

# Mountaintop Waldorf School Parent Handbook

Both parents from each family are asked to read through our handbook, which provides information about our school and asks for your cooperation with our policies. Please answer all questions and click "submit" at the end. Thank you.

\* Required

## Mountaintop Waldorf School Mission Statement

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Our goal is to provide a warm, calm, secure, aesthetic environment in which the imagination and creativity of your child will flourish. We are here to provide a loving, homelike setting that allows each child to grow to his or her full potential.

Mountaintop Waldorf School is a community for children and families and is a full member of WECAN, the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America. <http://www.waldorfearlychildhood.org/wecan.php>

## Foundation of Waldorf Early Childhood Education

### The Three R's

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Reverence, Repetition, and Rhythm, is what is most needed for the young child. The natural reverence children experience in nature is supported in all we do and in our outside play in all weather. We provide structured group activities consisting of finger plays, singing, reciting poems, and doing full body movements at circle time. Fairy Tales and stories are told to the children on successive days, sometimes culminating as a puppet show offered to the children by the teacher. Arts and crafts consist of water coloring, sculpting with beeswax, coloring, finger knitting, and baking bread. The child's unfolding imagination and creativity through free play, art, drama, music, oral recitation, and dance/movement, is the goal for his or her healthy development.

# Privacy and Partnership

## Our Privacy Policy

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- We will do all that we can to protect your family's privacy and will abide by the state privacy laws.
- We will keep all records and information about your child and your family private and confidential, unless we have your written permission to reveal specific information.
- You may contact us to discuss issues about your child up until 9pm on weeknights.
- We do not discriminate based on race, color, sex, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, or public assistance status.

## Our Partnership Agreement

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We will need to work together to ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop his or her full potential.

We agree to communicate regularly about the child's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual growth.

You will keep teachers informed about any change in the child's schedule, routine, or home environment. We will do the same for any changes in the school that affect the child.

You will notify teachers about any allergies or other health issues that the child is experiencing.

You agree to follow the policies of Mountaintop Waldorf School.

### 1. Partnership Agreement \*

*Check all that apply.*

I agree to the terms of the Partnership Agreement as stated in this handbook.

## Our Records for Your Child

We will keep the following records for your child; you are responsible for updating these records immediately when any of this information changes:

- Emergency contact information, including the name of a backup person in case we are unable to reach you, and the phone numbers of the child's doctor and dentist
- A list of everyone who is authorized to drop off and pick up the child
- A signed and completed enrollment form
- Any special care or health requirements for your child
- A signed consent form to obtain emergency medical or dental care
- Written permission to transport your child
- According to state law, you must provide updated immunization and medical records every 12 months for preschoolers.

### 2. Record Policy Agreement \*

*Check all that apply.*

I agree to provide all information stated above and notify Mountaintop of any changes or updates.

## Gear and Attire for Your Child

### Dressing for Outside Play

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Young children are in the process of developing their sense of temperature. They do not yet have the ability to make decisions about the appropriate layers for the various conditions they may encounter. It is the responsibility of parents to see that the children are suitably dressed for the day. It is the responsibility of teachers to see that the children maintain proper layers throughout the day. Going outside in all types of

weather helps the child to become more robust and strengthens their connection to the natural environment.

## **Clothing**

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Play clothes are the order of the day, the kind that will stand up to dirty knees, the sandbox, the slide, and mud pies. Shorts are allowed in warm weather. Simple shoes and sneakers are appropriate, but not shoes with lights on them. When purchasing your child's school wardrobe, please keep in mind that much of the clothing on the market is trendy and not suitable for children. Parents are requested to refrain from dressing children in attire containing commercial characters. Simple, general images are fine; on the other hand, recognizable commercial characters are distracting to the children and create a different energy in their play (for both those wearing the clothes, and their friends who see the images). If it is found necessary for the child to have such items, it will feel even more special to them if they save it for home use.

## **Extra Clothes and Labeling**

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Each Child has a cubby at school for extra clothes and outdoor gear. All clothing and gear must be labeled with your child's name. Please check cubbies each week to see what is available and bring clothes that are appropriate for the weather (ie, extra mittens and socks in winter, long sleeves and pants for cold weather, etc.). If your child requires a change of clothes and you have not left any clothing, we will use other clothing that we have on hand. These are to be laundered and returned as soon as possible.

## **Extra Clothing and Outdoor Gear**

This information is intended to be helpful to both parents and children-- please read through and contact your child's teacher if you have any questions.

## **Required Cubby Items for the Little Ones Class**

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- Secure, non-slip "indoor shoes" or slippers, which will remain at school.
- Two complete sets of clothing marked with his/her name and appropriate for

the season, including sweater/sweatshirt, shirt, pants, and socks.

- Two (2) extra sets of underwear, for those who are potty-trained.
- A supply of diapers and wipes, for those in diapers.

Additionally for the Little Ones, as the day's attire is chosen, opt for clothes that will set your child up for success in emerging self-care, i.e., elastic waistbands rather than snaps or ties, pull-overs rather than buttoned shirts, and mittens rather than gloves.

## **Required Cubby Items for the Mixed Age class:**

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- Secure, non-slip "indoor shoes" or slippers, which will remain at school.
- Extra set of clothing for your child that is appropriate for the season, including a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks.

## **Our Outdoor Gear Policy**

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"Whether the weather be cold, whether the weather be hot,  
We'll weather the weather, whatever the weather, whether we like it or not."  
– Anonymous British (adapted)

Quality outdoor gear is essential to maximizing the child's experience in the natural environment. With sufficient layers and sturdy, warm, and waterproof gear, children delight in outside play, no matter what the weather, and will fully engage in their preferred activities.

Throughout the year, the child should be sent to school in the appropriate gear for the elements. During the winter, this includes, a jacket, hat, neck cozy/warmer, mittens, a snowsuit/pants, and boots. In rain/mud seasons, we require that each child have a full set of rain gear, which remains at school. Below is our approved list of rain gear. We respectfully ask that you have this rain gear on the first day of school.

## Necessary Outdoor Gear for Outside Play

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- Rain (possible rain days) – rain jacket and rain pants, or a one-piece suit and rain boots. (Please refer to school's policy below on outdoor gear)
- Winter (cold weather) – winter coat, hat, scarf, mittens, a snowsuit or pants and boots.

## Approved Outdoor Gear

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For both the Mixed Age and Little Ones, we strongly suggest the following options:

1. Polarn O. Pyret: Overall rain pants, rain coats, and fleece-lined rain suit.

We have a relationship with Polarn O. Pyret, which entitles you to a 20% discount off all regular-priced outerwear purchases, which includes merino wool, shell, wind fleece, winter jackets, rain wear, etc.. To take advantage of this, complete the Program Sign Up link:

[http://www.polarnopyretusa.com/outdoor\\_schools\\_form](http://www.polarnopyretusa.com/outdoor_schools_form)

Complete the form to create your own personal customer account, when asked "Affiliated Outdoor School & Address," specify Mountaintop Waldorf School - 68 Band Camp Road, Saugerties, NY 12477- as your school. Once you submit, please allow 24 hours for your confirmation from Polarn O. Pyret. Once you receive this confirmation, your 20% discount will be in effect. Once you have created your own customer account, you may join their loyalty program at [https://www.polarnopyretusa.com/pop\\_plus](https://www.polarnopyretusa.com/pop_plus).

2. Puddle Pants and Jacket by PlayShoes. A fleece-lined option is available to help keep the children warm and dry.

Available at Amazon and at:

<https://atoygarden.com/collections/puddle-pants-rain-gear>

Visitors to the website will be prompted to join the email list when they first arrive at the site, and signup will generate a coupon code good for 10% off their first order.

### 3. Oakiwear:

- Oakiwear Kids One-Piece Waterproof Trail Rain Suit
- Oakiwear Children's Core Rain Jacket
- Oakiwear Kids' Trail Rain Pants

Available at [Oakiwear.com](http://Oakiwear.com) or Amazon.

If using the Oakiwear website:

Use this code: 'oakischool'

Orders of \$75.00 or more enjoy free standard shipping, 5-7 business days.

\*Please Note Code Restrictions\*

This coupon code may not be used on or work with:

1. 'Hot Deal' or bundled product packages promoted on the Oaki.com homepage or on the 'Matching Sets' tab as these products are already offered at a large discount
2. Additional online discount codes
3. Other advertised/marketted sales promotions

Others to consider:

- Suse's Kinder: [http://www.childrensneeds.com/Kids-Rain-Bibs\\_c\\_18.html](http://www.childrensneeds.com/Kids-Rain-Bibs_c_18.html)

### 3. Clothing Agreement \*

*Check all that apply.*

I agree to dress my child(ren) in the appropriate rain and/or snow gear each day when needed.

## Eating Together and Celebrations

## Food and Nutrition

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Food is offered to the children, but they are not required to eat it. We will notify you if we notice changes in your child's eating habits. Please notify us in writing if your child has a food-related allergy. Snack is typically

served at 9:30am. Lunch is served at 11:00am (Little Ones) and 11:15am (Mixed Age). Daily food is provided by Mountaintop. One day of the week is “Soup Day” – a day when children are invited and encouraged to bring a vegetable or soup ingredient for our weekly pot of soup. The children delight in their contributions and the discussion around their offering for the soup.

Gathering around the table together is a meaningful aspect of our social life. All children participate in this community embrace of warmth and nutrition. Food prepared lovingly by the teachers is served family-style, as all gather around the table and are nourished by the organically-grown fruits, vegetables, protein, and whole grain of the day, yet another grounding rhythm to our days and weeks. The weekly menu is communicated to parents at the beginning of the year, enabling families to complement their home offerings to those provided at Mountaintop.

## **Birthday and Holiday Celebrations**

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Birthday celebrations are a very special event for each child. In the Mixed Age class, parents are invited to join the class at 10:45am for the birthday celebration and stay through lunch with the class. Parents will provide a special treat to share at lunchtime. There is a special birthday story told by the teacher. In preparation, you will be asked for a short biography of a few events from each year of your child’s life. These events will be woven into the birthday story. The birthday child will wear a special crown and cape and receive a gift from the class and the teachers. Please talk to us about scheduling as the day approaches.

In the Little Ones Program, the birthday celebration is quite simple, yet special for the children. The class celebration consists of a puppet show and a small, special snack provided by the birthday child’s parents. There is no parent involvement, aside from sending in a treat. We find that parent participation at this age is a distraction to the children. The snack can be along the lines of fruit, a small cookie, or a muffin and is served during our morning snack time.

We will also celebrate the changing of the seasons with the children as a community. These include: Michaelmas in September, Lantern Walk in November, Winter Garden Spiral in December, Pancake Day in March, May Day, and our Annual Summer Sailing Regatta at the school year’s end. These festival days bring the parent community together to observe, welcome, and celebrate these transitions of the seasons connecting us to our natural world. We encourage parents to mark these dates on their calendars (see school calendar) well in advance, in order to enjoy this time with their child and the Mountaintop Community. Some of these festivals are for the Mixed-Age class only and are noted on our school calendar.

## Behavior Guidance

At Mountaintop Waldorf School we take many measures to prevent behavior problems. Our goal is to support the development of self-discipline within each child and to help him or her develop social skills. Our own professional and inner work brings understanding of childhood developmental issues and gives us realistic expectations for the children. We strive to model ideal behavior through our interactions between ourselves, as teachers, with the children, and with you as parents. The rhythm of our day goes a long way toward helping the children develop inner form and the impulse to care for others, their playthings, and their environment. The classroom environment also effects behavior; therefore, utmost consideration is given to the physical space of the classroom.

We will always share any concerns, or specific incidents we have about your child with you as we hope you will share with us any events that may be stressful in the life of your family that would affect your child's behavior in school.

## Encouraging Good Behavior

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Behaviors that are not welcome:

- Biting
- Hitting
- Aggressive behavior
- Threatening/disrespectful language
- Bathroom talk

Behaviors that will be encouraged:

- Inside voice
- Walking feet indoors
- Cleanliness/responsibility and care for toys
- Sharing/taking turns
- Good table manners

Redirection will be used to guide children from behaviors that are not welcome towards behaviors that we wish to encourage. Time outs are our last resort when children cannot contain themselves and need space from other children's view to think about their behavior and to pull themselves together.

## Approaches to discipline that are used at Mountaintop Waldorf School are:

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- Gesture- Without calling or speaking, we indicate with a gesture what we would like the child to do (ie, sit down, quiet, etc.).
- Royal “we”- Speak in “we” rather than individualizing the children. This helps them to learn participation. Ex: “Now we are sitting down” or “We are putting on our shoes.”
- Privileged “may”- When asking a child to do a task or deed, we speak with truthfulness. We don’t phrase a request as a question if we do not truly want to receive a yes or no response. Ex: “You may close the door.”
- Pictorial Language - Children live in pictures. When we make a request through the use of creative language, children often respond with delight and enjoyment. Ex: to encourage a child to help put all the “food” back in their play kitchen we might say: “Let’s collect all the muffins in the basket” or “Don’t let the ice cream melt—let’s put it in the freezer.”
- Use of an even, objective tone of voice. When our voice wavers and escalates to urgency, we lose ourselves (our consciousness) and the child loses respect for us. Discipline is for the benefit of the child and is done with love and respect.
- Save “NO” for harm to self and others. Otherwise, we tell the children what they may do rather than what they may not. We describe what we want to see the child doing.
- If NO, then when YES? What are the underlying needs of the child? Is there a more appropriate way for them to have that need met? Ex: If the child is knocking another child’s block castle over, we can create a place where things can be knocked over and broken down.
- Create healing relative to the deed. Ex: We have the child who hurt another help with the healing of the injured child by giving them an ice pack or just a kiss on the boo-boo.
- Objectify the deed. By seeing the inherent good in each child, we can then separate their behavior from who they are. This prevents the child from seeing him or herself as “bad.” Ex: “I see those hands are knocking into things, let’s make them warm, or help them do good work.”
- Healing stories - Stories are told that provide examples and models of how to treat one another with

kindness and gentleness. These moral lessons, told through stories, sink deeply into the child's consciousness and provide a way for them to check their behavior.

## **Our Behavior Guidance Policy**

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Our approach to any difficulties with behavior:

- We use behavior guidance that is fair, reasonable, and suited to the age of the child.
- We do not use any corporal punishment (spanking) in our program.
- If a child persists in problem behavior (hitting, biting, breaking toys, etc.), we will ask you to come and pick up the child from school for the remainder of the day.

## **We are Mandated Reporters**

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We are state-mandated reporters and are required to report any suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect. If we have reason to believe that your child has been abused or neglected, we will report the situation to the local child protection office.

### **4. Behavior Guidance Agreement \***

*Check all that apply.*

I agree to the terms of the Behavior Guidance Policy as stated above.

### **5. Agreement to Share Relevant Behavior Information \***

*Check all that apply.*

I agree to share with the school any issues or changes in my child's life that may affect his/her behavior.

## **Illness, Health, and Safety Policies**

## **Sick Child Policy - When to Stay Home**

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Children who have the following symptoms or illnesses may not attend school:

- An illness that includes vomiting
- A virus
- A temperature over 100 degrees
- Pink eye
- Diarrhea
- A parasitic infection
- Chicken pox (The child may return when all the blisters have dried and formed scabs, usually about 6 days after the onset of the rash.)
- Any communicable or contagious disease

If your child has any of the above conditions, you are required to notify us as soon as possible.

A child will not be allowed to return to our program until he or she has been symptom-free for a full 24 hours.

## **Sick Child Policy - During the School Day**

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We may also ask you to take a child home if the child isn't sick but is experiencing discomfort, such as during the last stage of an upper respiratory infection or after the first dose of an antibiotic.

We will not send a child home who has a common cold, unless accompanied by a fever or other symptoms.

If your child starts to show any of the above symptoms during the day, we will ask you to come and pick up the child.

We will notify you of any illnesses that your child is exposed to in our school, including any of the symptoms listed above.

Whenever a child enters a new child care program there is an increased risk of colds or other minor illnesses until the child's immune system adjusts to the new environment.

If in our opinion a child is too ill to remain in care, you are required to come and pick up the child when we ask you to do so.

If your child becomes ill and we are unable to reach you, we will then try to contact your emergency backup person.

If a case of head lice is found in our program, we will notify everyone in the school. Children must be treated and be free of nits before they will be allowed to return to care.

#### 6. Agreement \*

*Check all that apply.*

I agree to the terms of the Sick Child Policy as stated above.

## Emergency Policy

To reduce the risk of fire, we follow the fire safety rules and state laws regarding smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

- In case the power goes out, we keep a first aid kit with a flashlight.
- We keep a list of emergency numbers (police, hospital, and ambulance) and the emergency contact numbers for all students. We bring these contact numbers with us whenever we take the children on a walk or other excursions away from the school.
- You must provide us with the names and phone numbers of at least one other person to call if we cannot reach you in an emergency. You must keep us informed at all times of how you can be reached in an emergency, and check your voice mail and cell phone often. If you leave work early, go to another location for the day, or vary your normal routine, you must let us know how we can contact you that day.
- If your child is involved in a serious or life-threatening emergency, we will call 911 and get immediate medical care, and then we will call you as soon as possible.

## Our emergency plan includes:

- A fire escape plan posted with an emergency meeting place away from the home.
- Fire drills as required by state law.
- Our school has all the smoke detectors and fire extinguishers necessary to comply with state fire safety laws.
- An emergency plan for transporting the children.
- A general emergency plan to respond to an accident.

## **Policies for Transporting Children**

We will transport the children by car only with your written permission, except in the event of an emergency.

## **Bad Weather Closings**

In the event of a school delay or closing due to inclement weather, we will notify you as soon as possible via email, through the Remind App which all parents are encouraged to use, and the following public postings:

- Cancellations.com - internet
- WDST 100.1 FM Woodstock - radio

## **Drop-Off and Pick-Up**

## **Persons Authorized to Pick-Up and Drop-Off Your Child**

- You will authorize the people who are to pick up your child from school.
- You will update this list annually.

- You will notify us immediately of any changes in the name, address, or phone numbers of the people who are authorized to remove a child from the school.
- We reserve the right to remove anyone from the authorized pickup list for any reason.
- You will notify us in advance verbally or in writing if an authorized person will be arriving at our program to drop off or pick up a child.

## **Drop-off and Morning Arrival:**

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Our goal is to provide a warm, calm, and secure environment. A teacher will greet each child individually as they arrive and say goodbye to the parent. You are responsible for your child until a teacher greets you and your child. It is our hope that parents will establish a consistent, short leave-taking ritual inside the gate (or at the door on inside days). It is our experience that parents' conversation in the play yard inhibits the child from getting into their day's work, which is movement and play, and leads to more difficult goodbyes. Shorter goodbyes make for easier transitions for the children. In the same manner, sneaking away while your child is distracted and not saying a clear goodbye is discouraged, as it can contribute to anxiety in the child, making the separation more difficult. With a simple goodbye ritual and a warm hug, your child can feel your confidence in their school environment.

If your child is experiencing difficulty leaving your arms, we encourage you to hand your child to one of the teachers, rather than having the teacher take him or her from your arms. This instills confidence in the child, indicating that the parent has trust in the teacher and that they are in a good place, rather than sending the signal that the teachers are "taking" him or her away from you.

## **Parking Lot and Transportation Safety**

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You are responsible for your child's safety and well-being in the parking lot until you have come through the garden gate and been greeted by a teacher.

When you transport your child to and from our program, you must comply with state law regarding appropriate car seats and infant carriers.

## **Easing the Transition**

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The morning program begins at 9:00am and ends at 12:30pm for the Mixed Age Kindergarten.

The morning program begins at 9:00am and ends at 12:00pm for the Little Ones.

We appreciate your promptness, as will your child. Beginning the day at the same time with other children will help establish rhythm, which is the foundation of our program and will prove helpful for a smoother transition from home. The child who is consistently late is at a considerable disadvantage to the other children as he or she tries to enter into play that already has taken form.

Shorter goodbyes make for easier transitions. Socializing with other parent should take place outside of the school grounds. If you need to speak to a teacher, please arrange a time for a phone conversation or meeting, so as not to take our attention away from the children during school hours.

## **Pick-up and Dismissal**

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Afternoon dismissal is at 3:00pm for the Mixed-age Kindergarten and 2:45pm for the Little Ones. Please be prompt--your child has had a full day and will be in need of your attention when you arrive. If a discussion is desired with a teacher, a time should be scheduled, rather than engaging in a lengthy conversation in the play yard. The primary responsibility of our teachers is to ensure the safety and well-being of the children, with attention being completely given to them. Parents are responsible for their child as soon as the teacher says goodbye to the child and the parent or responsible caregiver has arrived.

While we wish to encourage a sense of community among families, we ask that you first fully engage with your child, meeting them eye to eye. They are eager to have your full presence and will need your time and attention. We will reserve any remarks about the day for a note or an email. One can assume no word is good word. Talking over the child's head or reporting on the day takes the child's personal experience from them. Allowing the child to absorb their experiences, and own them, will enrich their inner experience and build their self-confidence in a sustaining manner.

**7. Parking Lot Safety Agreement (morning drop-off) \***

*Check all that apply.*

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to hold my child's hand in the parking area until we are inside the garden gate and I have shaken a teacher's hand; then the teachers of Mountaintop Waldorf School will be responsible for the safety and well-being of my child.

**8. Parking Lot Safety Agreement (pick-up) \***

*Check all that apply.*

I am responsible for my child upon pick-up after I take my child through the gate into the parking area.

## **Afternoon Program**

### **Mixed Age Class**

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In the Mixed Age class, inside afternoon rest is an hour-long, quiet, soothing, and restorative time of the day. As the children rest under soft blankets with their heads on pillows, there is soft music and a story. This rhythmic part of the afternoon program is very important for the young child. Sleep gives us a chance to step away from our immediate sense impressions. Rest time is a true letting go for the child, allowing him or her to better absorb what he or she has experienced in the morning. This time of peace gives the child pause from our often very hectic lives. We ask your support and understanding should your child need time to adjust to the long rest period. Dolls, stuffed animals, and other toys should remain at home; children will have a special Wee One doll to rest with.

Mixed Age Forest Rest is for the older children who do not sleep anymore in the afternoon. It is still a restful time, but is outside in a special spot in the forest. The children walk about 10 minutes to the Forest Rest spot and play quietly among the trees in a mossy area, sometimes gathering on a blanket with the teacher for story or cuddling. They return to the play yard after about 2 hours of quiet forest play.

### **Little Ones Class**

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In the Little Ones class, daily nap is a quiet, cozy, soothing, and restorative time of the day. It enables the children to “recharge” after their busy morning of activity and peer interaction. Rest is from 12:15pm to 2:00pm. Some children may sleep longer, some shorter. This time-frame provides ample time for rest. The rhythmic aspect of the afternoon is very important for the young child. Sleep offers them a chance to step away from their immediate sense impressions. This time is a true letting-go for the child, enabling him or her to better absorb the morning experiences and take a break from social interactions and busy play. We ask for parental support and understanding if the child needs time to adjust to the rest period. Each child is provided their own cotton flannel blankets and lamb skin. Dolls, stuffed animals, and other toys remain at home. In the Little Ones program, each child who rests with us receives a hand-knit chick. This chick is intended to be a napping “lovey” that will provide added comfort and consistency to the nap routine at Mountaintop.

There are times when a child has difficulties resting. A gentle foot massage, back rub, or just the reassurance that we teachers are nearby is usually enough to enable the child to relax and fall asleep. Learning to let go in a new environment may take time for your child. We honor where they are, allowing them time to adapt to their surroundings. Children who wake before the others will enjoy the opportunity to look at books or sit quietly with a teacher. Once rest time is over, all children dress to go outside to play and prepare to go home.

## **Aftercare**

Ms. Barbara is the aftercare program coordinator, and is available Mondays–Thursdays from 3pm to 6pm. You may schedule your child for 1 to 3 hours each of those days. Her fee is \$7 per hour, but we ask that if you pick up even 5 minutes late, that you pay the full \$7 for the extra hour. You have the option to pay daily or monthly in cash or check to Barbara Krzywonos. She asks for either a set schedule for your child or a call the night before to ensure that there is a space for them the following afternoon. Please call only her home phone to schedule. The cell # is in case you need to reach her during aftercare hours, while your child is with her. Her home phone # is 845-246- 5035. Her Cell # is 845-332-6165.

## **For Parents of Little Ones**

Information about early childhood development and potty training follows for parents of children who will be in the Little Ones class. Parents of Mixed Age children may answer "no" to skip that information.

**9. Is your child enrolled in the Little Ones class? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No      *Skip to question 11.*

## **Special Note for Little Ones Program**

### **Free Movement – Early Play**

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Children under the age of three are in the age of exploration. Free movement, which is also their play, is the young child's vehicle for learning and developing their mental, emotional, and physical abilities. Play is the work of the young child. Whether inside or out, our free play is focused on providing a safe environment for the child to follow their own intuition, at their own developmental ability and with ample time for exploration. There is no rush. Instead, we encourage the child to fully explore each stage of motor development. Offering children the "freedom to move in an uninhibited way as often as possible... is the best way to support the child's unfolding movement capacities." In the Waldorf kindergarten, this out-breath is one of the main components of the foundation for learning and later-life skills.

Much of children's play, at this age, is parallel play. The children will play surrounded by one another but may not necessarily engage with each other until a toy is taken from them, or they take one from another. Appropriate to this age is self-concern. Along with this comes the natural tendency of this age to take objects from peers, since their own play is often inspired by their environment, which includes their peers. We attempt to provide multiples of many toys, enabling children to play alongside one another, engaging in their own process of play, while still having "their" toy or tool. The Mountaintop environment supports healthy movement and play by providing open-ended climbing, balance, and tactile experiences, both indoors and out.

### **Potty Training Policy for the Little Ones Class**

You will know better than anyone when your child is ready to potty train. When this happens, please talk with us and we will walk through this school transition with you. It is important to remember that training at home is a different experience than training at school or in public settings. At home, you have the ability to give this "task" your full attention (as parents, it is common to take on this stage of development over a long weekend or school break, much like weaning or helping our children sleep through the night). The home

environment also allows for free access to the bathroom and not having to wait a turn. In the school setting, sometimes a child must wait and therefore must be able to control the urge to “go.” School also has many distractions; it can be difficult for a child to leave their activity. Don’t get discouraged; it is common for us to see accidents at school when home may be “all dry.” Together, we will work to support your potty training efforts using these guidelines.

## **When your child shows interest in using the potty, we will:**

1. Offer them the opportunity to sit on the potty during natural transition times (before and after meals and naps).
2. Practice with them getting their pants up and down on their own and hand washing.
3. Supervise them and watch for signs that they have to go or are going and get them off to the potty.
4. Communicate with the parents about any indicators suggesting the child may be ready.

## **Signs that a child may be ready to come to school in underwear:**

1. Two weeks of a dry diaper at school.
2. Able to tell the adult they have to go potty before they have to go. Communicating in words “I have to go potty” is an important step.
3. Able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up with limited assistance (see note on clothing below).
4. Able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.
5. Able to get on & off the potty by themselves.
6. Able to wash and dry hands with assistance.
7. Able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are outside and away from the house – that said, we understand that accidents do happen.

## **When they come to school in underwear:**

If a child has 2 accidents in a given day, we will put them in a diaper for the remainder of the day. If there is a poop in the underwear, it is up to the discretion of the teacher to put them in a diaper if it is the first accident.

Once they come to school in underwear, we will still put them in a diaper for nap until we have at least 2 weeks of a dry diaper during rest at school and reports of dry sleep at home.

## **Accidents**

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Should there be an accident, we will bag pee-soaked underwear and return it to the parent at the end of the day. If there is a poop in the underwear, we will clean up the child and bag the underwear to return home or dispose of the soiled underwear - this is based on parent preference. Be sure to supply the cubbies with plenty of extra pairs of underwear and clothing in case this happens. If we start to see accidents (with pee or poop) happening more frequently, we will request that the child come in a diaper or pull-ups until they make some progress with either telling the teachers when they have to go, or become more comfortable using the potty.

## **Diapers, Pull-ups or Underwear:**

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If you have had great success at home we can do the training with the underwear and a pull-up over the underwear during the training. If the child has regular accidents in the underwear we will switch them back to regular diapers and try again at another time. We use regular diapers at nap time.

## **Clothing**

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Clothing for children who are in the process of potty training should be easy to pull up and down. Please avoid dressing them in clothing with tricky buttons, snaps, and zippers, and please discontinue the use of onesies. We encourage children to be able to do this process themselves and want to steer them in the direction of success, not frustration. Elastic waistbands (sweatpants or leggings) are ideal until they are physically capable of doing snaps and buttons. Please refrain from sending them in anything that requires us to remove the top to get to the bottom (overalls, onesies).

## **Communication with Teachers**

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We are here to support you and your child during this process as best we can. If you have any questions or concerns, please be sure to talk to us about it. We will let you know of any changes we see with potty training, whether it's progress or a setback, which often happens for various reasons.

**10. I have read the Potty Training Policy for the Little Ones class and agree to follow these guidelines when my child begins potty training. \***

*Check all that apply.*

Yes, I agree.

## **Mountaintop Waldorf School Handbook Agreement Page**

Please fill out the name(s) of your child or children who are attending the school, as well as your name. We do need each parent or guardian to read and submit this form. By checking the box marked "Yes, I agree" you are agreeing to the terms as stated throughout this handbook. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Wendy immediately at [mountaintopschool@gmail.com](mailto:mountaintopschool@gmail.com) or 845-389-7322. Thank you.

**11. First Child's Full Name \***

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**12. Second Child's Full Name (if you have just one child attending this school, please write "None"). \***

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**13. Full name of parent or legal guardian who has read through and completed this form. \***

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14. I agree to abide by all policies in the handbook that has been provided for me. \*

*Check all that apply.*

Yes, I agree

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