



Shepherd Valley Waldorf School
Middle School Family Handbook

Version IV

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Why a Middle School Family Handbook?

Middle School is a time of tremendous growth and transition for the adolescent student. The Middle School students need to be challenged to raise their expectation of what they can accomplish.

The Shepherd Valley Waldorf School Middle School Family Handbook is a supplement to the Parent Handbook. The policies and procedures laid out in the Parent Handbook continue to apply to Middle School families and students. The Shepherd Valley Waldorf School Faculty recognizes the unique stage of development that occurs in Middle School and has created this Handbook to acknowledge that uniqueness.

This Handbook is intended to support your family's experience of Middle School by providing information on the curriculum, calendar of Middle School events, schedule of classes, dress code, and more. If you have any questions, please contact your Class Teacher or Linda Abelkis, Administrator.

Middle School - Overview

The Middle School Student is characterized by a growing independence of soul. He/she is no longer satisfied with goodness, beauty and truth as judged by another, but rather keen to explore his/her relationship to such high ideals. The students ask from the adults, knowledge of the world and a connection with the present time.

The Shepherd Valley Waldorf Middle School Faculty and Staff want to partner with parents to provide an environment of support and strength to meet these expectations. The Shepherd Valley Waldorf Middle School provides a curriculum that validates their experience of adolescence and provides schoolwork with real connections to the outer world.

The Middle School students are exposed to more subjects as their world expands. The relationship with the Class Teacher continues to be important in Middle School, and the student continues to form relationships with more Special Subject Teachers and deal with a more varied set of subjects; he or she is expected to do more homework and manage his or her time more independently.

Middle School Teachers are committed to academic excellence. The students will be evaluated through essays, artwork, class participation, timeliness, quizzes and tests.

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Middle School Curriculum

Main Lesson Blocks

SIXTH GRADE

Geography

Geography expands to include Europe (paralleling the study of Rome in history), South America and/or the Poles.

History

The History block often begins with a quick review of the life and conquests of Alexander the Great, followed by a study of the Aeneid. Important highlights of life in the Roman Empire are studied, including the rise of the Empire, the emperors, the Republic, conquests, government, building and construction, the life of Jesus, barbarian incursions, and the fall of the empire. Later in the year students delve into the life of medieval Europe. This includes, but is not limited to, feudalism, peasant life, knighthood, and the life of the monasteries. The life of Mohammed and the rise of Islam are studied. This naturally brings in the Crusades. Parallels to modern life become evident in this block.

Language Arts

Sixth Graders review parts of speech and verb tenses and write detailed reports and compositions. Grammar emphasis is on clauses, phrases, and the formulation of good sentences and paragraphs. Oral presentations of reports and research are given with an artistic component. Students practice lengthy recitation of epic poems. Class plays usually come from Roman or Medieval History. Biographies could be assigned for reports.

Math

The Sixth Grade Math curriculum is based on an intense review of previously taught material. This review is done in such a way that there is always something new. A continual theme through the year is the sense of number and the interrelationship between division, fractions, decimals, and percents, with fractions playing the central role. The main lesson blocks may include percentages, business math, geometric drawing, and the golden mean.

Business mathematics brings the students in touch with daily life and practical knowledge of finance. The study of geometry, both projective and the Euclidean constructions, are introduced.

Weekly homework assignments, organization skills, and keeping a neat notebook are emphasized.

Science

Physics and chemistry classes are added to the curriculum in Middle School. The study of science turns to the lawfulness that comes from cause-and-effect relationships in the physical world. The focus is on a threefold approach to the phenomena: observation, evaluation, and conceptualization.

Experiments are conducted before the students who are taught to observe the phenomenon rather than proving a theory. In Sixth Grade, the threefold approach is applied to electricity, magnetism, optics, acoustics and heat in physics.

The polarity between the heights and the depths is explored in the complementary studies of Astronomy and Mineralogy.

SEVENTH GRADE

Geography

Africa, South America and/or Asia may be studied, continuing the expansion outward from the local to the farther extents of the world from where we live.

History

The students study European history from the late Middle Ages, the age of exploration, through to the Renaissance. Key biographies of people who were forerunners of the times or individuals who particularly exemplified a character type from that time are studied in depth. As the curriculum moves towards the Reformation, the role of the Roman Catholic Church is explored with emphasis on the developments that took place within the church that contributed to the turbulence of the times. Not only are the changes that took place in the religious/political life studied, but also the explorers in science, art, and world travel. The students deeply immerse themselves in the art of the times through their own reproductions of the works of the Renaissance masters.

Language Arts

The Seventh Grade grammar lessons emphasize different styles of writing, use of an outline, paragraph format, self-editing, organization of compositions, note-taking, and the development of compound and complex sentences. Creative writing and poetry is practiced in the Language Arts block. Poetry continues to be spoken daily, and oral reports are given to the class. The class play is usually placed in the Renaissance or late medieval times. Independent reading with regular book reports gives the students an opportunity to explore different literature.

Math

The Seventh Graders' introduction to algebra in the main lesson is an important milestone in the development of the students' abstract thinking. This serves as a crucial foundation for studying mathematics in High School. Another central theme for Seventh Grade is ratios, through which Pi and irrational numbers are introduced. The study of geometry continues with the Euclidean constructions that were introduced in Sixth Grade, culminating in the Pythagorean Theorem. The students also spend time working with historical number systems and number bases.

Science

In Seventh Grade, a mathematical approach is applied for the first time to Physics content in mechanics, electricity, heat, and optics. In mechanics, for example, fulcrums are studied by first approaching the phenomena with seesaws and weights, and by identifying levers all around them in their homes and lives, then developing a rule or law. The students then use the rule to predict leverage and mechanical advantage for new arrangements. In chemistry, combustion, the lime cycle, and acids and bases form the content. The transformation of a substance through burning is an important highlight in this course.

The physiology of the human being, as well as nutrition, is also taught.

EIGHTH GRADE

Geography

The study of geography becomes more ambitious by encompassing the world through various approaches chosen by the teacher.

History

The Eighth Grade history curriculum strives to span the time from Elizabethan England through the 20th century by looking at the social, political and economic climates surrounding revolutions through individual biographies, art, literature and pertinent readings. Aspects of American history (The Revolutionary War, the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, Civil and World Wars) become familiar territory. The history of revolutions and its world-wide impact is also explored. WW1 and WW11 may be included in this study of current affairs.

Language Arts

Eighth graders learn to edit their writing, summarize written work, and solidify their grammar skills (passive and active verbs, direct and indirect objects, clauses and phrases, pronouns). The spoken work continues with more oral reports including biographies, modern history, and geography. Poetry continues to be a lively part of the main lesson. The class play is often Shakespeare or a modern play with rich use of language. Each individual now begins to understand a point of view and the dramatic themes used in acting.

Math

Much of our Eighth Grade math main lessons and practice classes are dedicated to the traditional topics covered in Eighth Grade including volumes, proportions, pre algebra and algebra.

Science

In Eighth Grade physics, students learn how certain concepts are applied to technology or natural systems. The content areas (heat, light, electricity and acoustics) are deepened and now include motors, and the study of pressure (hydraulic and pneumatic). Organic chemistry includes an overview of previous work with sugars, starches, proteins, fats and oils. Human anatomy from

the perspective of the musculoskeletal system is studied. The anatomy of the ear and the eye is also often taught at this time. The Eighth Grade curriculum may include the study of meteorology.

Weekly Subject Classes

Art

During 3rd and 4th Periods each Friday afternoon, the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grades will participate in art, crafts and practical skills classes, which will continue in four to six week blocks.

Students will submit their preferences and classes will be filled with attention given to overall balance. There are three blocks during the year.

These classes are subject to change, either from a logistics standpoint or lack of interest.

Eurythmy/Movement

Eurythmy lessons encourage the students to experiment and contribute their own artistic ideas in regard to the curriculum. Lessons are intended to reinforce the main lesson work. Parallel with geometry lessons, various geometrical form metamorphoses are practiced. These exercises encourage the student's growing capacity for orientation and abstraction and cultivate social awareness.

Rhythm, rod and symmetry exercises support recreating coordination. All exercises must involve coordination of sequences and attention to accuracy. In Seventh and/or Eighth Grade, the modes expressing spatial and soul elements are combined in longer dramatic or humorous poems, which will be performed for the school community. In connection to European history, the students will learn a variety of folk dances and they will be exposed to music from European cultures.

Games

A transition from cooperative games to competitive sports begins in Sixth Grade. Basic fundamentals and proper skill development is emphasized. The curriculum culminates in the Medieval Games, involving area Waldorf schools, in which students in a medieval period atmosphere, meet outdoor movement challenges that include group initiative events and individual obstacle courses.

In Seventh and Eighth Grades, additional team sports activities are introduced, while attention is given to perfecting technique and learning through practice. Emphasis is on sportsmanship.

Handwork

Handwork lessons include hand and machine sewing, highlighting the Waldorf Main Lesson curriculum.

Sixth Grade Students design and sew animals. Students in Seventh Grade hand sew dolls complete with clothes. Eighth Grade students learning about the Industrial Revolution will

machine sew their own clothing. The Handwork lessons are an engaging and lively way to enhance dexterity and life skills.

Math

Together with the math blocks, weekly math track classes are offered. Students can expect that homework will be assigned every class throughout the year.

Music

In choir and orchestra, the students learn more complex and challenging vocal and instrumental arrangements, demanding attention in the lesson. More instrument practice is needed outside of class. Recorders continue to be played in main lesson, with the alto recorder in the Sixth Grade and the bass recorder added in Seventh or Eighth Grade to the already proficient soprano and alto players, allowing for four-part harmony.

Woodwork

The fundamental tools students use for woodcarving are handsaws, chisels, gouges, rasps, files, and sandpaper. With these tools, they learn to shape, smooth, and polish wood. The underlying goal is to teach the students patience, perseverance, and pride in their work.

World Languages - Spanish/Chinese

Each World Language is taught in rotating blocks of four lessons per week for Middle School Students. This method serves to give the students a deeper connection and more familiarity with each language.

In Sixth Grade, a new Spanish World Language lesson book with texts, vocabulary, grammar, and verb work is introduced. Alternatively, the teacher may use the lesson book for texts and vocabulary and introduce a grammar book, which the students will add on to and work with through Eighth Grade. Earlier understanding of grammatical concepts is strengthened and verbs are now conjugated. The students are introduced to various tenses in the language. Students recite poetry and sing songs and begin to read more complex literature in the language, such as a story of Cesar Chavez and literature by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, respectively. South American and European geography may be explored through the world language classes.

Students in Seventh and Eighth Grade continue to review vocabulary and practice the basic grammar structures of Spanish such as verb conjugations and noun declensions. They will also be introduced to more complex grammar aspects of the language while developing more independence in using the learned structures both in speaking and writing. The students will be introduced to more sophisticated literature, and a reader may be added to the world language class. One of the goals is to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the historical and political developments of the Spanish speaking worlds. In addition, the students will explore the relationships of the Indo-European languages as well as the development of the English and Spanish language. Students can expect homework assignments in every class throughout the school year. New students are expected to have Spanish basics.

In this introductory year for Chinese, the studies will focus on language introduction, history, geography, social studies and calligraphy.

Middle School Schedule of Classes – 2011/12

The Scheduling Committee works each year to provide a healthy rhythm for both students and faculty. Following is the general schedule of classes:

		Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade
Monday	Extra Period	Skills	Skills	Skills
	First Period	Band/Orchestra	Band/Orchestra	Band/Orchestra
	Second Period	World Language	World Language	World Language
	Third Period	Eurythmy	Eurythmy	Games
	Fourth Period	Choir	Choir	Choir
Tuesday	Extra Period	Skills	Skills	Skills
	First Period	Band/Orchestra	Band/Orchestra	Band/Orchestra
	Second Period	World Language	World Language	World Language
	Third Period	Choir	Choir	Choir
	Fourth Period	Games	Games	Woodwork
Wednesday	Extra Period	Skills	Skills	Skills
	First Period	Games	Games	Language Arts
	Second Period	Handwork (animals)	Handwork (dolls)	Eurythmy
	Third Period	World Language	World Language	World Language
	Fourth Period	Woodwork	Woodwork	Games
Thursday	Extra Period	Skills	Skills	Skills
	First Period	Eurythmy	Eurythmy	Handwork
	Second Period	Practice	Practice	Eurythmy
Friday	Extra Period	Skills	Skills	Skills
	First Period	Practice	Practice	Language Arts
	Second Period	World Language	World Language	World Language
	Third Period	Art Electives	Art Electives	Art Electives
	Fourth Period	Art Electives	Art Electives	Art Electives

Middle School Operational Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential to an efficient and cooperative learning experience. The curriculum is created to promote the unfolding of the day, the week, and the year in a rhythm that allows learning to take place in a balanced way. Please keep absences for reasons other than illness to a minimum.

The Shepherd Valley Waldorf School Faculty expects that all students will be in attendance on all scheduled school days, unless they are unable to attend due to illness or other excused absence. Therefore, family vacations should be planned to coincide with the vacation days listed on the school calendar. Vacations and other unnecessary absences are disruptive both to a student's progress in school and to the teachers. Although every effort will be made by teachers

to assist a child who has been absent due to illness in making up missed schoolwork, this same extra effort will be made for planned absences only at the teacher's discretion.

Students will be ineligible to participate in an extracurricular activity on days they are absent from any portion of the school day.

Absence from the majority of a Subject Class qualifies as a quarter-day of absence. Absence from an Evening Assembly or a weekend festival (i.e., Harvest Faire or May Faire) qualifies as a half-day of absence.

A student who is absent five or more days in a semester is considered at risk. The class teacher will determine the appropriate manner for the at-risk student's family to assist the student to make up work and skills deficits as a result of absences. This may necessitate academic tutoring at the family's expense.

A student who is absent 10 or more days in a semester is considered excessively absent. Excessive absences may result in one or more of the following:

- Probation, which will require specific progress demonstrated by the student in relation to absenteeism;
- Required attendance at a fee-based Study Hall;
- Required academic tutoring at the family's expense;
- An inability to advance to the next grade or graduate from the school.

The College of Teachers and the Class Teacher will determine the requirements that result for each excessively absent student. Parents will be notified in writing of the requirements. Successful implementation of the requirements will be a condition for re-enrollment.

Class Plays

Middle School is a pivotal time for the adolescent. The young teenager is entering a new phase of life. Whereas earlier, a majority of their life and learning was imitative, they are now becoming creators. As their bodies and minds develop, they have the ability not only to create new life but also to create ideas, stories, music, and art. The world is their oyster. Yet, adolescence (which means "to wander") can be full of many seemingly tumultuous events.

Class Teachers choose the Class Play and cast accordingly. The Class Teacher continues to act as director of the play, although the increasing complexity of music, costumes, choreography, etc. make for increased involvement of a variety of teachers in the final production.

As always, the Middle School students will perform the play during a day performance for the appropriate grades in the school. Of course, the entire parent body is invited to the evening performance(s) of the play – it is especially important for the students to receive support and perform for an audience!

Dismissal

Students in the Middle School are not required to report to After School following dismissal if their parents have completed the Permission Form available in the School Office. Middle School students, with the required parental permission, will be allowed to wait by the kiosk or on the

Upper Grades Playground. They will not be allowed in the parking lot, on the basketball court or in the buildings.

Middle School parents will be required to complete the Permission Form prior to the start of school and return it to the office. This information will be provided to the After School and Gate Duty teachers shortly after the start of school.

Drivers and Chaperones

Drivers and chaperones on Field Trips must be fully prepared to support and enforce school policies. Disruptive behaviors should be reported immediately to the supervising teacher. Drivers and chaperones are asked to maintain a code of confidentiality about observations of the students and class, unless given permission by the class teacher.

Drivers need to be familiar with traffic laws for all the areas that will be covered. In addition, drivers need to observe the Media Policy while driving on car trips, unless otherwise directed by the Class Teacher.

Eighth Grade Class Trip

The Eighth Grade Class Trip is a memorable event that is highly anticipated by most students. This final trip celebrates their time spent together as a class. This is a special trip and offers the class closure for their time together at Shepherd Valley before heading off in different directions for high school. Chaperones for the Eighth Grade Class Trip are the Class Teacher and other Faculty Members. If the need arises, a parent may be asked to be a chaperone.

Fundraising

Class fundraising for the Eighth Grade Class Trip may begin in Sixth Grade. The requested schedule for the fundraisers is due at the beginning of each school year by September 30th for review by the Development Committee. The Development Committee will review all the requests to ensure a well-balanced fundraising calendar.

Graduation

The graduating Eighth Graders are honored in a lovely ceremony created by the combined efforts of the Eighth Grade teacher and the Seventh Grade students, teacher and parents. Parents and friends are invited to share and rejoice in this special event, which is traditionally held off campus.

Eighth Grade Graduation is an opportunity for the graduates to dress in more formal and festive attire. Students are asked to honor the Dress Code Policy as laid out in this Handbook.

The Seventh Grade hosts the Graduation every year by setting up refreshments, providing flowers and cleaning up the refreshment area.

High School Shadowing Days

During Eighth Grade, most students will spend class time shadowing at high schools. This time is often a very exciting and busy time for families. Parents are asked to please inform the Eighth Grade teacher of these absences at least a week in advance.

In the instance when a majority of the class is shadowing on the same day, the Class Teacher will modify the day's lessons for those students on campus to include Practice Periods or Study Hall.

New Students

Students who join the Middle School from other schools will be evaluated for academic and social development before acceptance. Students may be required to receive outside tutoring in world language and music to gain proficiency and to maintain overall class harmony.

Student/Parent/Teacher Conferences and Reports

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year. This year Fall Conferences will be held on November 7th, 8th, and 9th. Spring Conferences will be held on March 26th, 27th, and 28th. During the Conferences, students may join the parents for the conference at the teacher's discretion. The Student/Parent/Teacher Conference will include a review of main lesson work and goals for the coming year.

During both conferences, Subject Teachers will be available for subject class conversations.

In addition to these conferences, parents will receive a formal report at the end of the year that will provide a comprehensive review of the year's main lesson and subject curriculum including goals and expectations for the class as a whole. Teachers will also provide a summary of how the individual child meets these goals and expectations. Beginning in the Middle School, these reports are appropriate to share with the students at the teachers' and parent's discretion.

Sports Program

Cross Country

All interested Middle School students are encouraged to participate – there are no try-outs. Pre-season training begins in mid-August and the season continues through mid-October. Practices are held after school during the season. There are typically four or five meets (usually about two-mile distances) with area middle school teams, usually on Saturday mornings, with one or two after school during the week. The specific schedule is distributed at the beginning of the school year.

Tardy

A student who is tardy ten or more days in a semester is considered excessively tardy. This will result in the student being placed on probation. Probationary terms, which will be determined by the College of Teachers and the Class Teacher, will require specific progress demonstrated by the student in relation to tardiness. These terms will be put in writing for the student and family.

Middle School Student Policies and Procedures

Community Service

As a continued commitment to giving back to our community, the Middle School students will participate in a number of service-oriented activities as a class. The focus will be international, national and local causes.

Student Conduct Policy

Student Code of Conduct

We are all part of one human family. We will treat each other as we wish to be treated - with kindness, honesty and respect. We will listen when others ask us to stop a behavior which is perceived as disrespectful or unkind, and we will strive to find a courageous voice in ourselves to perceive and speak the truth when we witness such behavior in others. We will honor and uphold the dignity of each member of our human family with noble work and right action.

Standards of Conduct – General Expectations

- To honor and uphold the Student Code of Conduct.
- To be at school on time and in the classroom on time for every lesson.
- To help keep the classroom and the school grounds clean and tidy.
- To treat all property (not only personal property) with care.
- To remain within the school boundaries while at school and never to leave the school campus without permission.
- To remain in class and under the teacher's supervision unless the teacher has given permission to leave.
- To hand in all required assignments on time.
- To perform class work to the best of one's ability.
- To keep schoolbooks in good order, up-to-date, and in good condition.
- To not bring gum, candy, and beverages containing caffeine.
- To avoid possession of disruptive or dangerous items at school or at school functions.
- To avoid drug, alcohol or tobacco possession or use at school or at school functions.
- To honor the Electronics and Media Policy.
- To avoid sexual harassment or sexual contact with others. (An addendum will be forthcoming.)
- To honor the Dress Code.

In the Middle School, the supervising teacher may document the incident on a NOTICE OF CONCERN Form for parents to sign and return to the Class Teacher. After three violations within any six-month school period, more serious consequences will be necessary which include, but are not limited to, parent/teacher/student conference, community service, restorative justice sessions, suspension or expulsion. If the Class Teacher notices a pattern of unacceptable behavior, a meeting is held with the teacher and all students involved.

Dress and Grooming

Creating a form for education and fostering an active environment in the Middle School require an appropriate level of decorum in dress. All clothing must be clean, well fitting and in good repair. Students must conform to the expectations below, which promote movement, concentration, comfort, social inclusion, safety, and discourage 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 other school-related activities unless students are told otherwise.

Concerts and Assemblies

Concert attire is black pants or skirts and white shirts. Cello players are encouraged to wear pants or long, full skirts.

Curriculum Assembly attire is at the discretion of the teacher, and will vary depending on the presentation.

Concert and Curriculum Assembly attire is expected to be simple, clean, neat and in alignment with the standards expected during the school day.

Dresses

Sleeveless dresses that fit appropriately around the arms and do not expose undergarments may be worn. Dresses must be mid-thigh or longer. Dresses may not be tight fitting or “see-through” and may not expose cleavage, while the student is stationary or while in motion. Dresses must be free from distracting words, images, logos or media advertisements. No tank dresses are allowed.

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.

Hats

Hats or visors are recommended. At a teacher’s request, students may be required to wear a hat. Once inside, hats need to be removed and kept in backpacks or cubbies.

Jewelry and Accessories

Jewelry that interferes with learning and activities will be removed. Bling is not allowed. Chains, clamps or hooks attached to clothing are not permitted.

Makeup and Body Art

Wearing makeup is discouraged and students will be required to remove excessive makeup. Neutral or lighter shades of nail polish are permitted in the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grades. Artificial nails are not permitted. Markings or drawings on the skin are prohibited.

Outdoor Clothing

Sweatshirts, hoodies, jackets and sweaters (worn out-of-doors for warmth) with written or pictorial material will be hung on hooks after entering the classroom and may not be worn while inside.

Pants

All pants must be clean, well fitting and in good repair—no holes, rips, or frayed edges—and be worn at the waistline without sagging down (or fitting) at the hips. Undergarments should not be visible. Pants must be free from distracting words, images, logos or media advertisements.

Piercings

Piercing of ears is acceptable for girls and boys with parental guidance and consent—unless deemed too “extreme” (please confer with your teacher).

Scents and Fragrances

To protect those students and adults in the school with sensitivities and/or allergies, please be mindful and use discretion when applying perfumes, aftershaves,

deodorants, and other products that contain fragrances. Students need to be mindful of personal hygiene and take the necessary steps of personal grooming.

Shirts

Sleeveless shirts that fit appropriately around the arms and do not expose undergarments may be worn. All shirts must fall over the waistband of the pants, shorts, or skirts. The sleeves must not cover the hands. Shirts may not be tight fitting or “see-through” and may not expose cleavage or midriff, while the student is stationary or while in motion. Shirts must be free from distracting words, images, logos or media advertisements. No tank tops are allowed.

Shorts and Skirts

Students may wear shorts and skirts that fit at the waist and are not shorter than mid-thigh. Mini-skirts, short shorts and tight-fitting skirts are not allowed.

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, heels, rubber shoes or wedgies are examples of shoes that are dangerous on the playground and in gym class. These shoes are not allowed. Sandals such as Tevas, back-strapped sandals or other footwear with reinforced bindings secure enough to allow running and active play may be worn.

Special Events Dressing

In addition to Concerts and Assemblies, there will be special events such as field trips, class trips and dances where the students and parents will be informed in advance as to the appropriate dress for the occasion.

Consequences

Students who do not meet the dress code will receive a written warning to be signed by their parent. Students may be sent to the office until suitable clothing is obtained for the school day. The School Office has a variety of shirts that the student may be required to wear over his/her clothes for the remainder of the day. In these instances, the shirt needs to be washed and returned to school within two school days. Frequent violations of the Dress Code Policy will result in a parent/teacher/child conference and possible suspension.

Electronics

Students may not use electronic items such as cell phones, games, MP3 players, etc., during school. Communication between parents and students during the school day should be made through the office. A student may have a cell phone, which is turned to the “off” position, in his or her backpack to be used off-campus or outside of school hours on-campus with the permission of a teacher or staff member. Any electronic items found at school outside of students’ backpacks will be taken to the School Office where they can be retrieved only by the parents.

Media

Television, Movies and Video Games

Shepherd Valley Waldorf School is dedicated to nurturing children's capacities for creative imagination, healthy feeling, independent thinking, and active willing. We acknowledge the mainstream research showing the debilitating effects that media, including television, movies and video games, can have on the development of these capacities. Waldorf Education methods support the recommendations of childhood advocacy groups for play, movement and sensory motor development that underlie academic achievement in the early elementary school years. Screen time of any kind deprives the child of that physiological foundation. We ask that parents of Shepherd Valley students eliminate media exposure from the daily experience of the young child.

The degree of protection from media shifts in the Middle School. During this time it may be increasingly difficult to keep the students completely free from media exposure. Their experiences become more varied and the influence of the peer culture becomes stronger.

Class teachers of Sixth through Eighth Grade will help parents to monitor and modify media exposure. At this stage, care must also be taken that media exposure does not negatively influence the student's academic and social experience in the classroom. At the teacher's discretion in the Sixth through Eighth Grade, the limited use of media may be used in the classroom for educational purposes.

Computers, the Internet and Email

The foundations of Waldorf education rely on the richness of the child's direct sensory motor and social experience in the three dimensional world. The Internet is developing a reality of its own within our culture, but one which is founded on abstraction and isolation in a two-dimensional screen world. In all the grades, handwriting and personal exposition are emphasized in the curriculum. Premature use of a keyboard consists of mechanical activity, which undermines the skills and abilities being developed and nurtured in the classroom. The abstract, rapid and cursory nature of email also works against the fostering of grammar and composition skills so valued in the classroom. Chat rooms and Instant Messaging simulate true human connection, remove the child from direct experience, and build a false social context (at best artificial, at worst dangerous), weakening our efforts to promote the real, meaningful social relationships necessary for success in adult life.

The College of Teachers recommends that Middle School students do not have unsupervised access to computers, the internet and email. Classroom assignments and research topics may, at the discretion of the class teacher, utilize the Internet as a limited resource. The College of

Teachers recommends that student's access to computers is limited and under the guidance of an adult.

We urge parents to discuss these issues with the student's class teacher, especially if the student's experience is at variance with these recommendations. That will allow the parents and teacher to work out a viable approach.

It is necessary for us to remind parents that any student who disrupts the healthy classroom atmosphere through a lax media policy at home may be asked to leave the school.

Parent/Teacher and Inter-Classroom Email Discussions

The College of Teachers supports the adult use of email for discussion of classroom business (scheduling field trips, organizing fundraisers, meeting reminders, etc.). Likewise, the College of Teachers does not support the use of email for discussions involving the student's development, behavior, social issues, or academic issues. Those discussions are best held person to person, in order to achieve the greatest results.

Respect for School Property

In some courses, students may be given books that become their personal property. Sometimes the school retains ownership of books that are more expensive or difficult to obtain. Students are expected to return those books in good condition. Families will be billed for lost or damaged books through the Business Office.

Students are expected to be respectful of all school property and to take proper care with all desks, equipment, and the grounds of the school. Families will be billed for any damage to school property through the Business Office.

Study Hall

Middle School students who fall behind in their class work (academic and artistic) may be required to attend the Thursday Study Hall after school. Reasons for Study Hall attendance may include the following reasons:

- Extra help with a subject or skill, e.g. math or recorder
- Incomplete homework
- Incomplete main lesson work
- Behind in handwork

Students in Study Hall will be expected to work independently on their class work during this time. A faculty or staff member will supervise the Study Hall. Please note the Study Hall is not for detention purposes.