



HANDBOOK

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PARENT GUILD MISSION STATEMENT

The Parent Guild is the collective parent body of the Susquehanna Waldorf School. Our mission is to promote parental participation in the life of the school and inspire unity within the school community. The Parent Guild serves as a strong voice for the parent community and works in partnership with the Board of Trustees, Leadership Council, Faculty, and Administration. Together, we embrace the mission, vision, and goals of the Susquehanna Waldorf School to joyfully support and enrich the lives of our children and ourselves.

TASKS OF THE PARENT GUILD

- Actively participate in endeavors that support the mission and growth of the school and strengthen the school community.
- Provide educational opportunities that deepen understanding and appreciation for the principles of Waldorf Education.
- Provide a forum for parents to communicate and discuss issues of interest and concern.
- Initiate discussions and facilitate communications between the parents and the other bodies/committees of our school.
- Serve as an advisory group to the Board, Faculty, Leadership Council, and Administration reflecting the ideas and concerns of the parent body.
- Support and honor the Faculty in its endeavor to educate our children. See the document [How Can Parents Support the Work of Their Child's Teacher?](#)
- Provide parent mentoring to assist new parents to more easily navigate our school community.
- Organize social activities that create and promote a spirit of community within our school.
- Provide a forum to cultivate and identify parents for current and future school leadership roles.
- Represent the school in a positive way that supports the growth and well-being of the school.
- Assist the Facility Manager in maintaining the school building and grounds in a way that provides a safe and beautiful environment for the children and gives the school a warm and welcoming appearance.
- Organize the volunteer efforts of parents in an efficient way that nourishes, respects, and protects the volunteers.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PARENT GUILD

Every parent or guardian of a student at the Susquehanna Waldorf School is a member of the Parent Guild and is expected to participate in Guild activities through a contribution of time, talent, or treasure. Grandparents and other loved ones are also invited to participate. For the purposes of this document the term “parents” includes these individuals as well.

It is important that the Parent Guild structure be consistent with the philosophy of Waldorf Education - educating head, heart, and hands. The Guild shall strive to provide opportunities for a healthy balance of thinking (head), feeling (heart), and willing (hands) in everything we do.

Meetings are held at least monthly and are open to the entire school community. A schedule of meetings is available on the school website. Smaller committee meetings may be held more frequently, as determined by need.

The Organization of the Parent Guild:

- Elected Officers (The Steering Committee)
 - Chair
 - Co-Chair
 - Guild Representative to the Board
 - 2 (or more) Secretaries
- Class Parents
- Faculty Liaisons (Grades and Early Childhood)
- Leadership Council Liaison(s)
- Members (Parents)

OFFICERS (STEERING COMMITTEE)

The business and communications of the Parent Guild are managed by its elected officers, the Steering Committee. The membership annually elects a Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretaries. The Guild Representative to the Board is elected every two years. Any interested parent from the parent body may be nominated for these positions. Elections take place in the spring for the upcoming school year. These officers serve for a one-year term, renewable each year with no limit on the number of terms allowed. The exception to this is the Representative to the Board, who serves a two-year term with a maximum of four terms.

- The **Chair** oversees and coordinates all aspects of the Parent Guild. The Chair creates and publishes the agenda and runs all Guild meetings. The Chair facilitates communications within the Guild and between the Guild and other SWS bodies and committees. The Chair facilitates communications with the parent body and larger community in collaboration with SWS administrative staff via email bulletins, social media, flyers, etc.
- The **Co-Chair** serves as timekeeper at the Guild meetings and runs the meeting in the absence of the Chair. The Co-Chair supports the Chair in their duties and also supports Class Parents to foster parent participation.
- The **Secretary** takes minutes at the monthly (and other) meetings of the Parent Guild and its committees. The Secretary serves as timekeeper in the absence of the Co-Chair. The Secretary files and organizes all documentation related to Parent Guild activity, in hard copy and/or electronic form, and distributes meeting agendas and notes to the Chair, Board Rep and SWS administrative staff. The Secretary works with the Business Manager to track the expenses of the Guild.
- A second **Secretary** facilitates video conferencing of Parent Guild meetings, which allows parents to attend remotely. This Secretary schedules the video conference, distributes the access link to the parent body, moderates the video conferencing session during the Guild meeting, and distributes the video recording to the parent body after the meeting.
- The **Guild Representative to the Board** serves as a voting member of the Board and assures the “heart and soul” of the Guild is alive within the realm of the Board. The Guild Rep to the Board must be approved by the Board and must agree to fulfill all of the duties of a Board member including signing all contracts and agreements as authorized by the Board. The Guild Rep also updates the Guild on non-confidential work of the Board. The length of term and term limits are the same for other Board members, as determined by the SWS by-laws. Currently, the Board Rep serves a two-year term with a limit of four terms.

CLASS PARENTS

Each class has one or more Class Parents who volunteer to take the lead in organizing parents' participation in various aspects of school life. The Class Parent works in close partnership with the teacher and is chosen annually by the teacher and parents. The Class Parent also serves as a communication link between the Parent Guild and the parents of their class. The Parent Guild Co-Chair provides support to the Class Parents.

Description of tasks within the class:

Each teacher will have different requirements from their Class Parent. The tasks of each Class Parent are ultimately decided by the teacher and Class Parent together and may or may not include the following.

- Attend all class meetings.
- Facilitate good communication between the teacher and parents, using whichever modality best suits the particular group of parents and teacher (phone, email, etc.).
- Organize volunteers to support classroom needs such as food and supplies.
- Organize volunteers to support class activities such as field trips.
- Orient new families in the class to various school functions and to our school community, with the support of the Communications Committee of the Parent Guild.
- Coordinate support to families in the class who may be welcoming new children, grieving loss of loved ones, or in other need of assistance.
- Coordinate fundraisers for the class.
- Organize group gifts from the class to show appreciation for the teacher or to celebrate special occasions such as holidays or the teacher's birthday.

Description of tasks related to the Parent Guild:

- Attend all Guild meetings.
- Assure that if unable to attend a Guild meeting that another parent from the class is in attendance at the meeting.
- Communicate information to the parents in their class regarding school-wide events, social activities, special speakers, and all-school meetings.
- Communicate information from Guild meetings to the class parents.
- Coordinate volunteers from their class to participate in all-school events as requested by the Guild.
- Solicit feedback from parents who are unable to regularly attend Guild meetings, and convey that information back to the Guild.
- Seek to apply the skills and talents of the parents within the class in ways that benefit the Parent Guild as well as the school.

LIAISONS

- The **Faculty Liaisons to the Guild** are appointed by the Faculty. The Faculty may choose at least two individuals - one to represent Early Childhood programs, and one (or more) for the grade levels. These liaisons facilitate communication between the Parent Guild and the Faculty of the school and attend all Parent Guild meetings.
- The **Leadership Council Liaison(s) to the Guild** is appointed by the Leadership Council. This liaison facilitates communication between the Leadership Council of the school and the Parent Guild and attends all Parent Guild meetings.
- Faculty and Staff Committees of the school may occasionally request that a member of the Parent Guild attend said Committee meetings on a regular basis. These Guild Liaisons will be selected on an as-needed basis from the parent body. These Guild Liaisons will attend both the Committee meetings and the Guild meetings, bringing an update to both meetings for purposes of cross-communication.

Description of tasks:

- Attend all Parent Guild meetings as well as those required by their respective bodies (Faculty, Leadership Council, etc.), serving as communication links between these bodies.
- Facilitate planning and implementation of activities such as festivals that require the joint participation of parents with Faculty and/or Staff.

PARENT MEMBERS

Every Member of the Parent Body is expected to participate in the life of the school in a manner that is compatible to their time schedule. Parents can contribute to the success of the school in many different ways by providing work, wisdom, and/or wealth. The Parent Guild provides opportunities for parents to share their talents in a meaningful way, contributing to the health and well-being of the school.

Description of tasks:

- Attend Guild meetings, class meetings, and all-school meetings
- Read the school website and email notices regularly to identify the ways they can best contribute.
- Participate in Guild Committees that are compatible with their skills and interests.
- Participate in the classroom under the direction of the Class Parents and teachers, or volunteer to serve as a Class Parent.
- Participate in community-building and fundraising activities such as events and festivals through contributions of time, money, and/or work.

AREAS OF GUILD ACTIVITY

The Guild's work is separated into 5 domains:

- Events and Festivals
- Volunteers
- Communication
- Community Connection
- Facilities

It is at the discretion of each year's Guild members, based on the resources available to the current group, how best to allocate volunteers and time to address these areas.

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Each school year, it is the responsibility of the Parent Guild to determine which Guild-sponsored events are viable to plan and implement given the collective school calendar, all-school community interest, and the resources of the current Guild members. The Parent Guild is also responsible for determining the focus and content for each of these activities to foster inclusiveness and reflect the community as it changes. These events are in addition to the traditional festivals and events determined by the Leadership Council, Faculty, and Administration.

Description of tasks:

- Preview annually the year's upcoming festivals and events with regards to timing, viability, and interest.
- Create project plans and timelines for events and festivals, in cooperation with Leadership Council, Faculty, the Board, and Administration.
- Coordinate with other SWS bodies to fulfill needs related to communication, coordination of volunteers, community-building, and facilities management in support of planning an event or other activity.
- Identify interests and ideas from the parent body for new activities and events.

VOLUNTEERS

Recruitment and support of parent volunteers is fundamental to all Parent Guild activities. The Guild is responsible for promoting a culture of giving and sharing within the school by creating joy, connection, purpose, and gratitude in the volunteer experience. The Guild provides the willing and skilled hands to support the work of Leadership Council, Faculty, Administration, and the Board.

Description of tasks:

- Coordinate with members of Leadership Council, Faculty, Administration, and the Board to determine volunteer needs and tasks for events.
- Create necessary signups for volunteer activities.
- Recruit volunteers from the parent body (including interested grandparents and other loved ones), using effective and personalized means of outreach.
- Direct and support volunteers on site at events.
- Create and maintain a database of parents' skills and interests, with the purpose of matching parents to tasks that include their skills and/or interests.
- Nurture an atmosphere of connection and joy among volunteers.
- Express gratitude to volunteers on behalf of the Parent Guild through thank-you notes or other acts.

COMMUNICATION

This aspect of the Guild's work focuses on parent education and communication. The Guild organizes parent education, working alongside the Leadership Council, Faculty, Board, and Administration to promote parents' engagement with Waldorf education. It is also responsible for promoting clear communication within the school community and fostering a culture of sensitivity, trust, and accountability. The Guild Representative to the Board is a member of this committee.

Description of tasks:

- Facilitate timely and transparent communication between parents, the Board of Trustees, Leadership Council, Faculty, and Administration.
- Mentor and support parents new to the school and assist with navigating school life.
- Mentor and support Early Childhood parents transitioning to higher grades.
- Work with the Leadership Council and Faculty to educate parents about Waldorf education or other topics of their choosing.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

This work brings the members of our community (including alums) together with care and companionship and connects us to the towns and regions around us and beyond.

Description of tasks:

- Provide hospitality services such as refreshments at school assemblies, meetings, or other gatherings.
- Coordinate activities of giving within the school community, such as clothing or food donations.
- Coordinate social activities that foster joy and connection within our community. Activities may be on-campus or off-campus, during or outside of school hours.
- Support and collaborate with the Leadership Council, Faculty, Board, and Administration in outreach activities to promote our school.
- Collaborate with the Leadership Council and other interested SWS bodies in determining the content of these activities.

FACILITIES

The Guild works with the Facilities Committee of the Board to ensure that our facilities are safe and beautiful.

Description of tasks:

- Work with Facilities Committee to identify areas needing improvement or maintenance in school building and grounds and assist with their repair and/or maintenance.
- Work with the Board of Trustees to identify any needs related to the school facilities that may require fundraising or other financial support.
- Decorate the school for winter holidays, May Day, and other events as decided with Leadership Council, and manage subsequent clean-up.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL COMMITTEES

It is at the discretion of each year's Parent Guild to determine if any committee is to be formed on an ad hoc or year-long basis to address these areas of activity.

Reporting Responsibilities:

- Each committee will request time on the Guild agenda to report monthly or as deemed necessary.

Timelines:

- Timelines are established and completed as deemed necessary by each specific task.

Membership:

- Membership will consist of any parents who are interested in this type of work. A minimum of three people is the ideal, though not necessary, number of members so decisions can be made by a committee quorum. A committee quorum shall consist of at least two members of the committee and the chair of that committee.
- The chairperson of each committee will be chosen by the members of the committee.
- The committee will meet as often as deemed necessary by the committee.

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PARENT **GUILD**

There are four main documents that are important to the Parent Guild. These should be reviewed regularly and changes proposed as needed.

Susquehanna Waldorf School By-Laws:

The Susquehanna Waldorf School By-Laws shall be the overriding document for all activities in the School including the Parent Guild.

Susquehanna Waldorf School Governance:

The Susquehanna Waldorf School Governance shall be used to provide more specific guidance of the daily activities and responsibilities of all school bodies including the Parent Guild. The Parent Guild Handbook shall be used as the most comprehensive description of the Guild's activities.

Parent Guild Handbook (this document)

All-School Handbook:

The Guild Steering Committee works with the Administration to expand and revise the portion of the Parents' Handbook that relates to the Parent Guild.