

COMMUNICATIONS at WCS

WCS welcomes suggestions, comments, and/or concerns. This will ensure we are taking appropriate action regarding potential improvements to the school. Forms for suggestions will be 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 the chairs of the appropriate councils or committees and reviewed in meetings. Any suggestions that are being adopted or integrated will be noted in the meeting minutes.

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 four-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 Dire

Level 3: Contact the Communication Support Team

Level 4: Fill out written form to start an Formal Concern

These 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, you can also request a Communication Support Team member to be present (see below under Level 3). 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: Contact the Communication Support Team.

If Level 2 has not brought satisfactory resolution, the next step is to contact the **Communication Support Team** (CST) at CST@wasatchwaldorf.org or ask for assistance at the front desk to help you get in touch with the team.

WCS has a “ Communication Support Team” that handles concerns.

The Communication Support Team (CST) is an appointed body composed of up to five people including faculty members and parents. These individuals are appointed because they are skilled at listening and have demonstrated successful results in addressing concerns and will receive training on mediating meetings.

The CST will work when with all parties involved, bring them together as needed, and assist in resolving the issue. The CST will take objective notes during those meetings reflecting the concerns, recommendations, resolutions and or action plan, distribute those notes to the parties involved and follow up after a week.

When a concern is brought to the CST, the CST will acknowledge the request for assistance within one working day by phone, email or in writing, and will work with all parties, to bring them together, as needed, to help resolve the issue. We may invite a

mutually agreed upon Third Person to participate in any meeting with the CST. Two or three members of the CST will participate in any given meeting; any CST member involved in the specific conflict will recuse him/herself from participating.

All inquiries to the Level 3 process will be logged and communicated to the CST team which meets on a monthly basis.

Level 4: Filing a Formal Concern.

Should still further action be needed, the next step available for concern resolution is to request to fill out a Formal Concern Form. The forms will be kept at the front desk or can be printed from the school website. [Coming Soon] Forms should be priority mailed or handed over in person to the Executive Director, Emily Merchant. The Formal Concern will be handled by the Communication Support Team which will provide a formal response acknowledging that the formal concern was received and giving a timespan in which to expect further action on handling and resolving the concern by involving proper authorities.

Communications Flowchart

Who do I contact with my questions or concerns?

TOPIC	INDIVIDUAL	CONTACT
General Questions	Front Office / Deb Peterson, Office Manager	801-871-3950 info@wasatchwaldorf.org
School Lunch	Erin Arrigo, Food Services Director	erin.arrigo@wasatchwaldorf.org
Family Council Meetings	Jo Des Roche, Family Council Chair (Parent)	wasatch-family-council@googlegroups.com
Parent Enrichment	Marinda Lloyd, Enrichment Coordinator (Parent)	wasatch-family-council@googlegroups.com
Fundraising	Megan Zurkan, Fundraising Committee Chair	megan.zurkan@wasatchwaldorf.org
Building Use, Care & Security	Danny Macfarlane, Facility Manager	801-871-3950
Preschool Enrollment & Aftercare	Jennifer Fedewa, Wasatch Family Foundation Director	jfedewa@wasatchwaldorf.org
Curriculum & Standards	Prairie Adams, Pedagogical Director	padams@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 & Events	Raven Garland & Michelle Simmons, Festivals Committee Chairs	raven.garland@wasatchwaldorf.org michelle.simmons@wasatchwaldorf.org
Drop-off & Pick-up	Jonathan Baker, Traffic Committee Chair (Parent)	jonny@ubakers.com
3 Streams	Spencer Dirats, 3 Streams Coordinator	dirats@wasatchwaldorf.org
Employment Opportunities	Kara Salisbury, Administrative Director	ksalisbury@wasatchwaldorf.org
Administration, Procedures & Governance	Emily Merchant, Executive Director	emerchant@wasatchwaldorf.org
Personnel Issues	Emily Merchant, Executive Director	emerchant@wasatchwaldorf.org
Student Discipline	Emily Merchant, Executive Director or Heather Campbell, Student Support Director	emerchant@wasatchwaldorf.org heather.campbell@wasatchwaldorf.org
Governing Policies	Joe Welch, Governing Board President	jwelch@wasatchwaldorf.org
Classroom Practices & Concerns	Special Subject or Class Teacher	firstname.lastname@wasatchwaldorf.org or firstinitiallastname@wasatchwaldorf.org (when in doubt, email both)
<i>Still Uncertain? You may request direction from the CST as to who to communicate with regarding your concern.</i>		CST@wasatchwaldorf.org

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

Parents and families will receive periodic updates from class teachers by email. These may include requests for volunteers, class newsletters, and information on upcoming events. School email lists will not be used to promote private events, businesses or activities. Only school-sponsored or affiliated activities will be shared via school email lists. Parents and families should refrain from using school email lists for personal gain in any manner. Families may also connect using the Family Facebook Group. In both email and social media posts the guidelines for healthy and considerate communication (below) should be followed.

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.

Text

Text messaging is never an approved means of school communication. It should be reserved for personal communications or emergency contacts, not for sharing concerns or resolving issues.

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.

Use Proper Netiquette at All Times

“Netiquette” means bringing conscious etiquette and manners to behavior in electronic communications. Email communications 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.

Posting of Materials and Flyers

Staff, students and parents wishing to post materials on the school’s bulletin boards must first receive stamped permission from the Director to do so. Because we are a public school, certain parameters exist for such postings. In addition, non-school sponsored activities will not be advertised through electronic communications (school website / newsletter); the public bulletin board is the only venue for such advertisements. Official school emails, lists, and website should not be used for personal advertisements / solicitations.

Newsletters & Regular Information

Wasatch Charter School will provide regular updates through electronic newsletters to families. These will also be posted to the school website. These will include information on upcoming events, school activities, policies and other noteworthy topics. This information will also be made available through the school’s App which is available for free.

School App

Wasatch Charter School has a free App that is available for download onto iPhone and Android devices. This is a simple way to receive communications and access school information in one place.

Email

Parents and families will receive periodic updates from class teachers by email. These may include requests for volunteers, class newsletters, and information on upcoming events. School email lists will not be used to promote private events, businesses or activities. Only school-sponsored or affiliated activities will be shared via school email lists. Parents and families should refrain from using school email lists for personal gain in any manner. Families may also connect using the

“Discussion” function within the school’s App. In both email and Discussion posts the guidelines for healthy and considerate communication (below) should be followed.

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.

Short-term Reminders & Emergencies

WCS will be using a communications system which allows for email, voice calls and text messages in order to communicate time-sensitive information and emergency information. The number / email that information will be sent to is based on the information provided on your child’s registration forms. If you would like communications to go to another number / email or if your contact information changes, you should notify the WCS Front Office staff.

For short reminders of time-sensitive information, all parents will be notified by text and email and push notifications may be sent through the App. Parents who do not want to receive this information through one of these means, may opt-out. However, the option chosen for these messages will also apply to emergency messages.

For emergency situations, we will send messages by voice message, text, and email. Parents should ensure that they have not opted out of all three modes of receiving mass communications or they will not receive emergency messages from the school.

For absence notifications, parents will receive an automated voice call and text notifying them of their child’s absence.

School Closure - Inclement Weather Policy

Should inclement weather be determined to pose a significant obstacle to parents or faculty arriving at school, school may be delayed two hours or closed for the day. Parents will be notified using the emergency notification system (text / email) and notice will be placed on the school’s website. Because WCS must hold school a minimum number of days and hours, every effort will be made to hold school throughout the winter months.

Web Pages

WCS will maintain information to support parents online through the Parent/Student section of the website. This will include access to class blogs, student attendance and assignment information, volunteer opportunities, school lunch accounts, and more.

Each teacher will have access a class blog through the WCS website. Blogs will be updated monthly and emailed to parents, as well as posted online. Other pertinent information, including reminders and schedule changes, may be communicated via class email lists / texts.

Photos may be posted to the class blog with parental permission. Permission will be obtained on a single form at the beginning of the year and is not required for each posting. Teachers will not create or share class information on other websites or social media without the Director's and parents' approval.

This document was created by the Communication Support Team

Approved:

Governing Board:

Pedagogical Council:

Family Council: