PARENT COMMUNICATIONS at WCS

Edited 12/2024

WCS welcomes suggestions, comments, and/or concerns. This will ensure we are taking appropriate action regarding potential improvements to the school. Concern forms are available in the front office. Individuals with suggestions are welcome to fill out a form or send an email to the general school account: info@wasatchwaldorf.org. All forms and emails will be forwarded to school administrators.

Concerns

Concerns are a normal and natural occurrence among people working together toward shared goals. When we engage in moving a concern toward resolution, we model healthy human relationships for our students and for each other. Resolution can take a variety of forms, including:

- coming to a mutual understanding;
- recognizing the need for further work;
- agreeing to disagree, and agreeing, nonetheless, to treat each other with respect.

WCS has a three-level process to support concern resolution and improve parent staff communication.

Level 1: Speak to the Person Directly
Level 2: Contact Your Class Teacher or the Person with Direct Responsibility
Level 3: Fill out written form to start an Formal Concern

Th*ese steps are described in more detail below:*

At any level, inviting a mutually agreed upon Third Person as listener or facilitator into a conversation is always an option . The Third Person can be anyone from within or outside the WCS community. With honest, direct communication, most concerns can be resolved. A resolution may be documented with a formal agreement.

Level 1: Speak to the Person Directly, whether a parent, teacher, or staff member. Direct communication, with respect and sensitivity, is the groundwork for all conflict resolution. Keeping in mind the principles in Healthy Communications and Electronic Communications guidelines. (See Below)

Sometimes, before we have the face-to-face conversation to resolve an issue, we may want to process that concern with a friend. In that case, we select a mutually agreeable time and place for that meeting and ask our friend to keep the conversation

confidential. Afterward, we follow through by having the face-to-face conversation with the appropriate person to address our concern. If a friend approaches us with a concern, we encourage our friend to pursue a face-to-face conversation to address the concern, and we follow up with our friend later.

At WCS, we speak *TO* not *ABOUT* others.

Level 2: Contact Our Class Teacher or Individual with Direct Responsibility.
If a direct conversation has not yielded a satisfactory resolution to the concern, the next step is a conversation with the Class Teacher or Individual with Direct Responsibility (If the concern is with our Class Teacher or Individual with Direct Responsibility, then Levels 1 and 2 become one. If the concern is unrelated to class teaching, then the person with direct responsibility for the issue should be contacted. See the flowchart below.)

The Class Teacher or Individual with Direct Responsibility has a larger perspective that can often be helpful. He or she may be able to facilitate a resolution to the concern. Also, sharing your concerns can also help create a fuller picture for the Class Teacher or Individual with Direct Responsibility.

If necessary, invite a mutually agreeable Third Person to the conversation. The teacher or in the case of a third person being a CST member (see Level 3 below) will document the conversation for future reference and distribute to “needing to know parties” and do a follow up after a week.

If, after taking this action, we feel the conflict remains unresolved, we proceed to Level 3.

Level 3: Filing a Formal Concern.
If Level 2 has not brought satisfactory resolution and further action may be needed, the next step available for concern resolution is to request to fill out a Formal Concern Form.

Some issues rise above the level of interpersonal challenges: mis-communication, mis-perception, and mis-steps. These more chronic challenges may rise to the level of needing a supervisor’s attention or violating school policies, such as related to harassment, intimidation or bullying. These are outlined in our School’s Handbook and Human Resources Policy.

In order for School Administration to take formal action on such concerns, they need to be reported to the appropriate individual and documented. Sometimes, one report is not enough basis to take action, particularly if it is coming through a third party. Should there be a concern in which you feel action is appropriate, the next step is to complete a Formal Concern Form. The forms will be kept at the front desk or can be

printed from the school website. Forms should be handed over in person to the Executive Director, Emily Merchant. Forms with the required content are a necessary step in the process of initiating a formal investigation related to allegations of workplace misconduct as described in our policies quoted below.

Communications Flowchart

Who do I contact with my questions or concerns?

TOPIC	INDIVIDUAL	CONTACT
General Questions	Front Office / Kassie Balfe, Office Manager	801-871-3950 info@wasatchwaldorf.org
School Lunch	Brittany Salaz, Food Services Director	bsalaz@wasatchwaldorf.org
Family Council Meetings	Tifani Cox & Patty Hamel, Family Council Co-Chairs (Parent)	familycouncil@wasatchwaldorf.org
Fundraising	Rhiannon McDaniel, Fundraising Committee Chair	fundraising@wasatchwaldorf.org
Building Use, Care & Security	Sus Edmondson, Facility Manager	sedmundson@wasatchwaldorf.org
Preschool Enrollment & Aftercare	Tricia Sullivan, Wasatch Family Foundation Director	tsullivan@wasatchwaldorf.org
Pedagogy	Pedagogical Advisory Committee: Nicole Denison, Chair Annemarie Goslow Michelle Woods Julia Macdonald Veronica Seidemann Jill Bell Annelise Slater	pac@wasatchwaldorf.org
State Standards & Intervention/Assessment	Pedagogical Advisory Committee Literacy Coordinator: Rachel Fleming Math Coordinator: Alison Hodgkin Assessment Coordinator: Samantha Cornia	pac@wasatchwaldorf.org rfleming@wasatchwaldorf.org alison.hodgkin@wasatchwaldorf.org scornia@wasatchwaldorf.org

Enrollment, Attendance & Student Records	Kara Salisbury, Administrative Director	ksalisbury@wasatchwaldorf.org
Special Education, 504 Accommodations	Heather Campbell, Student Support Director	heather.campbell@wasatchwaldorf.org
Festivals	Michelle Simmons, Festivals Committee Chair	michelle.simmons@wasatchwaldorf.org
Drop-off & Pick-up	Kadi Samake, Traffic Committee Chair	ksamake@wasatchwaldorf.org
3 Streams	Marta Gradilone - Rodriguez, 3 Streams Coordinator	3streams@wasatchwaldorf.org
Employment Opportunities	Kara Salisbury, Administrative Director	ksalisbury@wasatchwaldorf.org
Administration, Procedures & Governance	Emily Merchant, Executive Director, Administrative Team or Pedagogical Advisory Committee	emerchant@wasatchwaldorf.org adminteam@wasatchwaldorf.org pac@wasatchwaldorf.org
Personnel Issues	Emily Merchant, Executive Director	emerchant@wasatchwaldorf.org
Student Discipline	Heather Campbell, Student Support Director or Kara Salisbury, Administrative Director	ksalisbury@wasatchwaldorf.org heather.campbell@wasatchwaldorf.org
Governing Policies	Melissa Jensen, Board President	melissa.jensen@wasatchwaldorf.org
Classroom Practices & Concerns	Special Subject or Class Teacher	firstname.lastname@wasatchwaldorf.org or firstinitiallastname@wasatchwaldorf.org (when in doubt, email both)
Still Uncertain? You may request direction from the PAC as to who to communicate with regarding your concern.		

Healthy Communication Guidelines

At WCS, we seek to create an authentic and nurturing community of students, faculty, staff, parents, neighbors, and friends. We would hope that each “single soul reflects the total community, and the community itself is reflected in the single soul” (Rudolf Steiner). As adults in this community, we are obliged to provide models worthy of imitation for the children. If we are to foster respect, we must model respect in our interactions with each other. Our school is

committed to positive adult communication, based on mutual respect. We are committed to an atmosphere where different perspectives are heard and valued, and confidentiality is respected.

One of the 12 senses described by Rudolf Steiner is the sense of ego—meaning a sense not of oneself only, but a cultivation of sensitivity to others. Though it is natural for questions and concerns to arise within any community, sensitivity and respect allow such concerns to be communicated in a productive and constructive manner. An important starting point is recognizing that the first priority is serving the best interests of the students. All respectful adult interactions, large and small, lead to building a healthy environment for student learning. All respectful adult communication serves to model appropriate, constructive and adult behavior.

To accomplish this goal, we abide by certain principles:

- We demonstrate respect, in both what we say, and how we say it.
- We focus on issues, not individuals. We assume that others are acting out of their best intentions.
- We keep an open mind. We are positive and flexible. We ask questions first.
- We respect the confidentiality of information imparted in confidence, including that shared in group meetings. We honor the need of others to do the same.

Guidelines

- When a question or issue arises concerning another person (a class teacher, a subject teacher, a staff member, or another parent), we take it up appropriately and, as soon as possible, we have a face-to-face conversation with that person. Asking a clarifying question is often all that is needed to solve an issue. We demonstrate respect by speaking to people directly, rather than taking the issue to others when the one with whom we have an issue is not present.
- We respect others' time and priorities by arranging for an appropriate time and place for the conversation. (Teachers will respond to a meeting request within one to two work days.)
- We strive not to take things personally. We listen with an open heart and mind.
- We use email and texting thoughtfully, keeping in mind the four Principles above.
- We familiarize ourselves with these communication principles and guidelines and encourage others to use them.
- We do not condone or tolerate verbal, physical or sexual harassment.

Guidelines for Healthy Electronic Communication

Electronic Communications and Social Media

Electronic communication has become an essential part of adult life. It is a tool that can be helpful in transmitting simple or large amounts of information, coordinating activities, and expediting plans and processes. However, email lacks the key visual cues, nuances and inflection of direct communication, which can cause misunderstandings; thus, problem-solving can be better achieved face-to-face. Electronic communications present unique opportunities and

challenges, some of which have the potential to create division within our community. The following guidelines will aid us in our work together as a community.

Email

Email is not a venue for resolving problems or raising concerns. Individuals with concerns may use email to request a meeting to discuss an issue, but should plan to meet face to face to address any sensitive or highly charged topics. Staff receiving emails that raise concerns may ask for an in-person meeting with a facilitator to resolve the issues, rather than providing a written response.

Teachers and staff sending emails should always be conscientious of only relaying factual occurrences and observations, not making judgments or interpreting student or parent behavior.

Cell Phone Usage

WCS is a cell-free zone. All adults are expected to put away phones while in the building, particularly in public areas. Phones are not to be used in the classroom or on the playground or in other spaces when with the children. Personal calls and messages can be placed in the offices and empty classrooms, etc.

Electronic Communication Guidelines

- **Write a draft first**. Save it and read it again the next day before sending.
- **Use "I" statements**. "You" statements are often perceived as an attack. Making the same statement from the "I" perspective can avoid this perception.
- **Express needs and wants rather than judgments or critiques**; we always need solutions to our challenges. It is also helpful to try to imagine what the other person's needs and wants are as well.
- **Respond completely to all questions**. If we do not answer all the questions in the original email, we will receive further e-mails regarding the unanswered questions, which can waste time and cause considerable frustration.
- **Do not write in CAPITALS**. Writing in capitals can be interpreted as shouting. This can be highly annoying and might trigger an unwanted response in the form of overly emotional e-mail or unspoken resentment or misunderstanding.
- **Do not overuse "Reply to All".** We should only use "Reply to All" if it is critical that our message is seen by every person who received the original message.
- **Speak for ourselves, not for others**. It is not appropriate to speak for or refer to others who have not spoken on their own behalf. Generalizations and assumptions can create a false impression.
- **Use cc: field sparingly**. Using the cc: field can be confusing since the recipients might not know who is supposed to act on the message. We must not "cc" others as a way to expose or shame. In general, we try not to use the cc: field unless the recipient in the cc: field knows why he or she is receiving a copy of the message.
- **Re-read the entire email before sending it**. Reading email through the eyes of the recipient will help us create more effective messages and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

Tone of communication: People sometimes write something they might not feel comfortable saying in person. It is important that we take time to reflect on the content and tone of emails *before they are sent,* and that we never say something in an email that we would not say in person. This is particularly important when emotions are high; it is all too easy to hit "Reply", or worse still, "Reply all," and fire off an immediate response to something another person has written. Often, our immediate response doesn't adequately reflect the complexities of the situation and the delicacy of feelings that may have arisen. If a particular piece of writing evokes a powerful emotional response, it can be helpful to pause and reflect on where that reaction comes from — is the response particularly influenced by our own thoughts, assumptions, previous experiences, feelings or beliefs, over and above what the other person has actually written?

Confidentiality: A request for confidentiality, even in electronic communication, must be honored absolutely, unless there is threat of physical harm, in which case you should file a police report with local law enforcement. If the threat is from a member of the WCS community, report the incident immediately to the Executive Director Emily Merchant. In discussion groups, communication within the specified discussion groups should remain within those groups and confidential, unless the group agrees to approve the sharing of such communication with other individuals. Only persons authorized to represent any discussion group to another group should engage in communication between those groups. In this spirit of confidentiality, it is best to carefully consider the intentions of the sender as well as the possible implications prior to forwarding email or text messages to any other recipients.

Prohibited content: Electronic communication is not to be used for the creation or distribution of any offensive or disruptive messages, including messages containing offensive comments about race, gender, age, sexual orientation, pornography, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability. People who receive any emails with this content should report the matter to the Executive Director, Emily Merchant.

School resources may not be used to promote personal agendas, political agendas, businesses, or to market to colleagues or parents.

Use Proper Netiquette at All Times

"Netiquette" means bringing conscious etiquette and manners to behavior in electronic communications. Email communications, text messages and postings on the School's social media cannot be held as private communication or even necessarily held within the WCS community. Social media sites are especially vulnerable to wider dissemination. In internet communication, as with any other communication, respectful and polite language is expected. Be mindful that electronic communication outlets are not appropriate for wider discussions of personal matters or personal concerns. Also, be aware that referencing the names of others in these communications must be done with care and respect for the privacy of students and parents, and only with their explicit consent.

Guide to Text Messages

Text messaging is to be used for limited school communication. It should be reserved for personal communications, time sensitive communications, or emergency contacts, not for sharing concerns or resolving issues. See below for additional details.

Guide for Teachers and Staff Sending Texts	
APPROPRIATE	**INAPPROPRIATE**
<u>To Other Staff</u> ● Personal communication, not school related, if friends (*please note even this can be discoverable in a legal situation*) ● Logistical information: coordinating meetings, events, responsibilities,etc. ● Time-sensitive information: illness, emergencies ● A reminder to check email for important communication	<u>To Other Staff</u> ● Concerns or complaints ● Information about specific students or colleagues
<u>To Parents</u> ● Personal communication, not school related, if friends (*please note even this can be discoverable in a legal situation*) ● Logistical information: coordination of meetings, field trips, student online work ● Time-sensitive information: emergencies, changes in plans ● A reminder to check email for important communication	<u>To Parents</u> ● Concerns about their student ● Incident reports ● Grades / assessment scores ● Information about other faculty, staff, students or parents ● Unprofessional content
<u>To students</u> ● Logistical information: coordination of meetings, field trips, student online work ● Time-sensitive information: emergencies, changes in plans ● A reminder to check email for important communication	<u>To students</u> ● Personal communication that is not school related ● Information related to incidents at school ● Information about any other students or faculty
Parents Texting Teachers & School Staff	
APPROPRIATE	**INAPPROPRIATE**
● Personal communication, not school related, if friends (*please note even this can be discoverable in a legal situation*) ● Logistical information: coordination of meetings, field trips, student online work ● Time-sensitive information: emergencies, changes in plans	● Concerns about their student ● Questions about curriculum, classroom happenings, etc. ● Anything outside of typical work hours
Students Texting Teachers & School Staff	

APPROPRIATE	INAPPROPRIATE
● Time-sensitive information: emergencies, changes in plans ● Assignment-related information	● Personal communication, not school related ● Concerns / issues ● Information about other students or school staff