

Safety Policies & Procedures – Outdoor Environment

Addendum

We are lucky to live in such a beautiful part of the country. With this comes being surrounded by nature to its fullest – water features, fire, inclement weather, bugs, birds, deer, and other wild creatures - both within the city limits and out. As a part of our curriculum, many aspects of our environment will be a part of their learning in a weekly class called Home Surroundings or Earth Skills. The safety of the students is collectively our top priority.

Water Safety

Each student will be an active participant in our weekly Home Surroundings/Earth Skills class, where knowledge will be shared on how to be stewards of the land and how to be safe in such environments. The Wetland is a sacred space that must be treated with responsibility and respect. The students will not be allowed to enter this space without permission or active supervision. The Early Childhood students will only enter the Wetland area when the class is ready, determined by the lead teacher. When the Early Childhood class is ready, it would be actively supervised and clear boundaries would be established during visits.

Fire Safety

The wood stoves in each classroom will serve as the primary source of warmth and heating of liquids like tea and broth. Caring for a wood stove is a part of our practical work, which is something that is woven into Waldorf curriculum. Students are allowed to be in rooms with wood stoves. The students will be actively supervised during any practical work involving the classroom wood stove. Each stove will also have available a child safety gate to create a boundary when we are not using the stove together. Each classroom will be equipped with a fire extinguisher and an Emergency Exit Strategy that will be practiced. Stove and fire pit lighting and extinguishing procedures are led by classroom lead teacher.

Clothing & Outdoor Gear

“There is no such thing as bad weather, just unsuitable clothing.” – Alfred Wainwright.

Your child’s comfort is especially important, and we want them to feel good throughout each day. The students clothing is their primary means to succeeding in the outdoor classroom environment. Each student must come prepared for daily weather conditions and be prepared if it should change. We require that the student has at least three layers of clothing: 1) Base Layer 2) Play Clothes 3) Outer Layer. This is true even in our warmer months since the days can start off cool, then become quite warm. Please refer to resources given for a variety of suggestions on the type of gear to have, as well as how to put the layers on for optimal comfort.

Each teacher will carry a whistle on them for emergency purposes. Part of the uniform of the Grades students is always to have a whistle on their person. The student's whistle will have a different sound than the teacher's. This is used as a tool, *not* a toy and will be treated seriously. If this tool is blown for any other reason than an emergency, the student will be sent home immediately. The Chickadees will not each have a whistle.

Wildlife

Before the start to each school day, the teachers arrive and prepare the land and structures for the students' arrival. Part of this is scanning the area for any visitors or signs of visitors, some who may be unwelcome. Whether at our campus or the property, having awareness to our environment is crucial. The students are made aware of what we may encounter, and emergency preparedness is part of their learning.

Insect Precaution

The students must come prepared with any preventative measures for insect protection. The teachers will periodically scan the students for insects such as ticks. We highly recommend a thorough body check each night prior to bed. Checking areas such as bellybuttons, armpits, hair line and scalp can be easily overlooked.

Safety Boxes

RCE will be equipped with five safety boxes throughout the property that contain a first aid kit, safety documents, a fire extinguisher, and two megaphones on each end for if an emergency occurs. This will be easy access for the teachers wherever they are on the property.

Emergency Exit Routes

Each classroom will be equipped with an Emergency Exit Routes map that will highlight the safest route to exit the property for an emergency such as a fire. Classrooms will practice these procedures periodically so that everyone is familiar with the procedure.

First Aid

Each teacher will have a complete first aid kit on them for most injuries that may occur. If an accident does occur that is outside the parameters of our basic first aid measures, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and 911 if necessary. Please be sure to thoroughly complete our *In Case of Emergency* forms. All injuries will be communicated to the parent/guardian.

Safety Team

RCE will have a Safety Team that will take on the duties of randomly inspecting the property for any hazards, as well as checking in with the teachers on their mental and physical health. The safety and health of our staff is crucial to the success of our program.

Teacher Trainings

Teachers are certified in CPR, First Aid, COVID-19 Safety and Prevention, and most have a Food Handlers Permit.

A *Learning in Nature* course was completed and discussed July 2020.