a consequence such as loss of my privileges to use computers and/or possible disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.
- If I knowingly enable others to violate these rules, I may be held accountable as if I broke the rule myself.
- Inappropriate use or violating the responsibilities of use may result in disciplinary action including suspension/expulsion.

### **IN USING TECHNOLOGY AT SCHOOL, STUDENTS AGREE TO:**

- Use technology resources for academic and school-related purposes only.
- Use applications, email accounts, and network space appropriately and only for school-related activities.
- Store my documents and files in places that are assigned to me.
- I will not use technology to bully another person.
- I will not attempt to discover or use another user's login name or password, nor will I share my passwords. If I become aware of another individual's password, I will inform that person immediately.
- Use of social media is **not** permitted on school campus.