



2017-18

School Handbook

“Receive the children in reverence; educate them in love; let them go forth in freedom.”

~ Rudolf Steiner

Welcome

Welcome to The New Amsterdam School. We welcome you as a family and look forward to learning and working together for many years to come. We offer this handbook as a guide to our early childhood and grades programs, to our philosophy of education, and to our community. It provides a description of the Waldorf approach and offers important information to help ensure a positive experience for your family at our school. We hope this overview proves useful and supportive for your family as you get to know our school and our community.

Our School

The New Amsterdam School began in 2006 as a grassroots alliance of educators and parents determined to bring Waldorf education to young children in Lower Manhattan. Now, after ten years of success with our early childhood programs, and two years of success with our grades program, we continue to flourish as a school and as a community. Our Early Childhood and Grades classes are held in a beautiful, home-like environment that nourishes and protects the senses. Children have the unique opportunity to explore the outdoors every day at our neighboring community garden. We uphold consistent daily and seasonal rhythms that instill health, security and confidence. Our comprehensive Waldorf curriculum feeds the imagination, building resilience, creativity and social sensitivity. Our teachers integrate art, movement and music into academics and into daily life, inspiring a genuine joy in learning, reverence for the natural world, and a deep sense of gratitude.

In everything we do, the child's natural unfolding is our guide.

The Curriculum

The curriculum of a Waldorf school differs in some ways from the curriculum at other schools. The expectations are likewise somewhat different. **We therefore ask that you familiarize yourselves with the information herein, and return a signed copy of the agreement page,** which is included in your welcome packet. With this agreement, we endeavor to create a conscious understanding between your family and the school. We aim to offer you a deep experience of mutual support and understanding. We strive to elucidate our programs and our philosophy of education, and to build a community wherein the values embraced by the Waldorf pedagogy resonate, and where each individual feels him or herself to be an essential part of the whole.

“A healthy social life is found when in the mirror of each human being, the whole community finds its reflection and when in the community, the virtue of each one is living.” ~Rudolf Steiner

The three R's of a New Amsterdam School experience are:

Reverence, Repetition, and Rhythm.

It is our aim to provide an environment in which children feel nourished in body, mind, and spirit and will come to feel at home within themselves and the world. Since the primary means of learning for the young child is by imitation, the teachers strive to always engage in meaningful activity in the physically beautiful setting of the classroom. The teacher's aim is to be worthy of the children's imitation. Demonstrating care for one another, care for the classroom, and care for oneself is paramount. Natural materials are provided for the children's play and work in order to give them real and true impressions that will nourish their senses and foster an appreciation for the wonders of nature.

For our lower grades children, we aim to ignite the life of the imagination and create a learning environment that is supported by love and kindness. Waldorf education seeks to educate the whole human being and to provide experiences throughout childhood that nourish the imagination and the senses, and that encourage the development of inner and outer strength.

Our reverence for ourselves, each other, and the world around us develops in our students a belief in a world that is beautiful and good. Through repetition of songs, activities, and experiences, our students find both reassurance and a feeling of mastery of their environment, which allows for exploration and appropriate development. The rhythm of activities throughout our school days, weeks, months, and years allows our students and families to relax, breathe, and appreciate the specific qualities of each day of the week, the seasons, and the cycle of the year.

Early Childhood Program

"To a healthy child, playing is not only a pleasurable pastime, but also an absolutely serious activity. Play flows in real earnest out of the child's entire organism." ~ Rudolf Steiner

The Waldorf early childhood classroom is truly a child's haven—a protected, loving space where the imagination and creativity of each child will flourish. Here, enveloped in a warm and caring atmosphere, children can naturally develop through immersion in creative play and experience of the social group of the class. The teacher allows each child the space to grow at his or her own pace and to mature in a strong, balanced, and healthy way.

Imaginative play is a child's work. Each day, the children enjoy two long periods of imaginative play – one indoors and one outdoors. This self-directed, free play is facilitated rather than led by the teacher, who is ready to help problem-solve or redirect if needed. An important aspect of the curriculum is that teachers allow children to enter deeply into their imaginations and to be free from distractions that take them away from such an experience. Children naturally want to share in the practical work for the world around them. Whether becoming independent in dressing themselves, helping to prepare the snack, or crafting something useful, the children develop

capacities and skills as growing human beings and participate in life in an age-appropriate way. These activities also provide the foundation for true self-confidence.

A vital part of our teaching philosophy rests in the creation of rich experiences of the seasons throughout the year. Honoring the seasons helps children develop a relationship with the rhythms of the earth. The children experience the wonderful varieties of weather – rain, snow, ice, wind, and sun. They rake and jump into leaves in the fall, build snowmen in the winter, and welcome the return of flowers, leaves, and beloved insects and worms in the spring. The seasons also inform the curriculum we offer the children, and are reflected in the festivals we celebrate and the songs we sing together.

The rhythm of the day is carefully planned to support the child on physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. We make every effort to provide a calm atmosphere, and we purposefully lay out the day to provide alternating experiences of activity and focus. This creates a reliable, familiar, and safe atmosphere. This rhythmic aspect is the healthiest way possible for the young child to establish his or her own inner, bodily rhythms of breathing and circulation. The daily rhythms of our kindergarten programs include indoor play, snack preparation, snack, rest time, circle, story and outdoor play (rain or shine). Practical tasks, such as handwork and caring for the classroom and its contents are ongoing activities during the day. Artistic activities such as drawing, painting, and modeling are also woven into the daily and weekly rhythms. The weekly rhythm of the class will be shared with the parents at the beginning of each year. You will also find a “Daily Rhythm” schedule posted on the door to your child’s classroom.

Your child’s experience at school will be greatly enhanced when you make an effort to create a calm and regular routine at home. Although young children need to experience the world physically, we recommend that children not take too many classes outside of school. Too much activity and complexity impedes a child’s ability to benefit from this experience. For those classes you do participate in, we encourage you to seek environments that are similar to New Amsterdam in their mood and expectation of the children, so that your child has a sense of continuity and consistency. We suggest you work toward providing a home rhythm that allows for unstructured time, outside play, regular meals together as a family, and a calm, relaxed early bedtime routine. A regular rhythm will nurture your child, instilling a sense of security and warmth, which in turn provides a foundation for self-confidence and expanded learning. Your child’s teacher will be a supportive resource to assist you in establishing a healthy rhythm in your home.

Grades Program

“Where is the book in which the teacher can read about what teaching is? The children themselves are this book. We should not learn to teach out of any book other than the one lying open before us and consisting of the children themselves.” ~ Rudolf Steiner

New Amsterdam first and second grade students engage with a curriculum that integrates the sciences and humanities with art and practical activity. We teach the core subjects through main

lesson blocks in which we discover and delight in one topic for a two-hour period each day, over the course of three or four weeks. This rhythm allows students the opportunity to penetrate each subject, whether history or geography, thoroughly and with purpose. Our practice of saying a verse to greet and end each day brings the child into a oneness with the outer world. We offer an environment where activities are woven into a strong daily rhythm, and that rhythm is informed by the natural world. In everything we do, the child's natural unfolding is our guide.

Main Lesson

The two-hour main lesson that begins each day will focus on a particular subject for a duration of three to four weeks. The teacher will guide the children through a subject employing various arts, such as music, drawing, eurythmy, story, and painting. This method allows a full exploration of each subject and incorporates the practice of previously learned skills. At the end of three weeks the main lesson will take up a new subject.

Middle Lesson

After a morning snack, two middle lessons begin. The middle lesson centers on the humanities, and subjects that will lead the child towards developing a healthy relationship to his/her environment. Like the main lesson, the middle lesson allows the daily repetition of a subject over a whole cycle. It is during this block that the school's specialty teachers guide the class. We currently teach Japanese, Spanish, handwork, eurythmy, and music as part of our middle lesson. Sometimes the main and middle lessons are linked thematically, thereby allowing the academic and artistic realms to complement each other: a main lesson on math may be complemented by counting stitches in a knitting class in the middle lesson. Gardening, playing games, sewing, tie-dyeing, building—in fact, any and all of the practical arts and crafts can be a part of this lesson and can work to support and round out the main lesson.

Garden and Park Activities

We visit the garden or park every day, rain or shine, to smell the blossoms, climb the trees, feel the smooth texture of acorns and pebbles, watch squirrels scurry and caterpillars crawl and to gaze in splendor at the dew on the grass or the colors of the rainbow. We endeavor to nurture the child's individual imaginative life and encourage their innate sense of reverence, wonder, and curiosity through interaction with the natural world. These outdoor experiences provide the foundation for future science learning.

Outdoor Education

Outdoor education in the first and second grades covers many areas of the curriculum, such as health and physical education, geography, history, science, mathematics, English, art, conservation and sustainability. Through this exploration outdoors, the children grow their strength, resilience, and courage and learn to understand nature through direct experience and study. They also develop a deeper connection to their peers and teachers and to the world around them.

Essentials

“Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education.” ~ Rudolf Steiner

The Importance of Warmth

If children are to grow into happy, healthy individuals, it is essential to wrap them in the warmth of our love. For the young child, physical warmth is just as important. The Waldorf approach to child development views the first seven years of childhood as the phase when the physical body is growing and developing. During this time the children are also growing their sense for warmth. This sense of warmth has not yet been fully established in young children and they do not often realize when they are cold. When this happens, energy that is essential for building health, as well as emotional and mental capacities, is expended in heating the body. Being cold can also decrease immune function, rendering children more susceptible to illness. We recommend that you dress your child in layers, appropriate for the season and activities for the day. We also recommend using natural fabrics when possible, such as cotton, silk and wool. These will help support your child’s healthy development of a sense of warmth, while also providing the flexibility for movement in play.

To keep children warm and dry so that they can enjoy all sorts of outdoor weather, late fall and winter clothing should include three layers on the top (short-sleeved or long-sleeved wool or wool/silk blend shirt, long-sleeved shirt, and a sweater), and two layers on the bottom (wool or silk leggings or long-johns and pants). It is also important to include warm wool socks, a jacket, hat, scarf, and lightweight gloves or mittens. On rainy days, waterproof raincoats with a hood or hat, waterproof rain pants, and waterproof boots are essential. On snowy winter days, children should wear a hat, scarf or buff, warm and preferably waterproof mittens or gloves, a warm jacket, and snow pants or a snowsuit.

Please feel free to ask for recommendations when purchasing appropriate seasonal clothing. Other families in the school are good resources for lightly used clothing as their children grow into larger sizes. We often host a few clothing exchanges throughout the year where many quality items can be found.

Nutrition and Health at School and at Home

Preparing and enjoying a morning snack is an essential activity in your child’s school day in the early childhood classes. In the first and second grades, time is set aside to eat a nourishing snack and lunch from home. Food provides more than just sustenance; it nourishes the senses, as well as the soul. In the early childhood classrooms, teachers and children prepare snacks made from whole foods and refrain from any artificial or processed sweeteners. At times we will use natural sweeteners, such as honey, maple syrup and molasses. Wholesome foods provide myriad subtle

flavors, colors, textures, and aromas, unlike processed and artificially-flavored foods. The senses are further nourished with a beautifully set table, a verse of thanks, and a quiet, yet joyful mood. In this warm space, a child can take in the social and nutritional value of a shared meal. We encourage you to carry these efforts into your home life, and to take note of the impacts diet has on behavior and your child's overall well being. Teachers are happy to provide suggestions and recipes to support for this approach to nutrition. If your child has any food allergies or significant aversions, please communicate them to your child's teacher prior to the start of the school year.

Children, Screens, and Freedom

New Amsterdam teachers and staff seek to support parents in striving to provide a media-free childhood experience for their children. The challenges of eliminating children's media exposure in a culture permeated by the influences of television, computers, advertising images, digital recordings, mobile phones and personal devices loaded with electronic content designed for use by children is enormous. Cartoon, film, and video-game characters are heavily marketed to children. Even children's toys have become increasingly linked to battery packs, producing cheap sound effects and mechanical movements with the touch of a button or flick of a switch. It is up to adults to become conscious of the effects this continual barrage of imagery and virtualization has on the developing human being, and make choices accordingly.

Regular exposure to media has a significant impact on children. Children have a natural curiosity and interest in the world, and engage deeply with each experience through imitation. These wonderful qualities are met in a healthy way when children have daily experiences that provide contact with the natural world, opportunities for varied movement, exposure to other human beings, and the warm, loving quiet attention of adults. In contrast, virtual experiences are full of concepts and images that are impersonal and out of context with children's real lives. Even programs that are conceived as educational lack the inner activity, contextualization and interactivity so essential to true learning. In fact, screen time in general renders children passive, listless, and out of sync with the rhythms of life. As children grow towards middle school, it is time to begin to introduce them through guided and thoughtful experiences with media, how to think consciously about what they are seeing and experiencing, and how to use to their benefit the tools we have available to us. In high school, teenagers should feel comfortable in our modern world, with parents to offer guidance as needed. When children are given the opportunity enter into relationship with electronic media when they are well-developed enough to consciously decide to expose themselves or not, they are left free and independent. It is not a matter of "no." It is a matter of when.

It is in the best interest of the school community to support one another in providing children with a childhood free of the influence of media. Not only does media affect the individual child, the impact of media exposure is passed on, reverberating through the community and showing up in the play, attitudes, language, and inner life of other children in the class. For this reason, teachers and staff ask that each of the families in our community make a firm commitment to limiting media exposure and striving for a home life that works together with the school environment to provide children with healthy daily lives. We offer you our full support in

working towards this goal and are happy to assist you in creating a life for your child free from the influences of media. When the effects of media are having an ongoing impact on a child, we will work together with you as parents to address these concerns.

Media Use by Adults While at School

We kindly ask that parents limit their use of screens at school. Please do not use your electronic devices inside the school building. Please relegate screen use to areas outside of the building. When children are transitioning to and from the garden through the courtyard, please suspend your use of technology. We ask that you bring this request to the attention of your caregivers, relatives, and friends who may come to the school to pick up your child.

Toys

Waldorf education seeks to support the strong imaginative and creative powers of children. These capabilities are readily apparent, especially in the young child, when the child turns a colander into a hat or a piece of wood into a cup of tea. Healthy, creative play enables children to use their imaginations to interact with new ideas, solve problems, and exercise their ability to shape the world around them. For this reason, an ideal play environment for young children is one that supports free play through the use of "unfinished" play objects. In such a play environment, young children can find interesting and totally new uses for pieces of wood, stones, wool pieces, strings, silk and cotton cloths. These simple objects can become anything in the eye and mind of a child.

Recommended toys and playthings include the following:

- objects that allow the child to imitate daily activities of their home life (such as simple wooden kitchens, chairs and tables, child-sized mops and brooms, cradles and baby dolls and animals of natural material that can be held and cared for);
- objects that contain qualities of warmth, life and connection to the natural world (such as wool strings and balls, wood pieces for building, stones, cotton and silk cloths);
- objects that are housed within an uncluttered play environment with fewer toys and more room to move;
- objects that have less form and can be made use of in a variety of ways to support freely chosen, imaginative play scenarios;
- objects offering a variety of size, weight, shapes and textures;
- objects that are free from a single, fixed objective (such as puzzles and Lego sets);

- objects that allow the child to freely explore the play environment through movement such as sliding, rocking, swinging, balancing, crawling, hanging and climbing (this applies particularly, but not exclusively to an outdoor environment).

Recommended toys and playthings for first and second grade children also include puzzles, board games, musical instruments, cats' cradle strings, marbles, jacks, bean bags, and toys that encourage gross motor movements, such as jump ropes and low stilts.

Guiding Children's Behavior

In the class setting, the teachers create a positive, calm, and nurturing environment with a loving presence and consistent, age-appropriate limits. In this way, the child's innate capacity to imitate is held by the teacher's capacity to be a worthy model. Warmth, humor, and predictable daily rhythms are just a few tools that help create an atmosphere where children can joyfully learn and grow. In the day-to-day unfolding of classroom life, our teachers discern when and how to redirect a child to prevent a potentially difficult situation from escalating, or even beginning.

Yet, as in adult lives, conflict can occur in the life of the young child who is just beginning to interact with peers. Even in the uplifting and consistent class culture that our teachers uphold, conflict will arise. At times it is beneficial for the young child to not be shielded from conflict every time it arises. Even with all its unpleasantness and sometime unhappy outcome, teachers understand that in each conflicting situation there is enormous potential for children to develop essential capacities. Resilience, communication skills, the capacity to yield and maintain one's ground are just a few examples of the life-long character skills that are born when one faces a conflict. Teachers will always remain nearby to help in the case of conflict, ensuring that everyone learns to work with a sense of respect for others and for oneself.

There are occasional situations in which conflict is physically expressed between two children and here the teacher moves in with calm resolve and steadiness. After assessing both children in the context of the situation, the teacher will provide care and verbal direction. If a second situation should arise in which a conflict is physically expressed by one or both of these same children, the teacher will again provide care and verbal direction. In addition, the teacher will stay close to the children and engage them with work, a different kind of play, rest, or a visit to another classroom if needed. In the case of ongoing occurrences, the teacher will follow the steps laid out above and will also notify a parent and ask that their child be picked up early. The teacher will then arrange a phone conference with the parents to discuss the situation as soon as possible. If a child bites another child at school, the teacher will call the parents and request that the child be picked up from school immediately. And if there is consistent aggressive behavior, this too may result in the child being sent home.

If a child has ongoing difficulties in adjusting to the class, the teacher will arrange for a meeting to discuss the behavior. Problems are best solved when there is collaboration between school and

home. Parents are asked to share with their child's teacher any circumstances that might affect the child's behavior at school, such as family issues, visitors at home, illnesses, etc. Our teachers will work with the family to understand the child's difficulties and come together to form a consistent plan to address at home and at school.

It may happen that a child goes home and says that he or she was hit or affronted by a classmate, even sometimes when nothing of the sort has occurred. It's always best for parents to check in with their child's teacher and communicate what the child is saying at home. This gives the teacher a chance to clarify what actually happened and to identify areas that may need more support.

Seasonal Celebrations

A celebration of the change of season is a hallmark of Waldorf education. During the cycle of the year, we mark the seasons with the celebration of a festival or ritual. Such celebrations grant teachers the opportunity to develop community within the classroom and with families. Celebrating festivals is one way that children can deeply experience and participate in the rhythms of nature and of the changing seasons. It also connects them to the deepest elements of a common humanity. Teachers hope to awaken an overall sense of reverence, joy, and wonder through such festivals, which include a Lantern Walk in the fall, the Spiral of Light in December, and a community event in the spring.

In order to be inclusive of the wide variety of cultures and beliefs represented in our school population, the school focuses on common aspects of festival life, such as love, light, family, food, song, and simple activities. By looking at the underlying impulse behind a particular festival, adults can then translate the celebration into activities that are meaningful and age-appropriate for young children. Typically, these include stories, food, games, songs, and simple crafts. Teachers ardently strive to avoid the commercial aspects of holidays in the classroom. Families may volunteer to provide a special snack for those festivals that coincide with our school holidays or for any other occasion that is important to their own tradition.

Birthdays

Birthdays in the early childhood rooms are a time for the class to honor and celebrate each individual child. While each classroom has its own birthday traditions, the celebration often includes working together to prepare a birthday snack, coming together to hear a birthday story and sing a birthday song, and offering the birthday child a simple gift made by the teacher or classmates.

For children in the early childhood years, teachers recommend keeping birthdays simple at home as well. Often a short playtime and favorite snack with a few friends at home or outdoors is very enjoyable for the birthday child and more than enough to celebrate the day.

In the first and second grade classroom, the teacher finds a way to honor each child's coming into the world in a way that is simple and festive.

Parent Teacher Conferences and Parent Evenings

Communication between you as parents and the school is an essential ingredient in the success of your child's experience at school. There are two parent and teacher conferences scheduled for each year wherein parents and teachers come together to share insights and observations: one in the fall and one in spring. However, parents and teachers may meet more often, as requested or as needed. If you have any concerns or questions of any kind, or if anything changes in your home life or routine, please share this with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher will keep you informed of general class activities and share developmental insights through Parent Evenings and newsletters. Attending these Parent Evenings and reading newsletters is expected.

Practicalities

Arrival/Dismissal

It is important for the children to arrive at school on time each day. The class rhythm is best supported when all the children are at school and begin their day together. This promotes a sense of well being for each child and for the class as a whole.

We understand that getting to school on time can be difficult considering long commutes or the need for dressing children in extra clothing in the winter months. Teachers are happy to help you create a morning rhythm to help bring harmony and timeliness to your day.

Grades: Children should arrive prepared to enter the classroom at 8:15 am, at which time they will each participate in an activity designed specially to support their individual learning. At 8:30 am the class will begin its today together. Once the door is closed, parents must accompany their child to the classroom door. Children must knock on the door and await its opening before entering. Late entries disrupt the morning rhythm not only for the tardy child, but for the whole class. Children are dismissed at 3:15p.m.

Willow and Juniper Classes: Children should arrive and be prepared to enter the classroom at 8:30 am. Children are dismissed at 12:30 pm. Tardy children often have difficulty entering into the established play. If lateness occurs, and you are not sure you will be able to arrive at school by 9:30 am, please consider keeping your child at home.

Maple Two's Classes: Children should arrive be prepared to enter the classroom at 9 am. Children are dismissed at times specific to the individual group. If lateness occurs, and you are not sure you will be able to arrive at school by 9:30a.m., please consider keeping your child at home.

What to Keep at School

Each child will be given a cubby or a hook at the beginning of the year. Please keep an extra change of clothing for your child in his or her cubby or his or his hook. This includes: **a pair of socks, underwear, a shirt, pants and a sweater**. Please label all items with your child's name. Please check often to make sure there is a complete set of extra clothing, and please update the set seasonally. For girls who wear dresses, please include a pair of warm leggings or pull-on pants for outdoor play in cool weather. Your child will also need a pair of indoor shoes (grades) or slippers (early childhood) for use in the classroom. Please see our Waldorf Materials and Resource list for indoor shoe recommendations.

Shoes for outdoors should be sturdy and supportive for running and climbing; this excludes flip-flops, heels, and flimsy sandals such as Crocs. Rubber boots are necessary, as it is often muddy and wet outside. It is suggested that you invest in a full set of rain gear so your child can move freely and stay dry during rainy days at the garden. The children will be going outdoors every day, in all kinds of weather. When the children are well prepared, their experience is more complete and enjoyable. Teachers and children will splash in the puddles and dig in the mud, so please expect your child to get dirty in his or her play clothes. Dressing for the seasons is very important for children's health and well being. In winter, it is necessary to dress your child in layers. Please consider a wool and silk short or long-sleeve top, then a long-sleeve shirt and sweater on top, and two layers of pants. Dressed in layers, children can easily remove outer layers in case they are warm in the classroom.

Please remember to label all of your child's clothing and other belongings.

Illness

An ill child should be kept at home. If a child has fever, diarrhea, is vomiting, is lackluster or not themselves, he or she should stay home. Please call the school office by 8:00 am any day your child will be absent. If a child appears ill while at school, parents will be contacted to pick up their child. The school does not have facilities to care for children who come to school too ill to participate. Children should remain at home for a minimum of 24 hours after their fever or illness subsides.

Any child who contracts a contagious illness such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, or strep throat, must be kept at home until the illness is no longer in the contagious state. Please inform your class teacher of the illness so that other parents can be alerted. A note from your health care provider stating the date which your child may return to school is required to be submitted to the main office prior to the child's return to school.

Any child who contracts a communicative disease such as head lice, pink eye, impetigo, or pinworms must receive medical treatment before returning to school. In the case of head lice, all lice and eggs must be removed from the child's hair after treatment and before returning to school.

Gardens and Park

We are fortunate to have an ongoing relationship with the El Jardin del Paradiso Community Garden, and we are developing relationships with several other community gardens in the neighborhood. Tompkin's Square Park is located just a few blocks away as well. Our students visit a garden or park for outdoor play every day. There they have the freedom to run, dig in the dirt and find much to see and explore. Our Garden Committee helps to organize family days and Clean Up Days in the gardens throughout the year. These events are an opportunity for parents to work alongside their children to help maintain and improve neighborhood community gardens.

Organizational Structure and Volunteering

The New Amsterdam School functions through the collaborative efforts of the faculty and staff, the parents, and the Board of Trustees. We rely upon the efforts of families in our community to maintain and grow our programs in support of our mission and vision for the school. We are building a Waldorf school together. Participating in the life of the school enriches your own experience, as well as that of your child.

The Board of Trustees meets regularly to oversee the management of school business, including all financial, legal, and property matters. The Board works in collaboration with the faculty, administration, and the parents to ensure that the mission of the school is carried out in accordance with our by-laws and agreed-upon goals. Board members are elected to a two-year term. Entrance to the Board is based upon contributions of time and talent to the administration and operation of the school. We strive to create an open environment where information and decision making are transparent and available to the whole community. We encourage families with questions, concerns, or suggestions to speak directly to members of the board so that these things can be addressed in a straightforward manner. You can contact the board members by emailing: board@newamsterdamchildhood.org.

Community Involvement

Waldorf Schools are founded with the intention of social renewal: educating children and educating ourselves are ways we begin to invite renewal into our future. As we work collectively and grow as a community, not just in numbers, we stand together surrounding the children with our good will, creativity and intention to become more fully ourselves. A crucial component to building a healthy, vibrant New Amsterdam School community is parent and family involvement in all aspects of the life of the school. We request that you participate in the life of the school in as many ways as you can. One way to participate is to read all letters and communications from the school. Please ensure that your email server will direct all emails from your child's teacher, the school director, and admissions@newamsterdamchildhood.org to your primary inbox. When your child's teacher emails or sends a letter or an article home, please take the time to read it

carefully. These measures are thoughtfully planned to support you and your child's experience at our school.

New Amsterdam hosts several events, activities and lectures for the whole school community throughout the year. You will also be invited to attend meetings and activities that are specific to your child's class, such as parent conferences and parent nights. We hold several community meetings throughout the year, which support the decision-making, activities and growth of our school. We request that at least one representative from each family attend these events.

We further invite parents to join the "committee life" of the school. New Amsterdam relies upon several parent-supported committees that help manage certain aspects of the school, such as outreach, marketing, and resource development, among others. Meetings are organized by committee members and each committee works closely with faculty, administration and board members. Finally, we invite you to join NAPA, our New Amsterdam Parents' Association.

The New Amsterdam Parent Association (NAPA)

We are happy to announce that this past school year saw the continued growth of a Parent Association at New Amsterdam. This has been a many-handed initiative over past years and we are proud to be its caretakers as it has been finding its place in the life of our school.

Below please find a brief outline of the purpose and structure of the New Amsterdam Parent Association (NAPA). As school families (old or new), you are automatically a member of NAPA. This is your association and we are here to serve the Parent Community within the school. NAPA meetings will be held every 4 – 6 weeks throughout the year (dates for 2017/18 tbd) and all are welcome to attend. We look forward to your participation in NAPA's initiatives.

Purpose of NAPA

The primary purpose of NAPA is to engage, enliven and empower the community of parents; to support healthy communication within the parent body and between the parent body and the school; and to guide and support parents, especially new parents, toward a full entrance into community life. In so doing, we are seeking to craft and nurture the community culture that holds and supports our children.

Structure

We currently have a team of NAPA 'officers' who facilitate meetings and distribute information. We ask that the Parent Representative for each class attend NAPA meetings to bring class issues to NAPA and to report back on NAPA business. NAPA meetings are attended by at least one representative of the school administration and we are proposing that they are also attended by a member of the School Board. Meetings are held every 4 – 6 weeks. All are welcome to attend.

Specific NAPA Tasks include the following:

- Welcoming new families.
- Special fundraising and community events – e.g. Winter Fair, Holiday Auction, Benefit Party, etc.
- To organize biannual gifts of appreciation to teachers, administrators, and staff.
- To encourage support for Community Education Events.
- Community outreach – to support marketing & admissions.
- To establish a “complaints/solutions” procedure, and a “conflict/resolution” procedure.
- To encourage wide participation in community life among our families, and ensure all volunteer positions are filled – e.g. Garden Committee, Craft Committee.
- To guide and support parents in following school guidelines and community values.

Please contact your teacher if you have any questions or would like to get involved for 2017/18.

Philanthropic Support

As a private school, New Amsterdam receives no revenue from outside sources. Instead, our income is generated purely through tuition, participation in our annual holiday auction, winter benefit, spring fair, and the generous annual fund and capital contributions from New Amsterdam families, friends, and alumni families. Parents understand that volunteerism and participation in school activities, including parent meetings, fundraising, administration, fairs and special events are part of our school culture and contributes to the well-being of the New Amsterdam community.

Tuition and Tuition Assistance

The New Amsterdam School values and actively seeks a student body reflecting the ethnic, racial, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity of our downtown community. Our program of tuition assistance supports this diversity by making New Amsterdam more accessible to families of varying economic backgrounds.

All tuition assistance at the New Amsterdam School is need-based, and amounts awarded are based solely on demonstrated financial need. Admission decisions are made separately from decisions regarding tuition assistance.

Awards are determined by the Tuition Assistance Committee (TAC), a group appointed by the New Amsterdam School Board of Directors. In determining awards, the Committee relies upon the expected family contribution as calculated by an outside tuition aid assessment service, the family’s submitted tax returns, and any special financial considerations communicated by the family. Final TA decisions are based on thorough assessment of the family’s needs and the budgeted funds available. Information related to tuition assistance is kept in strict confidence, and children receiving assistance are not held to different standards.

Tuition

2017 - 2018 Tuition for Our Programs*:

Sugar Maples Two's Program	\$5,500
Silver Maples Two's Program	\$8,800
Willow and Juniper Kindergartens	\$24,200
First and Second Grades	\$25,000

Tuition Assistance is available. Please see above for more information about our dedication to accessible tuition fees.

Grades	Tier 1 \$25,000/year
	Tier 2 \$18,500/year
	Tier 3 \$12,000/year

Tier Level is determined by the Tuition Assistance Committee upon the family's completion of our tuition assistance application through TADS.

**Tuition fees are subject to change each year.*

We offer three tuition payment options: payment by single lump sum, payment in two installments, or monthly payments. These flexible payment plans are designed to accommodate families. Payments are due on the first of the month. There is no reduction for shortened months. There is no refund for days missed due to illness or travel. If a check is returned or a tuition payment is more than 15 days late, a charge of \$50 will be assessed. Students will not be allowed to attend class when payments are behind more than 40 days.

Enrollment / Payment Procedures

The parents understand that their obligation to pay tuition and fees for the full school year is unconditional and that no portion of such fees paid or outstanding will be refunded or cancelled in the event of the student's absence, withdrawal, suspension, or dismissal from the School, except as specifically agreed upon, in writing, between the Parents and the School.

The enrollment deposit is an annual fee, due with the enrollment contract to hold your child's place in our program. The deposit is deducted from the total yearly tuition payment. Enrollment deposit payments are not refundable, unless a tuition assistance award does not meet a family's need.

Returning families are expected to submit their signed contract and deposit for the 2018-19 academic year by February 1, 2018. In the event that a family fails to re-enroll by this date, the School cannot guarantee a spot for their child in our programs.

Waldorf Resources

Information on Waldorf Education

WECAN: Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America
www.waldorfearlychildhood.org

AWSNA: Association of Waldorf Schools of North America www.whywaldorfworks.org

Booklist and Resources

You Are Your Child's First Teacher, by Rahima Baldwin

Your Baby and Child from Birth to Age Five, by Penelope Leach

In a Nutshell, by Nancy Foster

Free to Learn, by Lynne Oldfield

The Incarnating Child, by Joan Salter

Work and Play in Early Childhood, by Freya Jaffke

A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play, by Vivian Gussin Paley

Raising a Son, by Ehum and Ehum

Navigating the Terrain of Childhood, by Jack Petrash

Dear Parent, by Magda Gerber

The Wonder of Boys, by Micheal Guran

Endangered Minds, by Jane Healy

Children of the Cyclops, by Keith Buzzard

Beyond the Rainbow Bridge: Nurturing our Children from Birth to Seven, by Barbara J. Patterson & Pamela Bradley

Waldorf Materials & Toys

NOVA NATURALS: Natural toys and crafts, children's books, parenting books, craft books, games, musical instruments, art and craft supplies, fabric and dress-up, handwork kits, etc. Tel: 1-800-668-2111 www.novanatural.com

MAGIC CABIN: Dolls and doll clothes, toys, music, books, dress-up, play stands, doll making kits, wool, fabric, felt, art supplies, etc. Tel: 1-888-623-6557 www.magiccabin.com

PAPER, SCISSORS, STONE: Waldorf home and school supplies, books, painting, crayons, pencils, modeling, beeswax, silk, yarn, cotton, wool, needles, felt, batting, roving, etc. Tel: 1-888-644-5843 www.waldorfsupplies.com

SOFTSTAR SHOES AND SLIPPERS A selection of handmade indoor and outdoor footwear. 866-763-2525. www.softstarshoes.com

I have read the New Amsterdam School Parent Handbook and agree to uphold the principles of the School to the best of my ability.

Name(s) of Child(ren) _____

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Friends of the New Amsterdam School Inc. is a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt public charity with Tax ID 26-2407285. We admit students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.