

Alpenglow Community School (ACS)

Welcome Handbook

Arrival & Sign in

The Waldorf-inspired outdoor Programs will begin promptly at their start time.

For the un-parented playgroups and Kindergarten, please sign your child in on the attendance chart. Notify the teacher by text or written note of any pick up changes. If your child will be picked up by a caregiver, other family member or friend, please ensure that the teacher is notified in advance and has the person's contact details.

Pick up & Sign out

The Alpenglow Community School programs will end either inside the classroom at their specific end time or outside in the back garden. Parents are welcome to arrive back early to join in the closing circle or help out.

Please notify the teacher in advance by text or written note if your child will be picked up early. This will help to ensure that the child is ready to leave when you arrive.

Please always sign your child out on the attendance chart at the end of the program.

Absence

Please text or write a note to the teacher, for any reason, if your child will be absent from any programs. If you know in advance, that your child or your and your child will be away, please update the teacher as soon as possible. The teacher will provide contact details at the beginning of the year.

Communication with Community

ACS and the Waldorf-inspired outdoor programs have an open door practice and welcome all communication, ideas and support from families and the community.

E-newsletters and emails will be sent out regularly to update families on group activities and community events. There is also a bulletin board that provides regular updates.

Communication with Teachers

Communicating regularly with your child's teacher is encouraged and nourished within our community school. If any issues or concerns arise, please contact your child's teacher directly.

There will also be Teacher Reflections with a Teacher-Parent meeting in November, March and June for the families of the Kindergarten children.

There are no Teacher Reflections or Teacher-Parent Meeting for the Early Childhood Programs.

Group Behaviour

Our teachers use caring words and gentle movements, and model appropriate behaviour with the children. Modeling is used to guide children to also use appropriate behaviour themselves. The children are encouraged and expected to have helping hands, speak with kind words and play together cooperatively.

If a child demonstrates inappropriate behaviour, modeling and positive redirection will be used. The child will also be supported in apologizing to the hurt child and working through how to make the situation better. If a child hits, bites or other similar hurtful behaviour, the families of the involved children will be notified so that they are aware of the incident.

If a child has repeated incidents of hurtful or concerning behaviour, ACS may ask the family to have a meeting to discuss options and ways to support the child.

Snacks

All our programs share a healthy snack together at the table with a blessing, thank you song and good table manners. Water in cups will be used - no juice will be given. All baked goods will be gluten and wheat free. Refined processed sugar will not be used in our classroom cooking or baking. Any other allergies will be addressed on a class by class basis.

Our Kindergarten class will follow a weekly rhythm for their snack and it will be an organic, healthy balanced snack. Snacks are provided by ACS.

Our Early Childhood Programs (ECP) will have home-baked, allergen-free muffins or bread provided each class. We ask that each child bring a piece of fresh fruit or a fresh vegetable to share with the group.

Allergies

Please let your child's teacher know as soon as possible of any food allergies. A list of children (and their picture) with serious allergies will be posted in the classroom.

Clothing & Personal Belongings

In Waldorf philosophy, the clothing the child wears should fit properly, and be comfortable, warm, and free of wording and graphics. Please have your child wear practical, simple clothing that they can easily move in and can potentially do painting or 'messy' activities. The children will go outside daily, and therefore, will always need proper outdoor clothing for the season. Please ensure all items are clearly labeled.

As all the Kindergarten and un-parented children will be carrying their own backpacks, please provide the following within;

- ~ Change of seasonably appropriate clothing; socks, top, pants, underwear (in a zip lock bag)
- ~ Leak proof bottle of water
- ~ Clearly labeled slippers (to be left on at school in a basket)

Please ensure your child wears seasonally appropriate outdoor wear to class.

Illness

The most comforting place where a child can be properly nursed through an illness is at home. If your child has a fever, deep cough, rash, diarrhea, any infectious condition (e.g. pink eye) or has been vomiting prior to group time, please keep your child at home until she/he is symptom free for at least 24 hours. If your child becomes sick at school, you will be contacted to pick up your child.

Medication

Please notify ACS and your teacher if your child has any medical issues or is on any kind of medication. The ACS staff and teachers cannot administer medication, except for an EpiPen to a child as a life saving treatment. If your child requires an EpiPen, please notify your teacher and provide an EpiPen with clearly marked instructions.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very special for the children and each child's birthday will be celebrated with a birthday story and hand-made candle as close to the child's birthday as possible. Children with birthdays in July will be celebrated in June, and August birthdays in early September or at their 1/2 birthday. The birthday story will be shared with families in advance, and any story changes are welcome. Parents are invited to attend for your child's birthday celebration. We ask that parents bring plain popcorn on the day of their child's birthday story. Please do not bring gifts as our emphasis is on the special attributes of the child.

Party Invitations

Birthday parties bring lots of excitement and joy, as well as challenges and disappointment. We understand the often sensitive nature of giving out and receiving invitations for children. If your child wishes to invite all of the children in his/her class to his/her birthday, you are welcome to distribute the invitations at school. Otherwise, we ask that you respectfully share them outside of the classroom.

Celebrations & Festivals

Seasonal celebrations are acknowledged through stories and activities and are an important rhythm to our year. Many celebrations will happen during our program time while some may be outside of program hours. The community festivals will be planned for evenings or weekends so that all families can join. Details of family and community festivals will be available in advance through the ACS newsletter.

Regular Class Outings

Exploring and being in nature are important components of Waldorf-inspired outdoor education. Our groups will regularly go for walks around Canmore and on Canmore trails. Parents will be asked to complete a consent form at the beginning of the school year for our regular nature walks.

Parent Involvement

Waldorf-inspired philosophy believes that the child's development is enhanced by a sense of community in which parents, teachers and other parents/community members join together to nurture the best interests and needs of the child.

Parent involvement and volunteer work in the Kindergarten class are encouraged and appreciated. The Kindergarten teacher and teacher assistants will work with the children for the first few weeks of classes to create daily and weekly rhythms together and build community and comfort. The Kindergarten teacher will share with families when parent helper days are needed, and a sign up sheet will be available.

In our Early Childhood Programs parent involvement is key. For the Playgroups, parents will be asked to participate as a parent helper throughout the seasonal session. A sign up calendar will be available at the first class. For the Parent & Toddler Groups, the parents will share simple housekeeping group jobs and tasks each week.

Many hands make light work, and there is much work to be done. Volunteer work is essential to nurturing and growing our community school. Time and energy are particularly needed for festival planning and fundraising. It is not only enriches our children's education, but also nurtures and strengthens our community.

Media

A central aim of Waldorf Education is to stimulate the healthy development of the child's own imagination. Waldorf-inspired teachers are concerned that electronic media hampers the development of the child's imagination. They are aware of the physical effects of the medium on the developing child, as well as the content of much of the programming. Please consider for your family what type of media and content you wish your child/ren to be viewing and consider not using media on days that your child has a Waldorf-inspired outdoor program.

Toys

The Waldorf-inspired toys used in the classroom nourish the senses with their natural materials, behold beauty of our natural world, inspire imagination and creativity, and are multi-functional. The children play with a wide variety of toys made from natural materials, such as wooden toys and blocks, silks, and handmade toys and dolls, as well as treasures from nature, such as cones, stones, shells, and sand. We encourage the children to enjoy the toys in the classroom together, and save their home toys to enjoy at home.

Parking & Church Property

At certain times of the year parking is available in the parking lot at the south side of the church. Street parking is also available. Please be aware of all parking signs and time restrictions as street parking is often only for two hours. At all times, parking at the rear of the church (in the alley) is reserved for teaching staff, other programs and church administration.

The church is a shared space with others as programs are often lead downstairs at the same time as the Waldorf-inspired outdoor programs. Please respect the privacy of other groups and ensure soft voices are used when on the main floor or in the bathroom of the Church.

First Aid

A first aid kit is located in the kitchen area of the classroom, and is out of reach of the children.

In addition the teachers will carry a travel first aid kit on them when they are outside and/or on walks. Teachers either have CPR and First Aid training or will take the appropriate courses. In case of an accident, teachers will provide and supply medical attention to the extent of their training until EMS arrives.

Emergency Safety Procedures

Our central concern is the wellbeing, care and safety of the children. In the event of a serious incident or emergency, we will immediately notify 911 for assistance by safety officials. If the classroom or outside location is unsafe to stay at, we will move the children to a safe location, and immediately update families of the class whereabouts. If a child requires immediate medical attention, the teacher will go with the child to the hospital by ambulance and stay with him/her until a parent or emergency contact person arrives.

The Board is in the process of creating a detailed Emergency Response Plan. Teachers and teacher assistants will be updated on the emergency safety procedures and protocol.

Alpenglow Community School Policies

The ACES Board of Directors and Teaching Staff are currently working on our school's policies, which address in depth topics such as;

- ~ Emergency Procedures
- ~ Discipline Policy
- ~ Flex Tuition Policy
- ~ Registration and Refund Policy
- ~ Donations
- ~ Grants
- ~ Roles and Responsibilities of our Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Principal & Board of Directors

*Although the responsibilities of working with young children are immense,
the rewards are boundless;
the seeds that are sown during these early years will sprout and grow,
and their blossoms and fruit will enrich the rest of the children's lives.*