



July 9, 2020

Dear Parents,

Happy 2020-21 school year! I know most parents do not think of the school year beginning in July, but teachers, administrators, and the Board of Trustees are already knee deep into the next school year once July 1 hits.

You should have received your TADS invoices for July; it is the first invoice for 2020-21. Please verify whether you have purchased tuition insurance by checking your billing account. HVWS strongly encourages all families to purchase tuition insurance every year to help cover tuition payments in the case job loss or a withdrawal from school for unforeseen circumstances (<https://www.waldorfct.org/wp-content/uploads/Tuition-Insurance-20-21-Digital-Brochure.pdf>). This year we have seen firsthand how valuable it is to protect the investment you are making in your child's education. If you have not yet purchased tuition insurance and would like to, please email aexley@waldorfct.org to add it to your account.

For those families who make one annual tuition payment, it will be automatically withdrawn on July 15. Annual payments have always been a huge boost to the school's cash flow and are greatly appreciated, especially this year.

Speaking of appreciation...

Thank you to all the community members who donated to the HVWS COVID-19 Take Care Fund this spring. Your generosity raised over \$27,000 and supported 18 HVWS families for the last three months of school. On behalf of those families, thank you for helping our community get through this challenging time together.

Once school ended in June, all-staff meetings began, followed by a week of report writing, participation in the AWSNA National Conference, and teacher training courses to prep for the next school year. Next week the grades faculty will meet again to work further on plans for the fall, as will the College of Teachers. We will be working with the five main mandates to open safely in the fall--cohorting classes; social distancing; face coverings for staff and grade school students during the school day when inside; frequent hand washing; and enhanced cleaning—in the most Waldorf way possible! We will keep you updated along the way.

A few updates now:

Face Coverings

We have had frequent inquiries about masks and want to assure you that teachers fully intend to plan mask breaks during the day for grade school students in addition to the obvious snack/recess and lunch/recess breaks. It will be a learning curve and approached as a learning experience for all. The same goes for social distancing, sometimes referred to as physical distancing. We recently heard

the suggestion of changing the term to social solidarity! That is the spirit in which this work will be approached.

School Calendar

Early on in this process the faculty discussed the merits of altering the school calendar i.e. beginning school earlier or ending later. Once accredited schools with early childhood programs were granted the ability to remain open during campus closures under the guidance of the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, it no longer seemed necessary to attempt to “front-load” the school year. We also discussed separate calendars for the grade school and early childhood program, but with parents who have children in both age groups, it seemed most supportive to keep both calendars the same. But the ultimate deciding factor was Waldorf pedagogy. The teachers pointed out that picking an arbitrary date to begin school would be a guesstimate at best, and that it would be better for students to follow the seasonal rhythm of the school year, public health conditions allowing.

Learning Outdoors

Plans are underway to enhance our outdoor areas to provide more outdoor learning opportunities. Faculty are discussing which classes lend themselves better for outdoor teaching. The Board of Trustees is reviewing up to \$20k for such improvements and up to \$10K for fencing to embrace the newly renovated Community House so that we can expand outdoor possibilities around that building as well.

Leadership Virtual Office Hours

We’ve gained so much from shared parent insights, concerns, questions, and ideas. Please join us. We know that we cannot not meet every parent’s need 100% but our aim to meet the needs for the collective wellbeing of the students and staff.

When: Monday, July 13, and July 20; 2pm to 3pm

Where: email leadership@waldorfct.org for the link

We have all worked hard and shared in a memorable year in which HVWS experienced its 30th year—and highest enrolment to date—and Waldorf Education turned 100. Let us build on that history and make next year one of our finest, together.

With warmth and determination,

The HVWS Leadership Council