



# *The* **DENVER** **WALDORF** *School*

## **The Denver Waldorf School Discipline Policy**

### **General Expectations**

The teachers at the Denver Waldorf School aim to "educate our students to become free thinking adults who are able to impart purpose and direction to their lives and who will offer new solutions for the problems of our age. We strive for intellectual freedom, artistic creativity, and a sense of social responsibility."

Meeting these goals is the responsibility of everyone connected with the school. Therefore, everyone has some general expectations.

Regarding all students, the following applies:

- To remember that everyone's personal safety and well-being comes foremost.
- To be at school and in the classroom on time for every lesson.
- To conduct yourself during the lessons in such a way that the teacher can teach the whole class with minimal interruptions.
- To treat all teachers, staff, parents, and students with the same courtesy and respect you would wish to receive yourself.
- To help keep the classroom and the school grounds clean and tidy.
- To treat all property not only your own with care. You will be required to repair or replace anything (apart from your own property) that has been damaged.
- To remain within school boundaries while at school and never to leave the school campus without permission.
- To do class work to the best of your ability.
- To keep your schoolbooks in good order, up to date, and in good condition.
- To hand in all required assignments on time.
- To leave gum, your iPods, cell phones, etc. at home or in your backpack until you have left the school grounds.

For teachers we add:

- To be on time for every lesson.
- To treat students with courtesy and respect, especially when discipline is needed.
- To treat colleagues and parents with courtesy and respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement.
- To be supportive and encouraging to all the students in your care, in words and actions equally and without favoritism.
- To strive to be consistent in your approach to discipline issues, individually and as a faculty.

- To provide all the students and parents with opportunities to express concerns and questions outside lesson time.
- To provide the parents with opportunities to learn more about the Waldorf philosophy.
- To notify parents ***in a timely manner*** when expectations for schoolwork and behavior have not been met.
- To familiarize you with State Laws regarding neglect and abuse, to be alert to signs and symptoms of such neglect or abuse and implement legal requirements accordingly.
- To do you're very best to provide the students with the education which will offer them choices in the future.

And for parents we add:

- To provide a home atmosphere conducive to the child's social, emotional and educational well-being.
- To collaborate with faculty in implementing discipline policies.
- To review the discipline policy and school rules with your child or children.
- To insure that your child or children are at school on time and that they are collected from school in a timely manner.
- To treat teachers and staff with courtesy and respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement.
- To make use - when possible - of the opportunities given by the school to learn more about the philosophy of Waldorf education.
- To see that children get adequate rest and appropriate time and environment for homework.

The intention behind these expectations is to create an awareness of what is necessary to take hold of an educational opportunity provided through The Denver Waldorf School.

## **Unacceptable Behavior**

Society recognizes certain activities to be unacceptable, and laws are enacted to serve to protect everyone's best interests. Most of these behaviors also find their reflection in Colorado law. While each incident has its own circumstances, a policy of "**No Tolerance**" is in effect regarding the following list of consequences as well as the defined misdemeanors.

### **Level One**

Mild physical abuse, mild verbal abuse, disrespectful/disruptive behavior, mild use of profanity, threatening behavior, accidental damage of property.

- Conflict resolution conversation/peer mediation with all concerned.

### **Level Two**

Repetition of Level One behavior, skipping class, willful damage of property, tobacco use:

- Conflict resolution conversation/peer mediation with all concerned.
- Parents will be notified immediately by phone.
- An incident report will be written for the student's file, with a copy going to the parents.
- Parental conference recommended.

### **Level Three**

Significant repetition of Level Two behavior, bringing a toy weapon to school (one which cannot cause harm), leaving school without permission.

- Conflict resolution conversation/peer mediation with all concerned.
- Parents will be informed immediately by phone.

- An incident report will be written for the student's file, with a copy going to the parents.
- Parental conference mandatory.
- Suspension of student possible, if decided by two, or more, College members.

#### **Level Four**

Stealing, significant threatening behavior (using anything as a weapon), bringing an imitation of a weapon to school which might reasonably be mistaken for a weapon, serious physical abuse, serious use of profanity (such as swearing at a teacher).

- Conflict resolution conversation/peer mediation with all concerned.
- Parents will be informed immediately by phone.
- An incident report will be written for the student's file, with a copy going to the parents.
- Parental conference mandatory.
- Suspension of student likely, following agreement by two, or more, College members.

#### **Level Five**

Deliberate injury of a person, repetition of stealing, drug possession or use at school (functions), sexual behavior (such as exposure to others), sexual activity, bringing a weapon to school (including all knives).

- Conflict resolution conversation/peer mediation with all concerned.
- Parents will be informed immediately by phone.
- An incident report will be written for the student's file, with a copy going to the parents.
- Parental conference mandatory.
- Immediate 3-day suspension, during which it will be decided what further action is needed.
- Please note that in these cases the school is legally required to inform the police or social services or both, depending upon circumstances.
- The student will submit a Personal Improvement Report prior to return.

Please note: It is likely that expulsion will result from Level Five behavior.

### **General Guidelines for Students' Behavior at School**

To some people it may seem strange that we need guidelines about how to behave at school -- after all "good behavior" is what we learn at home about how people expect us to behave when we are in their company. Indeed, "Treat other people as you would like them to treat you" is the theme behind all our rules, but we think that it is a good idea to have something written down, so that everyone is clear about what we can and cannot do at school.

#### **At bell time:**

Please line up promptly and quietly with the others in your grade. When you are told that you may go in, please go in quietly and with no pushing to your classroom. If you need to use the restroom please remember that you should be in your classroom on time for the lesson to begin without interruption.

#### **In the classroom:**

Please follow your teacher's requests quickly and quietly. (Everyone needs a quiet atmosphere to do well, so your cooperation is needed - and will be recognized.) Some questions that you may have need to be answered right away, so that you are able to do your work well. Other questions may be better asked at the end of the lesson since they are of a more personal nature. Try to learn which questions to ask right away and which would be better asked at another time.

Remember, teachers are expected to give both students and their parents opportunities to ask questions and express concerns, so they will be happy to arrange opportunities to do so.

Try to find out and follow each teacher's rules for "classroom etiquette". Each teacher will have their own expectations that will be slightly different from other teachers. Some things are expected by all teachers -- for instance, raising your hand when you want to say something, instead of just shouting it out. In some lessons you will be expected to stay in your seat most, if not all, the time. In other lessons it may be possible to move around the room quietly. Learn to adapt your behavior to the situation - but always remembering that everyone's personal safety and well-being comes first. Remember, even if each teacher has slightly different classroom rules, they are all trying to keep to the same guidelines that you are.

If someone disrupts a lesson by interrupting the work the class is supposed to be doing, then that person is denying the students their right to learn and the teacher's right (and duty) to teach. This cannot be permitted except in an emergency, of course. If you think or feel that a situation is unfair, you have the right to express your concerns - but politely and at the right time. (Sometimes the right time is "now", sometimes it is "later".) If, after speaking quietly to the teacher concerned, you are still not satisfied, then speak to your class teacher, another teacher, or your parents. (Your parents may decide the best thing is to have a conference with the teacher or teachers concerned, so that the matter can be resolved.)

Remember, if you ever feel that your safety and well-being have not been respected you have a right to have your concerns addressed.

If you need something at school - always ask! Never take anything from anyone else without asking first. If you take something without asking first, it may be considered to be stealing - even if you were only "just borrowing it".

You will be expected to play your part in keeping your classroom and the school clean and tidy. Please don't wait to be asked!

At no time is any student to be in a classroom without adult supervision, except in certain cases when a teacher has given special permission.

Although you may think that this does not need to be said: Chewing gum, sitting on tables, marking classroom furniture, writing on walls (or other behaviors you would not do at home) are also not allowed at school. Other things not allowed at school include electronic devices, most toys and things that might offend others. (You can always ask, if you are not sure about something.) If you do bring something that is not allowed, a teacher may take it from you and give it back at the end of the day. If you bring it again, it may be taken from you until your parents have been informed and the return arranged with them.

### **In the buildings:**

In between lessons and at other times when you are going from one place in school to another, you are asked to behave quietly and safely. Please walk quietly and do not run or shout. Please keep to the right when going up or downstairs and when passing other people. Horseplay is not allowed in the buildings at any time. Please play your part in keeping our school safe and clean.

### **Outside in the yard:**

Rule number one: Everyone's safety and well-being come first. (Think about what "safe play" means - and help other people when they forget.)

If you and your friends are enjoying "horseplay", remember that the game stops when anyone in the game says that they don't want to play any more.

Even though teasing someone may seem like fun, for many people it is more like torture. Teasing is not allowed.

Hitting people or hurting them by name calling or swearing at them never solves problems - it just makes the problem worse. In a conflict situation, call upon a teacher to help you with "conflict resolution" and maybe "peer mediation". These are the methods we use at school to help in situations like this.

For safety reasons, we cannot allow anyone to kick any balls in the play area unless under the direct and constant supervision of a teacher. Using hard surfaced balls (like baseballs) or heavy balls is not allowed for the same reason. If you are not sure, ask a teacher. (Again for safety reasons, the throwing of snowballs is not allowed. The reason is this: most times the snowballs turn into ice balls and cause injury. Please don't think that because your snowball is not made of ice it is all right throw it. At school it is not all right.)

Unicycles, bicycles, skateboards and inline skates are not to be ridden in the playground.

The boundaries of the play area do not include the alley or the parking area. Once you are outside, you may not go into the school buildings without specific permission. This means that you **always** have to ask for permission.

#### **On school excursions:**

Keep together and listen to the teachers and other adults who are with you. Follow their requests quietly and without loud argument. If you have something to say, always remember that politeness works better than rudeness!

Your behavior away from home and school is a reflection of them both. Remember that you are a representative of yourself your family and your school - and behave in such a way that people see you at your best.

#### **At school assemblies and functions:**

The same simple rules apply as when you are on school excursions. Please do not use screaming and shouting as a form of applause. Clapping and (sometimes) cheering is more appreciative. Things can go embarrassingly wrong during performances and it is really hurtful if people make things worse by booing. Booing or hooting, or any other form of hurtful behavior, is not allowed.

Please whisper quietly between items during assemblies and pay attention to what is going on, so that the teachers do not have to call you to order. Remember that we always have guests at our functions, and we don't want them to get a wrong impression of you.

If you - or your parents - want to have a photograph as a reminder of someone's play or assembly item, **please** arrange with the teacher concerned to have photos taken afterwards or during a dress rehearsal so that the class does not have its concentration spoiled during the actual performance. The teachers will be happy to help with this because they know how difficult it is when people are taking flash photographs while the students are trying to remember all the things they have to do!

## **Middle School Policies and Procedures**

### **Dress Code**

Creating a form for education and fostering an active environment in the Middle School requires an appropriate level of decorum in dress. Students must conform to the expectations below, which promote: movement, concentration, comfort, social inclusiveness, safety, and few distractions. These expectations may be contrary to what is currently fashionable and applies to the Middle School students for the entire school day, including all field trips and school sponsored activities and events unless students are told otherwise. Wearing non-approved clothing is not an option.

### **Pants**

Students may wear jeans, khakis, cargo pants, corduroys, and athletic pants free from words and numbers and logos or media advertising larger than a thumb. Images and repeating patterns on clothing depicting benign, kindly or favorable, or non-skull images are allowed. All must be clean and in good repair—no holes, rips, or frayed edges—and be worn at the waistline without sagging down (or fitting) at the hips.

### **Shorts and Skirts**

Skirts and shorts should be knee length. Otherwise they must be worn with leggings. Shorts and skirts must be free from frayed edges, words and numbers and logos or media advertising larger than a thumb. Images and repeating patterns on clothing depicting benign, kindly or favorable, non-skull images are allowed.

### **Shirts**

DWS t-shirts and sweatshirts that are clean and in good condition may be worn at any time. **No "off the shoulder" shirts may be worn. Tank tops must measure 1 inch or more at the shoulder.** Shirts must fall over the waistband of the pants, shorts, or skirts. Shirts may not be tight fitting or “see-through” and may not expose cleavage, midriff, or undergarments. They must be free from all words and numbers and logos or media advertising larger than a thumb. Images and repeating patterns on clothing depicting benign, kindly or favorable, non-skull images are allowed. Other sweatshirts, hoodies, jackets and sweaters (worn out-of-doors for warmth) are exceptions.

### **Hats**

Hats, hoods, and visors should be worn outside of the school building. Once inside, they should be removed and kept in backpacks.

### **Makeup, Piercings, Tattoos/Body Art**

Wearing makeup is not allowed for all 6th graders and older students will be required to remove excessive makeup. Discreet piercing of ears is acceptable for girls and boys with parental guidance and consent—unless deemed too “extreme” (please confer with your teacher). Other

facial piercings are not allowed. Tattoos are also not allowed. Marking, writing, or drawing on the skin with ink is prohibited because of its potentially carcinogenic consequences.

### **Hair Styles and Color**

Experience has taught us that drastic or excessive hair color and extreme styles are highly distracting and therefore not permitted. Hairstyles may not cover the eyes.

### **Shoes**

At school, students need the support of a shoe that is sturdy, flexible, stable, and stays on the foot. Dress shoes, slip-ons (without a back or back strap), flip-flops, or heels are examples of shoes that are dangerous on the playground, in gym class, and may not be worn at school.

### **Scents and Fragrances**

To protect those students and adults in the school with sensitivities and/or allergies, perfumes, colognes and after-shave products may not be worn to school. Please be mindful and use discretion when applying deodorants and other products which may contain fragrances.

### **Jewelry**

Jewelry that interferes with learning and activities will be removed.

### **Dressing for Special Events**

During the year there will be special events such as assemblies and concerts – students are expected to wear white shirts with collars or blouses with collars and black bottoms (either pants or skirts that fall to the top of the knee or longer.) For other events such as field trips and dances, the students and parents will be informed in advance as to the appropriate dress for the occasion.

### **Dress Code Consequences**

Students who do not meet the dress code requirements may be allowed to contact parents for appropriate clothing or may be given alternative clothing to wear for the day. Parents may be contacted by the student's class teacher to discuss dress code violations.

### **Electronics Policy**

Electronic items such as cell phones and any electronic music players may not be used at school. (Communication between parents and students during the school day should be made through the office, ext. 100.) A student may have a cell phone that remains on the teacher's desk during the school day. Otherwise cell phones are to be used outside of school hours and off campus. Electronic items found in violation will be taken to the Main Office or collected by the class teacher where they can be retrieved only by the parents.

### **Discipline Policy**

Each year we distribute The Denver Waldorf School Discipline Policy to all parents and teachers of students in Grades 6 – 8 at our school. This gives everyone a chance to reacquaint themselves with changes and also refresh their memory with the policies.

Parents are asked to read and discuss the Discipline Policy with their children during the first week of the school year. We have found that those students who have read and signed the document tend to have fewer difficulties with discipline issues.

As parents, you will know the best way to bring these matters to your children according to their ages and your own family values. It is very important that the students know and understand why these policies are in place.

### **Detention Policy**

Discipline involving Level One behavior as outlined in the Discipline Policy will be carried out in "detention" which is held Thursdays from 3:00 – 4:00 pm when all of the teachers are on hand for the weekly pedagogical meeting. This means that students with detention may miss or be late for sports practices or games, music lessons or other activities and appointments on Thursdays. Student notification of detention will occur at the time of the infraction. Parent notification of student detention will occur by the Wednesday evening before detention by phone and/or email. Should the occasion for detention occur on a Thursday, detention would be the following week.

### **Guidelines Addressing Sexual Misconduct by Students**

Governmental agencies, as well as the nation's courts and conscience, have made it very clear that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and that students are legally protected from it. What once may have been passed off as a "natural part of growing up - and the inevitable testing and teasing between the sexes" is now illegal.

The DWS Community fully supports all laws which are designed to protect our students from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment may be defined as: "Any form of unwelcome sexual behavior or conduct, imposed by one person upon another".

The laws of most states now recognize two kinds of sexual harassment:

- the requiring or soliciting of sexual favors through the use of power
- any unwelcome or unwanted communication or conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment normally requires a pattern of unwanted behavior; however, there are situations when one serious incident (even a single spoken violation) can constitute harassment. To help distinguish between innocent "horseplay" and unacceptable harassing behavior, experts suggest that the following test be used:

Four Point Test for Sexual Harassment:

1. Would you want your son or daughter treating others this way?
2. Would you be comfortable if such behavior were directed toward your sister or brother, your wife or husband, your daughter or son?
3. Would the behavior be offensive if it were videotaped and then viewed by girls or women you respect?
4. Likewise, would it be offensive to boys or men you respect?

Please note: intent is not a criteria for judging harassment. A student or adult does not have to intend to harass in order to be guilty of unacceptable or illegal actions.

Any sexual comment or behavior that makes one party experience fear, embarrassment or exploitation is against the law. Also, well intentioned "advances" are not permitted if a person has asked that they stop.

Please remember: the effects on victims can be devastating. The effects include depression, diminished self-esteem, alienation from school life and distrust of the opposite sex.

Some examples of sexual harassment (which can constitute acts of illegal sexual harassment):

Whistling or making catcalls; Sexual gestures; Teasing and taunting; Pulling down gym shorts; Asking personal, sexually oriented questions; Unwelcome touching; Leering or staring; Name calling; Flipping up skirts; Unwelcome requests for dates. Propositioning; Giving sexual gifts-, Stalking; Snapping bras; personalized graffiti; Off color jokes; Sexual or sexist language; Suggestive or descriptive letters or notes; Offensive T-shirts or caps; Distributing nude pictures; Grabbing or patting body parts; Unwelcome familiarities; Displaying pornographic materials; Sexual innuendoes; Graphic descriptions of girls or boys; Rating students' sexual attributes: Spreading rumors; Intimidation.

Please note that this list could continue with many more similar behaviors or comments.

Special concerns about student-to-student harassment:

- The potential for incidents is real in every school and every day.
- Some people (students especially) still don't think that it is wrong.
- Victims are often too ashamed or embarrassed to report incidents.
- Some people tend to blame the victim and some victims blame themselves.
- Failure to take appropriate action can literally cost responsible authorities their jobs, their reputations and even their life savings.

Why students don't report harassment:

Embarrassment in talking about it; Fear of retaliation or reprisal; Peer pressure; Self-doubt ("Am I the only one offended?"); Fear of loss of reputation; Reluctance to "cause trouble"; Distrust of the system in place; Fear for personal safety; Uncertainty about what constitutes harassment; Concern about the perpetrator's welfare; Fear that no one will understand or take complaints seriously; Lack of information on reporting procedures.

Therefore, we want our students and staff to know that we care.

We want all our students and staff to know the following two things very clearly:

- If you are a victim, feel free to report it. (See below.)
- If you are a violator, be certain that an investigation will be conducted and appropriate action will be taken EVERY time a substantial complaint is made.

Procedure:

Any student who feels that s/he is a victim of any form of harassment should inform a teacher or staff member immediately. It does not matter which teacher or staff member; it should be someone the victim chooses.

That teacher or staff member will work with the Administrative Director to ensure that an appropriate process is followed.

When someone claims sexual harassment, it is the school's responsibility to determine the credibility of the allegation, to reach a judicious conclusion, and to take appropriate action. The investigative team consists of three members of the school community: the class teacher, a teacher appointed by the faculty of the opposite sex from the class teacher, and the Administrative Director.

## **In Conclusion**

After many hours of work on this policy, the discipline work group realizes that there are situations that have not been mentioned, because they are matters of common sense and their inclusion would make this document even longer. There are also issues that cause a great deal of discussion and disagreement when raised *unless addressed without mentioning specifics*.

This whole document is intended to allow interpretation according to each situation, rather than following a rigid structure. Our intention has been to bring a document that clearly states our expectations about behavior to school and to follow these guidelines during the coming year, noting where adjustments need to be made or where clarification is necessary. The adjustments will be made when parents, teachers, and students have made their suggestions and agreement is reached about what needs to be changed, added or omitted.