



**Stellenbosch  
Waldorf School  
High School Handbook  
of  
RIGHTS  
and  
RESPONSIBILITIES**

**LIBERTY | FRATERNITY | EQUALITY**

Revised June 2015

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## ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK:

This handbook is a result of input from parents, teachers, administrators and professionals, both in our own community as well as the broader Waldorf community.

It will be updated and revised when required.

## THE NEED FOR RULES:

Rules set clear parameters which can be understood by everyone and provide a coherent platform for our community to negotiate their actions within clear and considered boundaries. However, it is also understood that each case has its own set of circumstances and will be treated as such within the context of the ethos of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality.

## OVERVIEW:

Our approach is one of inclusion and open discussion, so as to encourage a change in behaviour in a positive rather than draconian style. The agreements contained in this document are based on the underlying principle of partnership between school/teachers, students and parents.

*“Human possibility is seen as infinite”*

Rudolph Steiner

Waldorf education consciously nourishes the inner life of the child, in order to start them on a life-long process of self-discovery. It places before them eminent persons or situations, who overcame inner struggle, transformed themselves and thus expanded the horizons of the human heart. The implications for social change are far reaching when we consider this. In line with the Waldorf ethos, we are striving to draw upon the 'will' of our young adults and teenagers, by appealing to their innate sense of right and moral justice. This too, places the incumbent responsibility and accountability in their frame of consciousness.

What images of human possibilities do the Waldorf schools seek to bring to the children as a model and inspiration?

The affirmation that the human being is essentially loving, compassionate, reverent, respectful, engaged, tolerant, peaceful, joyful, patient, upright, balanced and in harmony with nature and humans.

In line with the school charter (see page 5) our aim as Teachers and Staff, as Parents and indeed as a Community, is to provide, support and facilitate a comprehensive education of the whole child, that develops the intellect, social, emotional and practical competence of responsible, resourceful, confident, creative and caring individuals.

All children and young adults in our school have the right to this.

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC):**

A group of students will form a SRC and they will be involved in and monitor conduct. The SRC will be elected by the high school students and will serve on the committee for a year. This will allow for on-going evaluation and understanding of the needs and changes faced by our students and encourage open communication to achieve the best results for our students, parents/guardians, teachers and the school.

## CHARTER OF THE STELLENBOSCH WALDORF SCHOOL:

### As Teachers

- We facilitate the development of children into adulthood through academic, social, spiritual, emotional and practical experiences that enable them to realize their full potential
- We create a warm, welcoming and inspiring environment.
- We partner with parents to create a common value system, based on Waldorf Principles.
- We communicate openly and honestly with parents.
- We develop ourselves and our school to meet the needs of our time.

### As Parents

- We create supportive and caring class communities.
- We seek to understand the principles and ethos of Waldorf Education, and to ensure that our children are nurtured by healthy influences and protected from harmful ones.
- We communicate openly and share our concerns directly with teachers.
- We actively participate in and contribute to class and school activities.

### As a School Community

- We are a diverse community in social, cultural, spiritual and economic respects, yet we are united by common values and ideals for the education of our children.
- We organize our school on the basis of co-responsibility, participation and consensus, and a partnership between teachers, trustees and parents.
- We actively promote natural, organic and sustainable products and services
- We develop an awareness of, and include in our curriculum:
  - Organic and biodynamic agriculture and healthy nutrition
  - Sustainable resource use and waste management
  - Entrepreneurship, crafts and technologies
- We allow appropriate people engaged in professions, crafts and trades to work from our campus and teach their skills to students, parents and others
- We are creating a vocational learning centre that develops well-balanced, independent individuals, who are able to contribute positively to society
- We are committed to creating ecologically sensitive structures and a beautiful and inspiring natural environment
- As a land-based school, we actively practice Biodynamic / organic farming
- We undertake activities and projects that address needs in our local community

We provide a truly comprehensive education that develops the intellectual, social, emotional and practical competence of responsible, resourceful, confident, creative and caring individuals.

# BILL OF SOCIAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STELLENBOSCH WALDORF HIGH SCHOOL

We, the Community of Stellenbosch Waldorf School declare that all children have:

## THE RIGHT TO SOCIAL EQUALITY AND DIGNITY

I have the right to be treated fairly and equally.

We are all different, but I have the right no matter what difference, to be treated with dignity and respect as a valuable individual.

I have the responsibility to treat everyone else equally and fairly.

I respect that people think, look and act differently from me and that I will not engage in putting them down, bullying them or teasing them.

I will speak up when I see others being treated unfairly.

I will demonstrate my respect for you and myself, in the way that I dress, the way I act, and in the way in which I speak.

I will strive to be kind and compassionate and will show this by being warm and courteous to my peers, parents and teachers.

I have the responsibility to protect my own and others dignity by adhering to the dress code.

I will protect my own dignity by refraining from cheating, stealing and lying.

## I HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIFE:

I have the right to a healthy, happy, safe and fulfilled life.

I have the responsibility to speak up if I become aware that someone else is endangering themselves (such as through taking drugs, developing eating disorders etc.) in any way.

I will not endanger the lives or health of anyone else, by carrying any type of weapon nor engaging in hate speech or making any form of threatening remark.

## I HAVE THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION:

I have this right and value the gift that my Waldorf education provides me.

I have the responsibility to attend school regularly and to be on time.

Being part of this community means that I acknowledge that there are younger and older members of the community, who may be offended by inappropriate words and actions (including offensive clothing/dress style, language and inappropriate displays of intimate behaviour).

### **I HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM AND SECURITY:**

I have the right to be and to feel safe at all times.

I have the responsibility to behave in a way that does not threaten another person's sense of security which means I must not be physically threatening, verbally abusive nor sexually threatening either in word or action.

I have the responsibility to speak up if I (or anybody else) feel unsafe.

### **I HAVE THE RIGHT TO MY OWN PROPERTY AND POSSESSIONS:**

I have the right to own things and the right to keep my things without fear of theft or damage.

I have the responsibility to respect the property of others by neither stealing them nor damaging them. I also have the responsibility to leave items which have been determined as unacceptable by the school, at home.

### **I HAVE THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT:**

I have the right to a school environment which is safe and healthy.

I have the responsibility to keep to the rules of the school property and to abstain from littering, respect the rules of access, refrain from defacing or applying graffiti, and generally damaging property.

I will also endeavour to uphold the schools ethos of sustainable and responsible environment custodianship i.e. to respect the environment.

### **I HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION:**

I have the right to freely express my unique personality by the way I dress, speak and express myself.

I have the responsibility to abide by the school dress code regarding appearances. I will endeavour to ensure that the right to freedom of expression is not abused by my self or others by being disrespectful, telling lies, insulting others or hurting their feelings.

## THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS:

1. Be a positive role model for students to follow.
2. Conduct themselves in a responsible and professional manner.
3. Respect all persons, property and the confidentiality of information.
4. Refrain from inflammatory actions and remarks.
5. Develop sound working and inter-personal relations with colleagues, students and parents.
6. Promote open, regular channels of communication between home and school.

## THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS:

1. Ensure that their child attends school each day, is punctual and in case of absence, timeously inform the school of such absence.
2. Provide their child with the resources needed to complete school work.
3. Maintain financial obligations with respect to school fees.
4. Promote positive interpersonal relations between students, teachers and other parents, in the best interest of the whole community.
5. Refrain from abusive language or inflammatory behaviour.
6. Bring to the attention of the school, any problems, conditions or circumstances which may affect their child or other students or persons in the school environment.

## PRINCIPLES, AGREEMENTS and CONSEQUENCES:

### **MEDIA:**

Stellenbosch Waldorf School is dedicated to nurturing the capacities for imagination, health, emotional development, independent thinking and positive action.

We have to balance the unassailable truth that we live in a media driven world (Television, Video and Electronic games, MP3 players I-Pods, cell phones etc.) with the firm belief that electronic media not only affects people because of content, but also is out of sync with the rhythms of nature, replacing human warmth with electro magnetic forces that inhibit healthy sleeping and eating patterns. There is substantial documented evidence to support this.

Waldorf teaching relies on the children taking the content of a lesson, going home, sleeping well, and then returning the next day to easily recall and continue with what has been taught. During sleep, the lesson will have been digested, together with the mental pictures made by the children themselves, and they are able to relate and understand it better than they could the previous day. This is easily destroyed by the strong visual and auditory media consumed by a desensitized audience rendering them finally hardened and gradually numbed to the finer, real human qualities which are far more subtle.

Gratuitous violence, sexual intimacy and strong language have become standard script points in many films and television shows. It is also alarmingly prolific in the music of our children.

A special word on cell phones: when children have their cell phones with them, they have access to the world, and the world has access to them. The parental supervision you may exert at home, no longer applies when they leave home with their phones.

The ability to access the world means that children are at greater risk of sexual exploitation and attacks. They may even be at risk of intimidation, bullying and harassment by those around them.

Furthermore, children carrying cell phones and other objects of 'aspirational' or 'cool' status, become targets for theft. The more desirable and less attainable these items are, the more forceful the appropriation can become.

Cell phones should preferably not be brought to school. If they are brought to school they must be switched off before entering the school campus and can only be switched on when leaving the school. They must also be kept out of sight at all times. Should teachers note a cell phone / IPOD or other device, or see a student using such devices whilst on the campus, the device will be confiscated.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

Parents are expected with the support of their children to be mindful of the above and in so doing we must limit and use discretion around the media we consume and allow our children to consume. We are doing ourselves and our children no favors, by 'turning a blind eye' or by permitting them unlimited access to media. It is a conscious decision on our part which takes resolve and commitment.

As a school we undertake to continue to remind parents, about the harmful effects and to bring into consciousness any particular offensive and obstructive media gaining favour or popularity amongst our children from time to time.

We must encourage and support parents to exert limited discretionary viewing or consumption of media.

### AGREEMENTS:

I will use media with discretion and consideration in terms of time and content.

I will never use social media to undermine or bully another person. Nor will I use it to spread untruths, defamatory remarks, spread gossip or hate speech.

If I have to use my cell phone it will be used only for the purpose of making a phone call or text message after school ends. It may not be used for gaming or playing music whilst on school property. It must be switched off during school hours.

### DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES:

If a child is found using a cell phone for any purpose, without permission on the school property or on school outings, it will be confiscated.

The cell phone will be kept in the Administration office at the owner's own risk for 1 week.

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND SMOKING:

This policy has been drawn up in order to confront the reality of substance use and abuse in a responsible and constructive manner. Where substance use and abuse occurs, the underlying aim is to change behaviour rather than to enact punitive measures and in so doing work towards maintaining and developing health self confidence and self image. While it is the school's aim to help in situations of abuse, it must be stressed that the school views the possession, exchange and use by the students of this school, of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs, in a very serious light.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

As parents we acknowledge that we are in partnership with the school to ensure the best education and care for all children and we will encourage a healthy, drug-free life.

We recognise that students partaking in substance abuse outside of school can also be negative in that it may influence the student's achievement, behaviour or attendance and may affect or influence other students negatively.

We endeavour to support the school and all its students by being honest and forthright about matters of substance use abuse, and to try to be part of the change of the behaviour for the good of the child and the school community.

We will support the intervention of the school if in the school's opinion, a pupil is partaking in or involved in substance abuse either on or off campus.

As a school, we will endeavour to ensure a safe environment for all students, free of exposure to substance abuse and exposure to harmful substances.

We endeavour to support those students who are in need of help in this area, who are willing and honest in their desire for help.

We will at times present age appropriate intervention and information sessions to all students and parents, so as to objectively inform them of all issues relating to this matter.

We will endeavour to implement appropriate internal and external structures when needed including the involvement of outside organisation on a consultative basis.

We will conduct random and planned testing from time to time.

We will retain confidentiality as far as possible in the interests of the school and the student/s.

The school will deal with each case individually and fairly.

#### **PROCESS:**

We will test all students from Grade 10 upwards, on a random and also on a planned basis. Students in the lower grades (grades 8 & 9) could be tested if reasonable suspicion is found and this will be conducted with parent/guardian involvement and knowledge. The school will cover the initial cost.

If the initial test is positive, a further test will be conducted by a certified and independent pathology laboratory. This cost will be for the students' parents/guardians.

An agreement between the student, parents and the school will be drawn up which will specify, inter alia: what treatment the student should undergo; whether a report should be supplied to the school detailing the pupils progress in treatment; what further testing will be carried out where or if this is deemed necessary; who will pay for the costs incurred where testing is deemed necessary; standard of work and levels of behaviour that the school requires from the pupil; and, consequences for breach of the agreement.

#### **AGREEMENTS by STUDENTS OF STELLENBOSCH WALDORF SCHOOL:**

**I will not:**

Use or be in possession of prohibited substances (e.g. Dagga, Ecstasy, Cocaine, Tik).

Use (or be in possession of) prescribed/non-prescribed medicines inappropriately (e.g. Ritalin, Panado).

Use or be in possession of solvents inhalants or other chemical agents inappropriately (for example, thinners).

Use or be in possession of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.

Use or be in possession of drug related equipment (e.g. cigarette rollers, lighter and paper).

Be under the influence of alcohol and or other drugs.

Consume alcoholic beverages whilst on school premises, representing the school or in any capacity associated with the school.

Be involved in procuring, in transacting or manufacturing, such substances.

#### **DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES:**

Each case will be dealt with individually.

Consequences as determined by the agreement between affected parties may include or result in immediate suspension or expulsion from school.

Using or possessing tobacco or alcohol or inappropriately using other legal substances or possessing illegal drugs on the school premises:

1. Immediate suspension from school;

2. Implementation of an agreement with clear outcomes and procedures in consultation with parents/guardians which must also ensure the safety and responsibility to the peer group.

Manufacturing, transacting or distributing legal or illegal drugs:

1. Expulsion from school.
2. Where the offence is governed by any South African law or statute, the school may require the South African Police Service to investigate the matter and to institute legal proceedings.

### **ATTENDANCE AGREEMENT:**

Children must be ready to begin school at 08.00 for the morning verse and registration.

### **DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES:**

Late arrivals may result in an incident.

### **ABSENTEEISM:**

Absenteeism is taken seriously at school and provincial level.

Notification from parents/guardians is required at the office before 09.00 on each consecutive day that your child is away from school.

Absenteeism over 2 consecutive days due to illness or when a test is being written requires a doctor's letter.

Students may be required to write tests that have been missed during break or after school at the teacher's discretion.

Any requests for absence from school, or any special leave and especially from festivals, fair and class presentations, which are compulsory, must be made well beforehand and approved by the College of Teachers who meet every Thursday afternoon. This includes families taking their holidays outside official school holiday times.

A note from parents/guardians must accompany requests for absence during the day.

In the event of illness developing during the day, which necessitates absence, the class teacher and guardian must approve this.

When making appointments for the doctor, dentist, etc., please make every effort to make these outside of school hours.

If a student misses school for any reason, it is his/her responsibility to catch up and complete all work missed, and to ensure that all homework is complete.

Class camps, seasonal festivals, fairs and presentation of work evenings etc. are compulsory.

#### **DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES:**

If students are persistently absent without notification from parents, the teacher may ask that the parents be contacted to ensure that the parents are aware of the absenteeism and that a way is found to have the students attendance improved.

#### **HOMEWORK and WORK NOT HANDED IN:**

Homework and projects are an integral part of the curriculum at school. It is not an optional extra. All students are required to do their work on time and to hand it in accordingly.

Photocopying of other students work is not permitted.

#### **DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES:**

Homework that has not been completed to the satisfaction of the teacher may result in an incident and they may be asked to stay in at break or after school to complete it. This is solely at the discretion of the teacher.

Projects or work not handed in which is to be marked will be penalized with 5% being deducted per day over a week. If it is still outstanding and not handed in, the student will be given a zero grade.

#### **CLASS INVOLVEMENT and PARTICIPATION:**

Each student is expected to be focused and awake during class. Sleeping in class is not permitted.

#### **DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES:**

Sleeping or not participating to the level acceptable by the teacher may result in an incident.

#### **PLAY REHEARSALS in CLASS 9 and 12:**

Students may be required to attend rehearsals on weekends and/or after normal school hours and/or during school holidays. **These rehearsals are compulsory.**

## **DRESS CODE:**

Provocative or inappropriate clothing, make up, jewellery or hair styles are not acceptable. Inappropriate clothing includes “short” miniskirts and cut-away shorts and revealing tops

Piercings - ears only: one stud or ring in each lobe is permitted.

Tattoos may not be visible at all.

No high heels or platform shoes. Closed shoes to be worn for gardening and craft lessons.

Hair may not be cut into patterns or dyed bright unnatural colours.

No overt make up is permitted. You may wear eyeliner, mascara and clear lip gloss. No lipstick or eyeshadow.

Nail polish is permitted, it should be neat and look well groomed. No nail art is allowed.

For Festival days and whole school activities, we agree to respect the primary school rules. When visiting other schools we will respect their rules.

For drama, sport, eurythmy or movement classes, loose fitting, comfortable clothes must be worn.

## **DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES:**

Anyone who transgresses the dress code will be sent by the teacher to the Administration office to remove or cover any items where possible and may result in an incident. The parents may be contacted to ensure they are aware of the situation and to find a way to have the student abide by the dress code.

**INCIDENT PROTOCOL:**

Each incident, depending on what the infraction is, is dealt with the student first and if required, depending on the severity of the incident, the parents may be contacted and a meeting held so that the situation can be dealt with effectively.

If a student has three or more incidents in a term, they may be required to stay after school, failing that suspension is considered so that the student and parent can commit to their way forward at SWS.

## AGREEMENT CONTRACT:

### PARENT/GUARDIAN

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (insert full name of parent/guardian),

The parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert full name of child),

Hereby agree to abide to the agreements contained in this document in its entirety and understand that I am in partnership with my child, the school and the teachers to uphold these agreements.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

this \_\_\_\_\_ (day) of \_\_\_\_\_ (month), \_\_\_\_ (year).

## AGREEMENT CONTRACT:

### STUDENT CONTRACT

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (insert full name of student),

hereby agree to abide to the agreements contained in this document in its entirety and understand that I am in partnership with my parents, the school and the teachers to uphold these agreements.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

this \_\_\_\_\_ (day) of \_\_\_\_\_ (month), \_\_\_\_ (year).

[Please sign this and return it to school within 7 days [due date: \_\_\_\_\_ ]