



RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY SCHOOL

EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD

Parent Engagement Agreement 2020 - 2021

The aim and commitment of **Riverwood Community School (RCS)** is to provide an actively engaging and meaningful education for children which rests upon a strongly shared partnership between home and school. In selecting our school for your child, you have chosen to become a contributing member to a community dedicated to realizing this purpose. We are delighted you are here! The educational experience you want for your child is only possible if we are all working together toward shared goals. This information sheet summarizes the three basic kinds of engagement we anticipate and depend upon from parents.

1. Supporting your child's education

The first area of engagement assures your child's educational process. It includes your ongoing commitment to be involved and attentive to your child's day-to-day experience and to support the classroom community created by the teacher and teacher assistants. The information you need will come through your child's teacher, weekly information bulletins, newsletters, email communications and whiteboard and class posting.

Assure your child(ren) has good attendance. The Washington State Board of Education has approved **RCS** to a grade school day calendar of 165 days, rather than the standard of 180 days. Parents of grades' students have the responsibility to ensure their child(ren) attend for the full time that school is in session to comply with state attendance requirements. Students may be excused for medical and dental appointments during school hours. A written excuse must be provided for all absences. Absences for reasons other than illness will require a teachers' pre-approval, and any make-up work must be completed. Consider scheduling appointments on Mondays when possible. Please refer to RCW 28A.

For our Chickadee program, attendance follows the same attendance requirements. Although most of the younger children attend shorter days, those days are crucial in building both the stamina and internal rhythm of the child. The program is a continuous process, one that if the child misses days concurrently, he or she will not be able to benefit from this enriching process as a whole.

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Assure that your child(ren) arrives on time. The holistic nature of the curriculum means that a late arrival causes a student to lose the benefit of what was missed, and it also disrupts the learning process for the entire class. If your grades' student arrives after 8:00 a.m., he/she must wait, with you, until it is appropriate to join the class. Morning verse time cannot be interrupted.

For our Chickadee program, arriving on time is a gift to the young child to be able to transition from the security of their parent/guardian into the classroom environment. This will give both individuals the time needed for this transition and allows the child to bond with the dynamic of the group that is naturally created at the start of each day.

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Attend Parent Orientation. See school year calendar for dates and times. This orientation is essential! Do not miss it.

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Attend all student/parent/teacher conferences. These generally occur twice a year, but the teacher may contact you to schedule additional meetings.

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Attend all Parent Enrichment Seminars. Take advantage of these opportunities to grow in your understanding of the needs of the developing child and how the **RCS** program meets these needs through the implementation of Waldorf education models and methods. Often guest speakers and special activities are planned to place classroom work in context for parents. Much planning, effort and thoughtful consideration are given to create these opportunities for you.

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Attend all Festivals. Festivals are designed to bring our school community together as well as extended family, friends, and supporters. The students prepare for several months in advance of each festival, and it is their time to share what they have been learning in school. The play that is performed in the spring involves all the grades' students and the older Chickadees. It is also a time for fellowship and conversation. Please mark these special dates on your personal calendar.

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Participate in Remote Learning Days. Remote Learning Days for grades' students are scheduled throughout the year on Mondays. It is necessary that your child participate in all of them to meet the state school attendance requirements. Remote Learning Days will usually take place in your home. It is an opportunity for you to share in school activities with your child, other parents and class teachers and teacher assistants. It is an occasion to build strong bonds, shared experiences and explore the world that surrounds us. For the upper graders, it may also involve homework and completion of main lesson books and projects. Your involvement and participation affirm your support of the school's mission and helps teachers provide a meaningful experience.

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Respond to requests for classroom support from your child's teacher. Examples include driving for fieldtrips and participating in Remote Learning Days, making food for school functions and festivals, construction projects, and helping with fundraising activities. It is vital for the health of the school community that these responsibilities are shared by all and do not fall to a handful of families or teachers.

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Observe the grades' classes in session. As a Chickadee parent, you have the opportunity to witness Waldorf education beyond early childhood by visiting the grades' classrooms. When you see the students' joy of learning, their creative thinking, and our rigorous curriculum in action, you will see how the academic foundation your child(ren) is building in the Chickadee class is preparing him/her for future success in learning. As a grades' parent, you have the opportunity to observe your child in class as well as sit in on other classes, to see what your child will be doing in future grades. Plan to visit the classrooms at least one time during the school year for a minimum of one hour (8:00 – 9:00 a.m.) after drop-off. You are welcome to stay longer or visit more often. Please coordinate your visit with the administrator and/or your class teacher at least one week in advance.

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2. Contributing time and talents to the school community

The second area of engagement is the contribution of your time and unique talents to the school community. **RCS** festivals, classrooms, gardens, play yard, building and commitment to sustainability make for a vibrant community that draws people in. These things can only be maintained if everyone takes responsibility for supporting what benefits us all.

Share your time and unique talents. There are many areas in which to contribute, so you should have no difficulty meeting an important time commitment each year with something that works with your schedule and interests. Some of our needs include website, marketing, social media management, courtyard/entrance/play yard maintenance, fundraising, event coordination, grant research, writers of articles for newsletters, gardeners, handymen, carpenters and more.

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Facilities Cleaning and Maintenance. It is crucial that families provide essential support in the daily cleaning and maintenance of the school building. The school does not have a janitor on staff. The School Cleaning Coordinator will work with you to develop a plan for how you can help in the way that works best for your family.

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Stewardship Days. During the school year, **RCS** plans two to three stewardship days. The first is in October, the second is in January, and the third is in April. They are held on Saturdays and last four hours. Your family should choose at least two to participate in. We work on projects inside and outside. Your children are welcome to attend and participate. Childcare will be provided for those who are too young to help. Your attendance at both days is expected. Should your family be unable to attend, you may still be a steward of the school by contributing financially in the amount of \$75 per stewardship day that you are not present. Some families prefer to or are

better able to contribute financially rather than in person. Both methods of contributing are equally valued. If you do not attend, it will be assumed that your preference is to contribute financially, and the charge will show on your statement and must be paid before the end of the school year.

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3. Providing financial support

The third area of engagement is financial. In brief, the funds we receive come only from tuition, supply and enrollment fees, fundraising, gifts and donations. **RCS** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and does not receive state or federal funding. All program costs including rent and utilities, teacher pay, trainings, food, class supplies and toys, textbooks, clerical supplies, office equipment, cleaning and event supplies, bathroom and kitchen supplies, play yard equipment, furniture, facility upgrades, printing and copying costs and garden supplies come from this fund pool. Rent includes the summer months when classes are not in session. To thrive and grow, we rely on the resources, gifts and connections of our parent body, extended families and community at large.

Pay tuition on time. Funds generated by fundraising cannot be allocated for teacher pay. Our teaching staff is wholeheartedly committed to our school, Waldorf education, our community and the life of your child. The pay we offer teachers does not include benefits and is far below that of teachers in the public or charter school systems that are financially supplemented by governing agencies. The dedication and commitment of **RCS** teachers, teacher assistants and specialty teachers are inspired by ideals far greater than monetary gains. All **RCS** faculty is deeply committed to implementing well-planned and thoughtful lessons, learning opportunities, and quality experiences for your student(s). Many hours are spent to meet these objectives. Teachers invest their personal time (and sometimes funds for fees, travel expenses, accommodations and meals) for trainings and educational experiences. Each brings unique and varied experiences, certifications, endorsements, trainings and talents in many fields to benefit the **RCS** program and community at large.

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Pay fees on time. The annual supply fee covers the consumable items that are used for instruction each year as well as supporting the programs and activities for which tuition income is not sufficient. Failing to pay or not paying in a timely manner compromises the school's ability to meet the day-to-day needs of teachers and students. Enrollment fees cover staff time to process paperwork, clerical tasks and assure that the program is in compliance with not-for profit business practices. Fees and fundraising dollars also help to pay for application fees, subscriptions, licensing and permit costs.

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Support RCS through utilizing the following programs and opportunities. Our base of financial support needs to grow in order to accomplish all that the world is asking of us! We need all who feel a responsibility to society and the school to join in making an extraordinary effort to carry us forward to where our program and development can more fully support our shared vision and intention. You can help by:

- Using Amazon Smile and encouraging others to use for online purchases
- Saving Box Tops and encouraging others to do so
- Asking that bequest contributions be made on behalf of the **RCS** program
- Participating in all fundraisers
- Purchasing crafts and items made by students/teachers/parents to raise funds
- Participate in and support guest speaker engagements sponsored by **RCS**
- Donate pre-approved bulk foods and supplies (all donations are tax-deductible)
- Purchase class photos and student school pictures
- Support local businesses that contribute services or funds to **RCS**

All contributions are tax-deductible. Your gift is a powerful affirmation of the school's mission and vision. Every milestone in the **RCS** growth has been made possible in part by financial gifts from the parent community.

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Note: **RCS** is **not** a childcare program or center. The program is an educational journey that begins at age three and a half and continues to the eighth grade. The program offers a unique opportunity to educate heart, head and hands, educating the whole child. We seek to preserve the innocence of childhood; encourage creativity, imagination and healthy habits; and to inspire active lifelong learning. In our school, which is inspired by Waldorf education, there is no pressure to reduce children to test scores or behaviors. The early childhood years are free from formal academics and instead focus on the development of foundational skills students must master to be successful in school and most importantly, beyond. The curriculum for grades 1-8 can be represented by an ascending spiral of integrated learning which is built upon year by year.

RCS is a Washington State approved private school and 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that serves our local community by providing early childhood through 8th grade utilizing Waldorf education practices, curriculum, and philosophies. We are an associate member of **WECAN** (Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America). We welcome your participation in this extraordinary and meaningful experience.

We/I understand the statements, appeals and expectations outlined and intend to contribute fully and to the best of my/our ability.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____