



Berkshire Waldorf
High School

Student & Parent Handbook

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CEEB Code

220901 (for SAT test registration)

Contents

Mission and Core Values

•••

New Student Orientation

 Before you arrive

 Guidelines for student writing

 Suggestions to improve descriptive writing

•••

Advising

Art

Assemblies

Athletics

Attendance & Punctuality

Books

BRTA

Bullying and Teasing; Anti-Hazing Law

Cell Phones

College Guidance

Community Relations Committee

Computer Use

Costs and Fees in addition to Tuition

Decision Making

Discipline

Dress Policy: See Personal Appearance

Drugs and Alcohol

Early Dismissal

Educational Support

Forum

Grades, Credits

Graduation

Helmets

Homework

Honor Policy

Honors Courses & Advanced Placement

Internet Access

Libraries

Lockers/Cubbies

Lunch and Snacks

Medication

Off-Campus Lunch Rules

Orientation

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parking and Driving

Personal Appearance (“Dress Policy”)

Projects and Internships

Progress Reports

Public Display of Affection

Respectful Speech

Rules and Policies

SATs & SAT IIs

School Closings

School Evacuation and Safety

Seminars

Seminar Books

Senior Trip

Seminars

Supplies

Who We Are: Board, Faculty, Staff & Committees

Work Period

***Mission and Core Values of
Berkshire Waldorf High School***

Mission

Berkshire Waldorf High School provides an education for adolescents that seeks truth, develops imagination, nurtures growth, fosters responsibility, and honors inner freedom in an atmosphere of academic excellence, artistic fulfillment, openness, and mutual respect.

Core Values

Truth

We understand the quest for truth as the foundation of all scholarship, learning, and inquiry. This principle inspires a spirit of independent thought, open mindedness, and academic challenge in our school.

Imagination

We see imagination as the conscious power that inspires creativity in the arts, discovery in science, and community in the affairs of men and women. Learning and teaching in our school are made alive through this human ability.

Growth

We acknowledge individual human growth and development as lifelong processes. Our school honors, nurtures, and addresses human growth in each student, teacher, and member of our community.

Responsibility

We recognize responsibility as the requisite characteristic of social relationships. By fostering an atmosphere of compassion and respect for others and for nature, our school strives to be a force for good will within its walls, and in the community, our nation, and the world.

Freedom

We honor inner freedom as a human condition toward which we aspire; one which, in the process of attainment, grants increasing self-reliance, individuality, and vitality to life. Our school serves inner freedom by promoting clarity of thought, authenticity of feeling, and intentionality of will.

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NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

Welcome!

Before you arrive:

1. Have you taken Algebra 1? If so, great! If not, please be aware that our math curriculum presupposes that you have had Algebra 1 in 8th grade. If you need to review, we recommend a private tutor, an online course through the University of Missouri (Mizzou K-12) or something similar, or review on a website like onemathematicalcat.org.
2. Can you touch-type? If your keyboarding skills are not good, you may want to learn or review via an online touch-typing tutor.

Guidelines for Student Writing

1. There is no such thing as a rough draft. A first draft is your best effort to fulfill the requirements of an assignment.
2. Write on unlined paper or copy paper only (you may take notes on lined paper, but don't do assignments on lined paper).
3. Papers may be typed or neatly handwritten, and they should be as free from errors as possible.
4. Double space all writing (skip a line when handwriting; set your computer to double space lines).
5. Give all pages a 1" margin on all sides unless otherwise specified.
6. Write on one side of a sheet only.
7. Type in a simple, clear font only (Times, Helvetica, Courier), 12 pt. size.
8. Indent paragraphs one half inch, and do not skip lines between paragraphs.
9. Give all work an appropriate title.
10. Write in pen only unless otherwise specified.
11. Write your first and last name and the date the assignment is due in the left margin of the first page (unless a teacher requests a different form). Each additional page should have your initials in the margin. All pages should be numbered. (Do not type your name or other information in the upper portion of your paper.)
12. Late assignments will lose credit.
13. These guidelines apply to all classes at our school.
14. Any teacher may decline to accept a paper that does not follow these guidelines.

Suggestions to improve descriptive writing:

1. Read your work aloud. Go into a closet if you believe you will embarrass yourself (although reading aloud in a closet may be more embarrassing than reading aloud to your mom.) Reading aloud is the easiest way to catch errors of all kinds; your ears recognize correct English better than your eyes do.
2. Focus on the primary and essential. Every detail is not relevant. What story do you wish to tell?
3. Write short, clear, direct sentences. Do not start a sentence without knowing how it will end. Have a complete thought, then write it down.
4. Describe what you see and also how you react to it. But don't write, "I feel solemn when I look at Mary's face." Write, "Mary's solemn face reflects her wisdom." The feeling comes through the description.
5. Avoid calling every generic individual "he." Write in the plural—"they." Or alternate paragraphs; use "she" in the first, "he" in the second, and so on. Or write "this person" if it is not awkward to do so. If you write, "The quilter should always wear a thimble to avoid pricking his finger," you ignore all the quilters who are women. Write, "Quilters should wear thimbles to avoid bleeding on their quilts."
6. Single objects follow single subjects. Do not write, "An ancient Egyptian drank coffee because they had no tea." You are speaking about only one ancient Egyptian. Write, "An ancient Egyptian drank coffee because she had no tea." Or, to employ suggestion 4, write, "Ancient Egyptians drank coffee because they liked the taste of it."
7. The passive voice is something to be avoided by you at all costs. Don't make your writing sound like a police report. Write, "You should avoid the passive voice."
8. Write, "toward, backward and forward." "Towards, backwards or forwards" are British English; you are American.
9. "Its" shows possession and has no apostrophe. "It's" can be rewritten "it is." It's your grade that will find its fate through your work.
10. Leave out all such phrases as "I see, to me, I believe, I feel, I say." I, the reader, know or can infer or guess that you, the writer, can see, feel, believe, or say.
11. Leave out all such phrases as "this appears to be, seems to be, looks like." Go out on a limb. Say what it is. I believe that this suggestion appears to be a way to improve your writing.
12. Eliminate words such as "very, much, rather, quite, extremely, somewhat, really" from your writing. If something is very beautiful, say that it's gorgeous. If it's somewhat ugly, say that it's plain.
13. "Who" applies to people. Do not write, "Students that write improperly annoy their teachers." Write, "Students who write well get good grades."
14. Do not begin or end a sentence with "however." "However" is best buried in the middle of a sentence. It is, however, a weak word. Avoid it when possible.
15. People lie down. Before doing so, they may lay a book on the table. Don't confuse lie and lay.
16. The phrase "a lot" consists of two words. "Background" is spelled "background," not "backround." "There," "their," and "they're" are three different words with three different meanings.
17. Anything else that we think of or find evidence of in your writing. The idiosyncrasies of your class will bring out more picky comments. Be ready for them.

Advising

Early in the school year, each student will be assigned a Core Faculty advisor. Advisors serve to ensure that your experience at the school—academic, social, and emotional—is as good as possible. Advisors generally meet with you informally through the year. You may also seek out your advisor whenever you wish. You may also seek advice from any member of the faculty.

Art

One of the things that most distinguishes a Waldorf school from other schools is the degree to which art supports and informs the curriculum. As a student at the Waldorf School you are required to study various practical and fine arts. In addition, you are expected to supplement much of your academic work with artwork. Although this work may seem daunting at first, you will soon discover abilities you never knew you had. Also, you will find teachers and other students helpful in giving you guidelines and tips on your work. The most important thing to realize is that good artwork often takes much more time than you might expect. One drawing can take two hours or more.

Assemblies

The life of the school includes periodic assemblies. We expect you to participate, set a good example for younger children when they are present, and dress appropriately. Assembly outfits are “dressy” without being outrageous or sexy. Appropriate outfits include jacket and tie, slacks or skirt and blouse, and dress. We ask that students not wear denim or sneakers as part of their assembly dress.

Athletics

We offer at least 2 seasons of competitive athletics—soccer in fall, basketball in winter. We also offer spring sports depending on student interest. In the past, these have included baseball, tennis, and girls’ lacrosse.

Attendance & Punctuality

We expect students to be in class every day, all day, except in the case of illness or family emergency. (School attendance is compulsory under state and federal law to the age of 16.) Classes start at 8:30 a.m., and you should be at school by 8:20 a.m. in order to be ready to begin on time. If you arrive late, please inform the office. If you are late because of bus lateness, your lateness will be excused; others will be excused only with an explanatory note from parents. If you accumulate three unexcused latenesses you should expect disciplinary action. School ends at 3:45 p.m., and all students are dismissed then unless they are remaining for after-school activities.

Unexcused Absence

Students who are absent without a legitimate excuse risk losing credit or receiving an “F” for all work for the days they miss. **Except in the cases of illness or family emergency, the school requires two weeks prior notice of any absence.** Without this notice the absence may be unexcused. Please be aware that even two weeks prior notice does not guarantee that an absence will be excused; the school faculty will determine which absences are excused and which are not.

The school gives the Senior class a few days off from school for a Senior trip. Given this relationship, it is our understanding that there are no “senior skip days,” and that any seniors who cut school should expect serious consequences. C’mon, guys.

Books

- Families buy their own books and textbooks for our school. Costs vary from year to year but average around \$400 per year.
- You will receive a list of most of the books for the year in late summer. (It’s posted on our website.)
- Families that live in New York State can obtain many of our books through local public school districts and the “Questar” program. Our Office Manager arranges this each summer and will let you know which books are available through the district and which you must purchase yourself.
- We will try to give you as much notice as possible regarding other books; when you are asked to purchase a book, please do so as quickly as possible so that you do not fall behind in your work.
- Some books are only available through international sources; in this case, the school will purchase the books and ask families to reimburse the school.
- The school owns copies of some of the books we use. Please use these carefully and return them promptly when you are done with them. There is no charge for these books.

BRTA (Berkshire Regional Transit Authority)

The BRTA runs regular buses from Sheffield, Great Barrington, Pittsfield, and other towns, to Stockbridge and back for around \$1 per ride. Most students who ride the BRTA purchase unlimited monthly rides for \$26, available on a “Charlie Card.” The schedule for BRTA buses is available at www.berkshirerpta.com.

Bullying and Teasing; Hazing

Students have described our school as the most respectful, most inclusive school they have seen. We aim for this to be the case in relationships among students and between teachers and students. We have a strict no bullying and teasing policy; for infractions, please see “Discipline” below. Any student-only organizations are required by law to sign an anti-hazing statement (we currently have no such groups; all of our student organizations, such as the Student Council and the Improv group, have faculty advisors).

Anti-Hazing Policy

As required by Massachusetts law, below find a definition of hazing, the anti-hazing law, and the law requiring reporting of hazing.

Section 17: Hazing; organizing or participating; hazing defined

Section 17. Whoever is a principal organizer or participant in the crime of hazing, as defined herein, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one year, or both such fine and imprisonment.

The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced physical activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section to the contrary, consent shall not be available as a defense to any prosecution under this action.

Section 18: Failure to report hazing

Section 18. Whoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonably practicable. Whoever fails to report such crime shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars.

Section 19: Copy of Secs. 17 to 19; issuance to students and student groups, teams and organizations; report

Section 19. Each institution of secondary education and each public and private institution of post-secondary education shall issue to every student group, student team or student organization which is part of such institution or is recognized by the institution or permitted by the institution to use its name or facilities or is known by the institution to exist as an unaffiliated student group, student team or student organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen; provided, however, that an institution's compliance with this section's requirements that an institution issue copies of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations shall not constitute evidence of the institution's

recognition or endorsement of said unaffiliated student groups, teams or organizations.

Each such group, team or organization shall distribute a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen to each of its members, plebes, pledges or applicants for membership. It shall be the duty of each such group, team or organization, acting through its designated officer, to deliver annually, to the institution an attested acknowledgement stating that such group, team or organization has received a copy of this section and said sections seventeen and eighteen, that each of its members, plebes, pledges, or applicants has received a copy of sections seventeen and eighteen, and that such group, team or organization understands and agrees to comply with the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall, at least annually, before or at the start of enrollment, deliver to each person who enrolls as a full-time student in such institution a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each institution of secondary education and each public or private institution of post-secondary education shall file, at least annually, a report with the board of higher education and in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with its responsibility to inform student groups, teams or organizations and to notify each full time student enrolled by it of the provisions of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen and also certifying that said institution has adopted a disciplinary policy with regard to the organizers and participants of hazing, and that such policy has been set forth with appropriate emphasis in the student handbook or similar means of communicating the institution's policies to its students. The board of higher education and, in the case of secondary institutions, the board of education shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall forthwith report to the attorney general any such institution which fails to make such report.

Cell Phones

All mobile or cell phones must be turned off during the school day, between 8:30 and 3:45 p.m., and left in an assigned pocket in the Office. (The school has a land line that students may use to call parents during the day.) Students may not use phones, video games, or other non-school related electronic apparatus of

any kind on campus. Students may not use headphones during school hours. Rules for use of these devices on field trips is left to teacher discretion; please comply politely with your teachers' requests. Laptop computers are an exception to this rule; see **Computer Use** below.

College Guidance

We provide excellent, individualized, comprehensive college guidance. For 9th grade, we recommend that you work hard and get the best grades you can. In 10th grade, you may take the PSAT for practice. It's not too early to think about what path you will pursue in college—major, career, interests—and which colleges may interest you. In 11th grade, we will begin formal college guidance, preparing you for the SATs, discussing SAT IIs and other tests, helping you develop a list of colleges that are right for you, and recommending that you start visiting colleges. We give you two school days per semester to do this. We guide you through selection of and application to college. The path to college is well-worn, and we will help you every step of the way. Please refer to our **College Guidance** booklet for more information. It is emailed to all families during the school year and available in the office upon request.

Community Relations Committee

In support of the school's Core Values of Truth, Imagination, Growth, Freedom, and Responsibility, the Community Relations Committee exists to assist clear communication among members of our school community. We are committed to clear communication, transparency regarding all but personal and confidential matters, facilitated dialogue, and conflict resolution.

If a parent, teacher, trustee, or other community member has a problem that has not been addressed by speaking directly to the person most likely to be able to effect change, or to the Faculty Chair, then he or she may elect to speak to a member of the Community Relations Committee. Members of the Community Relations Committee work to facilitate appropriate meetings and conversations toward resolving communication problems.

We encourage parents who have concerns about a student's academic or social situation to talk directly with teachers. Similarly, the faculty will make sure that any difficulties experienced by a student are brought to the attention of his or her parents. We encourage any member of the school community to address concerns directly with those who may effect change.

If community members believe that their concerns are not met through discussion with a teacher or with another community member, they may consult with the Faculty Chair. The Faculty Chair will mediate further discussion and will help determine whether a concern should be brought to the Council of Teachers or Community Relations Committee. If the problem is with or involves the Faculty Chair, or if conversation with the Faculty Chair does not lead to resolution, community members should go directly to a member of the Community Relations Committee.

The Community Relations Committee provides confidentiality and aid in finding solutions to concerns. Any member of the committee can act as a "3rd person" mediator or help community members find a suitable mediator.

Summary: Community Relations Process

1. Speak to the teacher, staff member, parent or other person who can best effect change. If helpful, take a third person with you. If you wish, a member of the Community Relations Committee is available to advise or accompany you.

2. If after following this process you are not satisfied, take your question to Mr. Sagarin, the Faculty Administrator. If helpful, take a third person with you. If you wish, a member of the Community Relations Committee is available to advise or accompany you.

3. If you are not satisfied at this stage of the process, find a neutral person—again, the Community Relations Committee can function in this regard or help you find someone else—to help you address your question or problem.

Community Relations Committee Mandate

- The Community Relations Committee is a joint committee of the Board of Trustees and the Core Faculty of the Waldorf High School.
- As such, it reports to the Board and to the Core Faculty.
- It meets as needed.
- Members of the Community Relations Committee assist community members in resolving communication problems through advice, advocacy, facilitation, and mediation.
- The Community Relations Committee has no decision-making power, but may make recommendations for action to the Board or the Core Faculty.

Notes:

1. "Third personing"

All groups need some conflict resolution process. One simple form is “third personing,” which is based on an agreement that a person having a difficulty with someone else must seek resolution first with the other person. If more help is needed in communication, a third person may be brought in. The third person acts as part witness, part mediator, maintaining a safe space where the two parties in conflict can speak together, and ensuring that they hear each other. (Please note: Materials on third-personing and conflict resolution, including a bibliography, are available at the school.)

2. Financial Questions

If parents have financial concerns, they need to contact the Business Manager, who will then address the Tuition Assistance Committee or the Executive Committee, as necessary. These committees work to find a satisfactory solution whenever possible.

3. Community Expectations

Please see the school’s Student & Parent Handbook for lists of Teacher and Parent Expectations.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Teresa O’Brien, *Board Chair, Alumni Parent*
(413) 854-7285, berksierra@aol.com

Beth Robbins, *Alumni Parent*
(413) 528-4870, bethrobbins61@gmail.com

Computer Use

We view learning to use a computer as we view learning to drive: A useful and often necessary skill that you can learn in a few hours outside of school, but not a skill worth disrupting the school day to teach.

Students may bring laptops and tablets to school, although computer use is rarely required during a school day. You DO NOT need to have a laptop or home computer to attend our school, although access to one may be helpful for writing papers, research, completing foreign language assignments, and other purposes.

You may use computers for class work according to teachers’ discretion.

We highly recommend that new students complete a typing tutor program before the start of school. Typing is a skill you will use for years to come.

Our school has a wifi network. The safety of our students is paramount, and we are also concerned that

our network not be jeopardized by inappropriate use. Students and parents must sign an “Internet Appropriate Use Agreement” before accessing the school’s network.

(Please note: Students wrote and voted on the following rules for use of computers during the school day.)

1. Use of computers is generally restricted to morning recess and lunch recess each day.
2. Computers are to be used for school or independent work only.
3. Computers may be used to check email or other communications regarding only school-related activities, extracurricular or after-school activities, and scheduling.
4. Students may not access social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, etc.), watch movies or videos (including YouTube), listen to music, or play games.
5. Computers may be used at other times during the school day only with a teacher’s permission.
6. Failure to abide by these rules will result in loss of computer privileges for one week.

In addition:

- All computers should have installed and updated anti-virus software.
- You are responsible for the safety, legality, and content of anything you download to your personal computer over the school’s network.
- The school provides a printer for student work. You are responsible for printing your own work, either at school or at home. (Do not let the computer become another reason for not having your work done on time!)
- Thank you for your appropriate use of computers!

Costs and Fees in addition to Tuition

We try to keep additional costs to a minimum, but they currently include the following:

- Books: Approximately \$400 per year.
- Orientation at Camp Hi-Rock: \$200.
- Hermit Island (12th grade only): Approximately \$300. Includes program fee, campground fee, fuel reimbursement, and food cost.
- Astronomy in the Adirondacks (12th grade only): Approximately \$200.
- Ninth grade hiking trip: Approximately \$250.
- Field Trips: Usually 2-3 per year to Boston or New York, for example. Cost varies depending on travel arrangements and purpose, but plan on \$50 for each.

- Foreign Travel: approximately \$2000-3000. Generally once during the four years of high school. Students raise approximately \$500-\$1000 each through school fundraisers over two or more years. Many students contribute summer earnings to foreign travel costs. Some students obtain grants to help defray costs—language teachers assist with grant applications.

Decision-Making

The school has a Board of Trustees that is responsible for the legal and financial health and integrity of the school. The school has a Core Faculty that is responsible for educational policies and practices at the school. Day-to-day operations are the responsibility of the Executive Director in consultation with the Core Faculty or the Board, as appropriate. As a small, informal, respectful school, however, student consideration of school policies, rules, and practices is welcome. If there is a course you would like to have, a policy or rule you would like to change, or a new idea you would like to see instituted, you are encouraged to discuss your idea with your fellow students and any teachers you believe might be helpful to you. When you have a clear proposal to which a majority of the students agree, submit it in writing to the Core Faculty. Teachers may call for a forum or consider the proposal on its merits without a forum. In most cases, your proposal—with, perhaps, some amendments—will be approved. Off-campus lunch privileges and rules and computer use policies are the results of student initiative.

Discipline

We try to burden you with as few rules and regulations as possible. Of course, generally understood rules of decent behavior, like “please be on time and prepared for your classes” can be violated in many ways, from the virtually insignificant to the extremely serious. Disciplinary action will usually be taken in the following manner:

- For disruptions or infractions in class, the teacher of that class is primarily responsible for discipline, which may mean detention during recess or lunch. What this entails is up to the teacher.
- For more serious infractions your class advisor will be involved in the disciplinary action. He may assign detention or he may confer with your parents to resolve the problem.
- For the most serious infractions you will see the High School Chair, usually with your class advisor present. Disciplinary action at this stage may involve

“in-school” suspension (for which you will attend school but spend a specified time working for the school), suspension, or expulsion. Your parents will be informed and, in the case of expulsion, asked to meet school representatives face-to-face.

Suspension

A student will be suspended by the High School Core Faculty, which includes the student’s advisor and the faculty chair. Parents will be notified of any suspension. Among the actions that may result in suspension are:

- Leaving campus during school hours without permission.
- Dishonesty, including lying, cheating, stealing, or plagiarizing.
- Smoking cigarettes or vaping (nicotine) during school hours or on school property.
- Violence.
- Vandalism.
- “Skipping school” or “skipping a class.”

Expulsion

A student is expelled by the High School Core Faculty. Parents are present for any conference during which an expulsion occurs. Students may be expelled for any of the actions mentioned under “Suspension,” depending on the frequency or severity of the infraction(s). In addition, students may be expelled for an infraction of the drug policy.

Dress Policy: See Personal Appearance

Drugs and Alcohol

The use of cannabis and any other illegal, hallucinogenic, or narcotic drugs is antithetical to the purposes of our school—clear thinking, strong will, deep feeling, and meaningful human interaction. The goal of our policy and any future changes to it is to prevent as many students as possible from using drugs. We aim to balance concern for an individual with concern for the culture of the school and the health of the community, but we are clear that we are a school first, and cannot provide counseling and treatment that would be better sought elsewhere.

- Any student who uses, sells, provides, or possesses cannabis or other illegal drugs while enrolled as a student at the school, whether on school grounds or not, may be expelled. This includes use, sale, or possession during any recess, including summer vacation.
- Students who use alcohol during the school day or at school functions or who bring alcohol onto school

grounds, including off-campus facilities and vehicles, may be expelled.

Early Dismissal

If you must be dismissed from school before the end of regular school hours, you must have a note from a parent or guardian stating the reason for your early dismissal. If you are dismissed early because of illness, the school will contact your parents or guardian.

We dismiss students because of snow or other severe weather only when bus companies or parents notify the school that they will pick their students up early.

Educational Support

We admit students behind whom we stand completely, but most students can benefit from support from time to time, and some students benefit from regular support. We offer academic or educational support before school by appointment, during recess and lunch. All teachers are available to help you if you need it. Teachers may require you to seek support, in which case this requirement will be communicated to your parents and arrangements made to help you succeed at our school.

Forum

“Forum” is a period given to discussion or presentation. It is scheduled when the school brings in a speaker or when students or teachers believe it would be good to take a period to discuss a topic of interest. Students may request a forum on any topic by submitting a proposal to the Core Faculty. These proposals are less formal than student proposals to change school rules or policies (see Decision-Making), and do not have to be in writing. Forum period includes teachers and students, although, when students would like to discuss a topic without teachers present, they may request a “students only” forum.

Grades and Credits

Grades are recorded each semester (end of January and end of the school year). Courses failed during the school year must be made up over the summer through summer school or private tutoring. Teachers may record letter grades from A to F or “pass/fail” grades. Pluses and minuses may be awarded at the teacher’s discretion.

Students receive credit for all courses, graded or not, including physical education and the arts. Students earn up to 7.5 credits per year. Five and a

half of these credits are in the academic areas of English, math, foreign language, history & geography, and science. One and a half of these credits are in art, music, and drama. And one-half of a credit is in physical education. (One credit equals 120 class hours of instruction; this is also known as a “Carnegie unit.”)

All credits earned are recorded on a student’s transcript. Transcripts are sent to colleges at a student’s request. There is no charge for transcripts. Transcripts record a student’s grade-point average (GPA) on a scale in which 4.0 points equals an A grade average. These averages are reported to colleges, but we do not rank students based on averages or any other measure.

Graduation

Graduation is held each June on the Sunday after the last day of school. A unique feature of our graduations is that each graduate speaks for a few minutes before diplomas are awarded.

Helmets

During school hours, students who ride bicycles or scooters or who skateboard are required to wear helmets. Similarly, students must wear helmets when participating in the school’s snow sports program.

Homework

Our school has a unique approach to homework: We believe homework should be meaningful and we believe that each teacher should assign what he or she believes is necessary. Some teachers ask for a lot of work. Others believe that all work can be completed in class; these teachers assign no homework at all. We try not to assign any “busy” work, to assign only work that is helpful and meaningful (which doesn’t mean that it’s all fun). On average, you may expect about 2 hours of work per night. This consists of about ½ hour of work per night for foreign language, English, and math—although these classes do not meet every day, so you won’t have all this work every night—and one hour of work per night for your seminar. This amount will vary a lot with your ability, your speed, and your teacher.

If you want extra work, just ask. Believe it or not, students at our school often ask for extra-credit work or for extra work to improve understanding and skill or to prepare for tests.

If the work is too much, let us know. Our intention is for you to learn in the best, most efficient way, and too much anxiety or fatigue is not healthful. On the other hand, be sure you are using your time

wisely and getting the help you need from day to day and class to class.

Honor Policy

As a student at Berkshire Waldorf High School you are on your honor at all times not to lie, to cheat, to steal, or to plagiarize. We do not ask you to sign an honor code or statement, but you may be subject to severe discipline for any infraction of our honor policy.

Honors Courses & Advanced Placement (AP)

All of our courses are Honors level and we report all courses as Honors courses on transcripts. We do not offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Students have earned advanced placement in college, however, usually based on SAT II scores.

Internet Access

Internet and access to it are a privilege, not a right. Students may:

- use the Internet for appropriate educational purposes and research;
 - use the Internet only with the permission of designated school staff;
 - be considerate of other users on the Internet and use appropriate language for school situations;
 - not intentionally degrade or disrupt Internet services or equipment. (This includes but is not limited to tampering with computer hardware or software, vandalizing data, invoking computer viruses, attempting to gain access to restricted or unauthorized network services, altering passwords, or violating copyright laws);
 - immediately report any security problems or breeches of these responsibilities to appropriate school staff;
 - comply with all of the rules and expectations included in the Student Internet Acceptable Use policy, administrative procedure, and Internet etiquette; and
 - not divulge personal information such as addresses and telephone numbers over the Internet.
- Students should understand that they have no right to privacy when they use the school Internet, and consent to staff monitoring of their communications. Any conduct that is in conflict with these responsibilities is inappropriate and may result in termination of Internet access and possible disciplinary action.

Libraries

The school uses the beautiful library on Main Street in Stockbridge and the excellent research library at Simon's Rock College. Library cards in Stockbridge are free, and you may purchase a "community borrower's" card at Simon's Rock for \$5. We also encourage you to use your local public library and the inter-library loan system.

Lockers/Cubbies

The school has a limited supply of lockers and cubbies in which you may store books and supplies. These do not lock—please don't leave anything valuable in them.

Lunch and Snacks

You should bring a mid-morning snack and lunch, unless you plan to purchase lunch off-campus, each day. Please do not bring candy, gum or carbonated beverages other than seltzer.

Off-Campus Lunch Rules

(These rules were written by students!)

Students may leave campus at lunch time every day of the week as long as they respect the following rules:

- Students may not leave the building until dismissed from class.
- Students must return before the start of the next class after lunch; this means being in class, ready to begin, not dashing through the door.
- Students may not go off-campus alone. Only groups of two or more students are allowed to leave the building during lunch.
- Students must sign out for a particular destination and go only to that destination.
- Students must conduct themselves respectfully as representatives of the school when off-campus. All school rules regarding cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol apply when students are off-campus during lunch.
- Students who violate any of the above may lose their off-campus privileges for the next lunch period or may lose them indefinitely depending upon the violation or the number of violations.

Medication

You may not bring medication to school, either prescription medicine or over-the-counter medicine. If you require medication during the school day, a parent or guardian must come to school to administer it to you. It is against Massachusetts State law for teachers or staff to dispense any medication, prescribed or over-the-counter. If you cannot make it through the school day without medication and you

cannot find a parent or guardian to administer it, you must stay home. We understand that this policy may seem unduly harsh, but it exists for your safety and for the safety of the school. Please note: Epi-pens, inhalers, and other medications meant to intervene in potentially life-threatening situations are allowed. Parents should let the office know in writing when a student carries or may require such medication. Also note: Possessing prescription medication without notifying the school's office is a violation of our Drug and Alcohol Policy.

Orientation

Each school year begins with a 3-day Orientation at Camp Hi-Rock, a 1200 acre YMCA camp about half an hour from the school. The current cost for this is \$200, which covers food, lodging, transportation, and activity fees. We hike, complete low and high-ropes challenges, introduce ourselves, talk around a campfire, and get to know each other and the school. Students return from Orientation as part of our school community, ready to learn and to participate in our school wholeheartedly.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled each year in November. Teachers meet with parents to discuss in detail a student's progress. Parents or teachers may request a conference at any time of year to discuss a specific or general concern. Students may or may not be invited to such a conference.

Parking and Driving

Students may park only in the upper lot near the school vans. All other spaces are reserved for teachers and tenants.

You are not permitted to leave campus in your car until dismissal. You may not drive on a field trip without parent and teacher permission. When driving during the school day or for a field trip, you are required to follow a school van if there is one on your trip. You may not return to your car during the school day. Except in extraordinary circumstances, you may not drive other students in your car during school hours. In these cases, we require written permission from the parents of all students involved.

During school events when there will be many cars present, you may park A.) on Main Street in Stockbridge; B.) In the St. Paul's Children's Center parking lot, just north of Main Street—go down the gravel drive by the first crosswalk between the St. Paul's Church and its neighbor; C.) At the Shrine of Divine Mercy at the top of Pine Street on the right.

It's a bit of a walk back to the school from this location, and we will provide a shuttle when we can.

Personal Appearance (“Dress Policy”)

The school expects students to maintain a neat and well-groomed appearance. More important than the specific details of what you may wear and what you may not are the reasons for the dress policy. The primary reason is that we want you to set aside that part of the day during which you are at school in several ways, one of which is through your dress. No matter the profession you choose, you will most likely have to set apart that part of the day during which you work from other, more casual parts of the day. Medieval scholars and judges, among others, put on robes to perform their duties. In the same way, when you dress for school, you are indicating your readiness to be a student.

Some guidelines regarding personal appearance:

- Please do not wear a hat or hood that obstructs your face in the building. You may not wear a hat to certain events, including assemblies, open houses, concerts, graduation, the elementary school, or other events at faculty discretion.
- Please do not wear outdoor clothing—winter coats in particular—indoors.
- Please do not wear clothing that is excessively torn, ragged, immodest or that displays objectionable images or slogans.
- Hair should be groomed and should not cover your eyes.
- Pants should fit properly; not so long that the cuffs drag on the floor and not worn in such a way that underwear is showing.
- Needless to say, but we say it nonetheless, undergarments (and skin normally covered by undergarments) should not be exposed. Undergarments or hosiery are not a substitute for other articles of clothing.
- Movement classes like dance, eurythmy, physical education, laboratory work, internships, hikes, and other school activities may have particular clothing requirements that vary from guidelines listed above.
- Use deodorant, but please save perfume, body spray, and similar fragrances for non-school activities.
- The most important point: Should a teacher ask you to change your clothing, please comply pleasantly.

Progress Reports

Written grade reports are sent home twice a year—in January and in June. Semester grade reports include the course title and the grade for the course. Final

reports for the year also include course descriptions and a narrative description of the student's performance in the course.

Projects and Internships

Depending on foreign travel, students complete a project or an internship in each of 11th and 12th grades. The projects and internships offer students the opportunity to investigate something that interests them outside of school. Projects have included acting, oil painting, electrical transformer repair, furniture making, pottery, airplane mechanics, and guitar building. Internships have included law, journalism, law enforcement, coffee roasting, and wild animal rescue. Students choose a project or find an internship, with the help of their advisors, in the fall, and then complete their work during a three-week period in April. Students receive credit for this work and present their work in a written report and, for seniors, in a brief talk during our Senior Recognition Dinner in May.

Public Display of Affection

We ask that students refrain from PDA (public display of affection). This does not prohibit affectionate greetings or good-byes. As with other requests regarding your behavior, please respond to any request from teachers or staff immediately, politely, and respectfully.

Respectful Speech

Berkshire Waldorf High School is proud to promote values of understanding and acceptance. Our school welcomes all admitted students, and celebrates every race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, while taking active care that those who are already disadvantaged within society are given a space in which to feel secure and to express themselves safely.

The school will not tolerate any form of bullying, bigotry, or hate speech toward any student or group. Students are forbidden from using slurs, hate speech, or displaying hate symbols, even in a "humorous" manner.

The only exception to this rule is in an educational setting, approved of and supervised by a teacher. (For example, English classes may include books such as *The Color Purple*, which contains slurs, and history classes may refer to objectionable facts in a history of racism.)

Students will not target their peers for harassment, teasing, or bullying on the basis of any perceived or actual minority status.

The school has a zero-tolerance policy with regard to this kind of behavior, and any confirmed report of such an incident will result in immediate disciplinary action.

Rules and Policies

We are not a democratic school, but we are a tightly-knit school community in which every participant has a voice. Students may request that rules and policies be changed by submitting a written proposal to the faculty. Generally, a student or group of students discusses and obtains approval from the full student body before writing a formal proposal. Teachers then discuss and approve, with or without amendments, the student proposal. Lunch rules, computer use rules, and aspects of our drug and alcohol policy have been re-written through this process. We find that students who have a voice in creating school rules and policies are more likely to respect and uphold them.

SATs and SAT IIs

We recommend that students take the PSAT in 10th and 11th grade, and the SAT in 11th and 12th grade. Those students who apply to colleges that request SAT II (achievement test) scores should generally take these as late in 12th grade—usually in late fall—as possible. Our students often do well on foreign language, math level I, and literature tests, although we have also had students do well in history and science.

Some students choose not to take SATs at all and apply to colleges that do not require these tests.

Some students, particularly those with some learning challenges, may do well to take the ACT instead of the SAT. It is a test similar to the SAT except that it is focused slightly more on what students know and not on what used to be called their "IQ." (Despite any claims to the contrary, the SAT is still an IQ test. Some parents may recall that it used to be called the "Scholastic Aptitude Test," but the letters SAT have not stood for that—or for anything else—for more than ten years. No correlation between SAT scores and aptitude can be measured, and SATs are relatively poor at predicting success or GPA in college.)

We offer an after-school SAT review course, usually beginning in December or January. The cost has been \$300 per student, and most 11th graders take it.

Our students generally score about 100 points above national averages on the SAT. Our students average 600 on math and 630 on verbal portions of

the SAT. (These scores are reported out of 800 possible points.)

School Closings

If weather closes Berkshire Hills Regional School District, we will be closed. When local schools are delayed, we are often closed—they draw from one district; we draw from 9-10 districts in 3 states, and so are even more cautious regarding transportation in bad weather. School closings will be announced by these methods:

1. The school's answering machine, usually before 6 a.m. and no later than 7 a.m.
2. An email to all parents and students.

School Evacuation and Safety

The school's evacuation and safety policy is simple and may be summarized in one word: Scatter. If students or staff feel threatened, they are to evacuate the building as quickly as possible. Every classroom in our building has a door to the outside. If safe to do so, students and staff meet on the lawn above the parking lot until everyone is accounted for. If it is not safe to remain on school grounds, students and staff should make their way to Stockbridge Town Hall and Police Station at 50 Main Street in Stockbridge.

Seminars

A seminar is a 1.5 to 2 hour class each morning for three or four weeks on one subject. The hours usually include a review of the previous days' work, a presentation of new material, and time for you to work on your own. Time usually passes quickly. It is important that you stay on top of your work; a project or paper assigned in the first week of the block is due before you know it. Also, if you miss a couple of assignments early in the block, you may be playing catch-up right to the end. History, literature, and science are taught primarily in seminar blocks. Each seminar runs for approximately 30 hours, and you receive .25 credit for passing it. Instead of a year of biology, for instance, you complete 6 seminars in your 4 years of high school, for 1.5 credits in biology.

Seminar Books

Many courses, particularly those taught in seminar courses, require a seminar book. This generally consists of a chronological collection, with title page and table of contents, of the work from the course. This work often includes notes from presentations rewritten in essay form, essays, tests, labs (if any), drawings, and any other work the teacher wishes to have included. Book work is usually required to be

done on unlined paper. Drawings and plates should be done on heavy drawing paper.

Seminar books should be neat and attractive. The pages should have reasonable margins, and students should strive to present their work as clearly as possible. Research papers and some other work may be typed, but much work may be done by hand. Each teacher will expect something slightly different, and each teacher will be sure to let you know what to do.

Senior Trip

The school raises money each year for a Senior Trip and give the senior class a few days off from school for the trip. Given this relationship, it is our understanding that there are no "senior skip days," and that any seniors who cut school should expect serious consequences. C'mon, guys.

Supplies

The school asks you to order necessary textbooks and some other course materials. In some cases the school will purchase books and supplies and then bill you for these. We try to keep these costs as low as possible; parents can expect to pay about \$400 per year for books and class materials other than personal school supplies. New York State families can obtain textbooks or reimbursement from their public school districts.

It is a student's responsibility to obtain books and supplies punctually! You are responsible for obtaining your own classroom supplies, including such items as pens, pencils, binders, paper, and thumb drives. Bring required supplies and books to class every day. "I didn't know we needed that today" is not a valid excuse. The school supply list is available at all times on the school's website.

Who We Are: Board, Faculty, Staff & Committees

Board of Trustees

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Teresa O'Brient
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Core Faculty

Robert Andenmatten, MEd, *physics, math*
Katie Fowley, MA, *English*
Edward Hamelrath, PhD, *German*
Julia Nunez, MA, *Spanish*
Stephen Sagarin, PhD, *history, math*
Kendell Shaffer, *English, drama*
Avia Stanton, *life science*
Samantha Stier, MFA, *English, history*

Visiting Faculty & Coaches

Dan Bellow, *pottery*
Michael D'Aleo, *astronomy*
Winslow Eliot, *English, journalism*
Stella Elliston, *eurythmy*
John Graney, *blacksmith*
Kosta Koufis, *soccer*
Al Thorp, *surveying*

Staff

Stephen Sagarin, *Executive Director*
Kendell Shaffer, *Office Manager*
Samantha Stier, *Admissions Director*
Patrick White, *Chief Financial Officer*

Work Period

The last fifteen minutes of each day (usually from 3:30-3:45 p.m.) are devoted to cleaning the school. Faculty and students clean the bathrooms, water plants, vacuum floors, empty trash, and so on. You will be assigned a work period job to which you report every day. Please perform your job well and cheerfully. Seniors supervise students in the other grades.