

# FAMILY HAND- BOOK

5/10/2016

A Public Charter School guided by the Core  
Principles of Public Waldorf Education

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Main Office: 970.986.8219

[www.JuniperRidgeSchool.org](http://www.JuniperRidgeSchool.org)

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## **School Office Hours:**

Main Office: 8:00 – 4:00 Monday through Thursday.

8:00 – 12:00 Friday

- School Day for Grades One through Nine: 8:20 - 3:40 Monday through Thursday
- School Day for Half-day Kindergarten: 8:20 - Noon Monday through Thursday

## **Vision Statement**

To awaken knowledgeable, self-aware, and compassionate human beings

## **Mission Statement**

At JRCS the community joins together to inspire children to cultivate their passion for life-long learning through child-centered academics that emphasize goodness, beauty and truth.

## **Curriculum**

JRCS is guided by the core principles of Public Waldorf Education. These can be found at

<http://www.allianceforpublicwaldorfeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Exhibit-A-single-page.pdf>

Our Curriculum teaches academics through the arts along with a rich cultural experience. We believe that a child learns not only through the intellect, but also by cultivating healthy social interactions and through lessons that engage the feeling life. In addition, we believe a lesson is best learned when intellectual content is linked with active, hands-on expression. This combination of addressing the head, heart and hands is unique to Waldorf. Through this broadened approach, the academic pace differs from the traditional public school curriculum. Rather than force-feeding intellectual content, we design our lessons based upon age-appropriate development and readiness to receive the teachings. Please consider reading *Understanding Waldorf Education, Teaching from the Inside Out* by Jack Petrash for more insight into the Waldorf Curriculum and why it is taught the way it is. You can get a copy from our school bookstore.

## School Policies and Procedures

Choosing a school that is right for you and your child is a difficult decision to make. We at Juniper Ridge offer every child the opportunity to engage in a rich cultural experience focusing on healthy, strong relationships, the academics and the arts. At Juniper Ridge an important piece to the program is engaging the family to participate and be an extension of the learning in the classroom. Because of this unique approach, we want you to be aware of the following policies and procedures.

### Tardiness

Students arriving after the starting time of school each day (8:20 for Grades 1-9) are considered late for school. If arriving late, **all students** must be signed in by a parent/guardian in at the Main Office building, and they will be considered tardy. They **may not** go directly to class.

Children coming late to class disrupt the flow of the opening of the day by being out of step with the rest of the group. Not only are the children who are late affected, but so are all classmates they come in contact with. Furthermore, it puts an increased load upon our receptionist, who is responsible to escorting the late students and keying them into the building. At Juniper Ridge, we have determined that following five (5) tardies/late arrivals, all parents will be required to meet with administration to set up an attendance plan.

### Attendance Policy

We ask that every family respect our requirement that students attend school daily and are absent only when absolutely necessary. A high absentee level creates serious difficulties for students and for the school. Parents are asked to schedule routine medical and dental appointments on Friday or after school hours and to schedule vacations during school breaks.

If your child is going to be absent, due to illness, physician's appointment or other reasons, please notify the school by 8:30 am in one of two easy ways:

1. Call the front desk at 986-8219, or
2. Email the front desk at [info@juniperridgeschool.org](mailto:info@juniperridgeschool.org)

Parents should include their name, their child's name and the reason for the tardy/absence. Parents are asked to call the office each day their child is absent even if the absence is on consecutive days. Parents are also asked to inform their child's classroom teacher of any circumstances at home that might affect the child's attendance or performance in school.

Per District 51 Attendance Policy JH-R, and absence is considered excused if it is for illness or injury of the student or a religious observance. Other absences may be considered excused on a case-by-case basis on the approval of the Director. All other absences will be considered unexcused. If absences of any kind are not communicated to the office, students will be marked unexcused. It is important for the continuity of your child's learning that school is attended on a regular basis. If absences exceed four (4) unexcused absences or a total of ten (10) absences, parents will be contacted to meet with the teacher or administration in order to establish an attendance plan.

As too many absences may adversely affect academic achievement, parents should be made aware such absenteeism could result in retention for the coming school year. If a student has over 10 unexcused absences, the family will receive a letter of concern regarding attendance from the school. Students may be un-enrolled after 10 consecutive unexcused absences. If a child is un-enrolled, JRCS will accept a child from the waiting list, so there is a possibility there will not be a place in that class when the unenrolled child returns.

In the case of extended absences due to a serious medical condition, the Administration may put a temporary 504 Plan in place that may include tutoring services at home. A doctor's verification of such a condition is necessary in this case, and a health official will develop a Health Plan for such students.

### **Policy regarding missed work due to absence**

When a student has missed school due to a verifiable illness, the class and subject teachers will do whatever possible to catch the child up with the lessons missed. Depending on the grade, this may require extra homework or staying in at recess. Since so much of our curriculum is dependent upon storytelling, only the basic information behind the lesson can be related. Missed story content cannot be recapitulated.

When a child has missed school due to the choice of the family (vacation, travel, etc.), the burden of catching the student up with missed work falls on the family. They must approach the teacher to learn what they must do at home to catch the student up. The parents cannot expect extra attention or work from the teacher when their family plans have taken the student out of school.

### **Mid-Day Pick-Up and/or Early Release From School**

If a student has an appointment, teachers will be notified by the office and the child should be sent to the office. Kindergarten students must be escorted to the office by teacher, assistant, or volunteer. A student will not be released from the school unless they are properly signed out from the Main Office. Teachers may not check out a student directly to a parent. Again, we ask that parents schedule routine medical and dental appointments on Friday or after school hours when at all possible.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up Policy for the Grades**

When dropping your child off in the morning or picking up in the afternoon, they should enter the building only through the SOUTH DOOR (to the right when facing school buildings). In the morning, access to the building is not allowed before 8:10 am, so please do not knock at the doors before that time. In the afternoon, pick up is at the gathering area outside of the south door. Thank you for your attention to this!

- Children are to be dropped off only after 8:00 am. There will be no supervision for them before that. Please follow the drop-off traffic pattern for your child.

- ❑ Any children dropped-off before 8:00 am will go to our before school care program. Parents will be charged a fee for this service. Please arrange this beforehand directly with the office.
- ❑ No children are allowed in the buildings before 8:10 am
- ❑ At 8:10 am, the doors are opened and children are welcomed into the buildings. Children are directed to go to their classroom and wait outside the door until greeted by their teacher and welcomed inside.
- ❑ Children will be available for pick-up at 3:40 pm. The pick-up area is at the south end of the main building along the horse-shoe. Enter the parking lot by the north entrance and queue up facing south in a double row until you can singly enter the horse-shoe. Pull forward when free. The loading area is clearly marked. Do not encourage your children to come to your car ahead of the loading area.
- ❑ Any children not picked up by 3:55 pm, unless you have made prior arrangements with the teacher or the office, will be taken to our after school care program, and you will be charged a fee by them.
- ❑ If pick up does not occur by 5:30 p.m., the After Care teacher will call Social Services who will pick up the child.

We have signage to help guide you when picking up your children. Parking along the line of logs is available to parents who want to park and personally pick up their children. Pick up from your car is only along the south side of the horseshoe. For safety reasons students leaving that area to find parents waiting in the line of cars will be sent back to the pick-up area. We are grateful for your continued cooperation waiting patiently in our doubled feeder line, alternating to enter the horseshoe, and for your willingness to pull as far forward as possible to make more room in the horseshoe for the cars behind you.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up for the Kindergarten**

- ❑ We ask Kindergarten parents to park in the east-facing line of cars and walk your Kindergarten to class. Children may be dropped off after 8:00 am. Children arriving before this time must be brought to our before school care program for before school supervision, which is fee based.
- ❑ At the Kindergarten door, please sign your child in.
- ❑ Kindergarten ends at 12 noon. Parents are asked to park in the east-facing line of cars and to walk to the Kindergarten to pick up their child. We ask parents to sign their child out. Parents are required to fill out a form located in the Parent Registration Packet to give permission to individuals other than themselves to pick up their child.
- ❑ Parents have the option to enroll their children into our afternoon Kindergarten program. There is a fee for this service.
- ❑ Unless prior arrangements have been made with the staff, children not picked up by 12:15 pm will be taken to the afternoon Kindergarten program until picked up. There is a fee charged for this.



## **Classroom Visitations**

We realize that there are occasions when parents would like to visit their child's classroom. Visitors are welcome to our classrooms. In order to arrange a visit, please follow these guidelines:

*Please, no unannounced drop-ins.* Our daily classroom rhythm is a finely structured, orchestrated routine. Lessons are an interplay between teacher and students, and student to student. Obviously, a visitor is not engaged in the work and flow of the classroom. As a result, an unexpected visitor can unnecessarily distract both the teacher and students. We ask parents to be sensitive to the fact that in any setting, most of us are uncomfortable being observed. For this reason, we ask parents to respect the teachers' request to be able to prepare the students for a visitor who is known by some and a stranger to others.

Please do the following when setting up a classroom visit

*–Speak with the teacher prior to the day you wish to visit. You may contact the teacher with your request by phone, email or directly (after school only, please).*

*–Consider making an appointment to speak with Donald Samson, our director of curriculum following your visit. We realize that you may come away with questions about what you have observed. Our teaching methods are different than what you may be used to from public school education. Mr. Samson is available to speak with, reflect on what you have seen, and answer your questions.*

## **Teacher Availability**

From the moment your teachers arrive at school, their full attention is on your children and the lessons they will teach that day. Your concerns and questions are very important to us. However, if you want your teacher's attention to them, even to remember what you have said, then we ask you to wait for a time to approach them when they are not preoccupied with caring for a room full of children. If they have not yet done so, teachers will announce times when it is best to call them, speak to them, or email them. Please be respectful of these guidelines. If you are having difficulty contacting a teacher, please bring this concern to the attention of the Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

## **Discipline Policy**

JRCS is dedicated to a positive discipline approach. We support the philosophy that as children grow, they may make inappropriate choices. Such choices require they experience natural consequences for their actions. If a child hurts another child, the child will be given the opportunity to make things right. We endeavor to develop a sense of responsibility for one's actions and an intrinsic desire to make things right. We also believe that parents have a right to know when their child has been hurt or when they have needed consequences for inappropriate actions at school. In cases where the law has been breached we must follow MCVSD 51 Guidelines.

JRCS's Discipline Policy is guided by our understanding that all children are unique and should be treated with love and respect. In every situation where our students require guidance in their behavior, every effort should be made to ascertain all of the contributing factors in order to find the correct solution specific to the situation and the student. In every instance requiring intervention, the following steps should be taken:

1. The classroom teacher should be given the support and guidance to address the situation within the class community.
2. The teacher will make every effort to involve the child's parents and/or guardians.
3. If the situation becomes more than the teacher and the classroom community can rectify, then the student should be sent to one of the administrators for further intervention. *If at all possible, a JRCS Behavior Referral Form must accompany the student.*
4. The administrator and/or the Intervention Coordinator will conduct a further investigation, which will involve interviewing the student, other students involved, and any staff members with pertinent information.
5. The administrator and/or the Intervention Coordinator will determine appropriate actions and/or consequences to be applied based on their investigations.
6. The administrator and/or the Intervention Coordinator will communicate with the teacher concerning the results of their investigation and the actions/consequences they deemed appropriate for the situation.
7. The administrator and/or the Intervention Coordinator will contact the parents and/or guardians and involve them in the process of helping the child learn and be able to demonstrate correct behaviors within the school day.
8. At all times, staff members and administrators will document actions taken and file them in the discipline folder in the office.
9. If initial interventions are unsuccessful, the class teacher will refer the student to the CARE Team. That team will be responsible for gathering all pertinent information, setting goals for behavior, and recommending specific intervention strategies to the staff and parents/guardians.
10. At all times, the safety of the troubled student, his or her classmates, and the school as a whole will be the main guiding principle in dealing with the student.
11. If the safety of students is in anyway at issue, the parents of the student in question will be asked to take them home until a satisfactory solution to their problem can be found. Formal suspension paperwork will be filed with the district depending on the situation and length of suspension.

It is the belief of JRCS that every student is a wonderfully unique human being. Some come to us with less than ideal sets of circumstances, which could involve physical as well as psychological issues. Every effort will be made to understand and meet all students where they are at their particular stage of life. If their behavior while at school becomes an issue, we will endeavor to ascertain any contributing conditions and address the underlying causes of the behavior. JRCS will always strive to be a school where all children are loved and respected as well as feeling safe and welcome.

## **Student Behavior Code**

- We expect students to honor all safety guidelines, respecting the need for a safe learning environment.
- We expect students to treat others with respect and consideration, using polite language with no profanity, unwanted teasing or put-downs.
- We expect students to treat school property and the environment with respect and use it responsibly. This includes desks, bathrooms, equipment, books and materials.
- We expect students to choose positive alternatives to physical or verbally abusive confrontations. Such alternatives may include seeking teacher assistance for help in conflict management.
- We expect students to be in class on time and to make proper use of instructional time, assuming the responsibility of being on task and completing assignments.
- We expect students to stay within school boundaries and within sight of adult supervision.
- We expect students to follow JRCS's dress code.
- Students must not break the law by bringing drugs or weapons of any kind to school, including facsimiles of weapons.
- Improper use of the internet or texting will have consequences in accord with D51 policy, including involvement by law enforcement if the student is 10 years old or older.
- Bullying behaviors will and must be addressed. Habitual bullying will have consequences.

## **Bullying Policy**

JRCS does not allow harassment, bullying or intimidation of students or staff on school property or during school sponsored events. Such breaks in policy will be recorded and kept in the student's discipline file. JRCS follows the District 51 bullying policy for reporting purposes.

If a student refuses to follow these guidelines, staff will use such actions as called for by law and the JRCS Discipline Policy. In cases where natural consequences will assist the student in changing the behavior, such consequences as Think Time, informal talk, restriction of privileges or assignment of duties to help the school will be used. If a student's behavior is so out of control that it threatens his/her safety or the safety of others, a parent or guardian will be called immediately to pick up the child. A meeting may be set up with the parents present to create a Student Behavior Plan, as needed.

## **Compliance with MCVSD 51 Policies**

As a charter school under the auspices of District 51, we are required to be in compliance with their Discipline Code. Such things as bringing controlled substances, weapons and habitual behaviors that are detrimental to the children and to the school environment may be reported to District 51 where appropriate. Both major and minor offenses will be tracked by the school and copies will be kept in the student's confidential file. In addition, we follow state laws regarding compulsory attendance. JRCS also follows District 51 policies and regulations regarding suspension and expulsion in accordance with Federal and State law.

In cases where the law has been breached we must follow State and local Guidelines.

## **Dress Code**

Juniper Ridge Community School recognizes that all students have an intrinsic worth based upon who they are and not what they wear. Whether we intend to or not, clothing is used both as an external expression of our own individuality, as well as an expression of the groups we align ourselves with. The school expects students to maintain a neat and well-groomed appearance and to dress in the spirit of the code outlined below. Styles must not interfere with the educational process nor present a safety hazard as determined by the faculty.

The dress code at Juniper Ridge is guided by three criteria:

1. Safety
2. To minimize peer pressure
3. To minimize distraction

The standards of dress are as follows. This applies to all clothing and personal items such as hats, purses, bags, back packs, and lunch boxes.

### **KINDERGARTEN AND GRADES 1 - 9**

1. No logos, emblems. Clothing with writing and/or pictures portraying characters or logos which have as a primary purpose advertising a product, movie, television show, etc. are prohibited. If an article of clothing not listed becomes a classroom/school distraction, the teacher may request that the clothing not be worn to school. The exceptions to this are JRCS t-shirts and JRCS event related clothing.
2. Designs or styles judged by their teachers to be vulgar, offensive, or suggestive are not allowed, nor is anything that promotes tobacco, alcohol, drugs, firearms, media, or gang affiliation.
3. No clothing displaying a message that the class teacher determines to be distracting (e.g., "I'd rather be playing video games").
4. Midriffs must be covered. No spaghetti straps. Tank tops must have a two finger width.
5. All clothing must have a hemmed or finished edge (no cutoffs, or frayed edges.) Children may not wear intentionally torn clothing to school. Underwear may not be visible.
6. Shorts, dresses, and skirts may not be shorter than 3 inches above the knee.

7. All clothing must be of the appropriate size, fitting and covering appropriately, no see-through shirts, nothing baggy or sagging (e.g. the crotch at the knee look) or excessively tight fitting.
8. Appropriate shoes for walking, running, jumping and playing must be worn for all games classes, gardening and recesses. Children who come in open-toed sandals will need to keep a second pair of shoes at school for outdoor activities. Shoes for outdoor wear must have a closed toe and heel support, be the correct size and fit appropriately.
9. Acceptable styles are tennis shoes with tied laces or zippers/Velcro or closed toed sandals (e.g. keens or similar styles).
10. Laces/Velcro must be tied/secured and stay fastened.
11. No flip-flops, platforms, crocs, rubber clogs, or high-heeled shoes are not to be worn as outdoor shoes. No shoes with lights or rollers/wheels, even if wheels are removed.
12. Clothing should be suitable for both classroom and outdoor play, including games, woodworking and gardening. Clothing should be suitable to the weather. In the winter, dress children in layers to allow for the cold mornings and warmer afternoons.
13. Items intended to be worn outdoors, such as sunglasses, hats, caps, heavy sweatshirts, gloves, etc., are not to be worn indoors.
14. Hats are intended to protect the child from the elements, not as an expression of style. No head coverings (i.e. bandanas, scarves, etc.) may be worn in classes. (Religious exceptions allowed).
15. Hair must be its natural color. Hair will be clean, neat, and out of the face. No extreme haircuts, head-shaving, partial head-shaving, hair carving, mohawks, faux-hawks, or the like. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis upon consultation and approval of the administration.
16. For safety reasons we discourage the wearing of jewelry. Piercing is allowed on the ears only, dangling earrings may not be worn by students at any time. We request that students in second grade and under do not wear watches to school.
17. Students in early childhood and lower elementary programs are not permitted to wear make-up. Students in grades 7 and 8 may wear light makeup in natural colors tastefully applied as determined by their teacher. Something for the sixth graders to look forward to!
18. Tattoos are prohibited. If a temporary tattoo has been applied, it must be washed off prior to coming to school.

**Consequences for being out of dress code include:**

- Cover clothing with another article of clothing.
- Child will be asked to remove article of clothing and replace with another. Lost and found clothing may be provided.
- Parents/guardians may be called to bring appropriate clothing.

- Parents/Guardians will be asked to return hair to natural color or re-cut hair that is out of compliance.

Please take the time to clarify with your child what portion of his/her wardrobe is school appropriate. Support your child in learning the difference between what they wear at school and what they wear at home and with friends. Questions can be directed to your child's teacher or the administrative office.

### **Dressing for the weather**

The children will have outside recesses during all but the most severe of weather conditions. We require that the children come dressed appropriate to the outdoor weather conditions, and in layers, so they can be comfortable in the classroom as well. Classroom shoes (slippers or other indoor shoes) are required in all grades to minimize the amount of mud that is tracked in and out of the buildings.

### **Classroom Shoes and the Battle of the Mud**

In the wet weather, managing the mud is a daily challenge. We want to be able to contain the mud to the hallways. Students, and after them their teachers, clean the classrooms every day at the end of the school day. When muddy shoes and boots are allowed into the work and living space of the classroom, the cleanliness and aesthetics are negatively impacted. For this reason, all teachers are requiring that every student has a pair of indoor classroom shoes that do not go outside. This can be in the form of a slipper, or simply an extra pair of shoes that are put on when entering the room and taken off again when going out to play. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation around this issue.

To help us cope with seasonal situations where mud is around for more than a few days, we offer the following guidelines:

1. It is essential that every child has classroom shoes. Obviously, a child coming in from recess with wet and muddy shoes, whether intentionally muddy or not, must leave them in the hallway to avoid tracking dirt into the classrooms. Please make sure your child has a usable pair at school. Socks are not enough, since wet shoes usually mean wet socks as well.
2. Send rain/mud boots for our most sloppy days during a thaw period.
3. Except in the clear case of an accident, we are not allowing children to call home for a change of clothing. We have told them to stay out of the mud, and there are natural consequences to their disobeying. We ask that you reinforce this as well and ask your children to stay out of the mud while at school. If they hear this from you as well as from us, they are more likely to get the message.

4. When children come in from recess tracking mud, we expect them to clean up after themselves. Please repeat this expectation to them, at least in respect to school, so they realize you also hold them responsible for cleaning up after themselves.
5. If you are concerned about your child being muddy and uncomfortable from recess time onwards, we welcome you to send a clean set of clothing to be kept in school. We will allow children to change who have a change here.

## **Personal Property at School**

### **The following items are not allowed at school:**

- Toys (stuffed animals, trinkets etc.)
- Games (Pokemon cards or similar games. Students may play regular cards at appropriate times if the cards belong to the school)
- Electronic devices
- Cell phones must remain at home, or must be turned off and put in backpack until the end of the day. If cell phones are seen by staff member they will be confiscated until the end of the day.
- Unsafe items – knives, weapons or toy weapons of any kind are against the JRCS policies and possession of these items may have serious consequences (there are a few exceptions with toy weapons during special occasions and with the approval of the administration). Any violation of this rule will be immediately reported to DCI or Administrative Director.
- Money/cash (field trip money is separate and should be turned into teacher or the front office before or after school)

## **Pets**

No personal dogs or pets are permitted on the school campus during school days and events, on or off leash please, for safety, health and liability reasons. This includes field trips. Special arrangements may be made to bring pets to school with approval from the Administrative Director and Class Teacher.

## **After School Classes, Clubs, and Fieldtrips:**

When after school classes, clubs, or fieldtrips are offered, parents must sign the proper permission forms/waivers and either return them to the teacher or deliver them to the Main Office before the student may attend the class, club, or fieldtrip. All after school activities on campus must be sanctioned by the administration.

## Homework Policy

JRCS's Basic Philosophy on Homework:

- Homework must be meaningful activity. There is no value in busy work just for the sake of doing more.
- Families have busy schedules, and students do not need more pressure in their lives.
- Teachers lead busy lives, too; and do not need a lot of additional accounting responsibilities.
- Homework should not set up stress between students and parents or teachers.
- In cases where a student struggles to learn, more time or support at home or outside of school time may be needed.

Ideally, homework could be optional, but when it is meaningful, students, teachers and parents will see its value as a support for academic success. Individual student learning goals can be achieved with the help of differentiated homework.

Loose Guidelines for Homework at JRCS:

### ***First and Second Grades:***

At this stage, students will not receive regular homework. As projects are assigned, there may be some at-home work to be completed, but this will only be a few times per year, and there will be ample communication between teacher and parent to help facilitate the work at home. Parents are fully involved in the homework. If the teacher feels additional support is needed at home for children to learn sight words or math facts, then such practice may be requested by the teacher. Parents will be asked to read to their student for 15-20 minutes per day (in the evenings) at least five days per week.

### ***Third Grade:***

Regular homework may begin at this time, with no more than 20 minutes per day on weekdays, and none over the weekends. Work will be meaningful, will help reinforce concepts/skills taught in class or will be in conjunction with a project. The purpose at this stage is to familiarize students and families with homework. Students should start to form good habits around homework. Parents are still very involved in the homework. In addition, students are asked to read 20 minutes per day after school on weekdays (it is still permissible and even encouraged that parents read to their children).

Homework may include some or all of the following:

1. Math practice, especially when it can be hands-on practice and not simply more worksheets (measure your desk at home; play math type family games at home; practice your times tables)
2. Nightly reading
3. Writing practice



4. Work on a project
5. Spelling or vocabulary words to practice

***Fourth Grade:***

Regular homework continues. Nightly work should be no more than 30 minutes and not assigned on weekends. The purpose at this stage is to have students take more responsibility for their work. They should turn it in daily or weekly and be held accountable for this work through non-punitive measures. Parents are still very involved in the homework. In addition, students are asked to read 20 minutes per day after school on weekdays.

Homework may include some or all of the following:

1. Math practice, especially when it can be hands-on practice and not simply more worksheets (measure your desk at home; play math type family games at home; practice your times tables)
2. Nightly reading
3. Writing practice
4. Work on a project
5. Spelling or vocabulary words to practice
6. Creative projects that help introduce time management skills
7. Book projects

***Fifth/Sixth Grade:***

Regular homework should not be regularly more than 40 minutes a night and should not be assigned on weekends. The purpose at this stage is for students to continue good homework habits, take more responsibility for their work, and begin to practice time-management skills. Parents are still involved and should be helping their student as needed, though some work could be done without parental support. In addition, students are asked to read at least 20 minutes per day after school on weekdays.

Homework may include some or all of the following:

1. Math practice, especially when it can be hands-on practice and not simply more worksheets (measure your desk at home; play math type family games at home; practice your times tables)
2. Nightly reading
3. Writing practice
4. Work on a project
5. Spelling or vocabulary words to practice

6. Creative projects that help introduce time management skills
7. Book projects
8. Research projects
9. Reading for content
10. Studying for End of Main Lesson Block Assessments

***Seventh/Eighth Grade:***

There will be more long term assignments along with the daily practice. Parent should be involved so that they know what their student should be working on and should be able to ascertain easily from the teacher if homework is being turned in promptly. In addition, students are asked to read at least 20 minutes per day after school on weekdays.

Homework may include some or all of the following:

1. Math practice, especially when it can be hands-on practice and not simply more worksheets (measure your desk at home; play math type family games at home; practice your times tables)
2. Nightly reading
3. Writing practice
4. Work on a project
5. Spelling or vocabulary words to practice
6. Creative projects that help introduce time management skills
7. Book projects
8. Research projects
9. Reading for content
10. Studying for End of Main Lesson Block Assessments

***Ninth Grade & Beyond:***

Homework practices from the previous years will continue and the assignments will become longer and more involved. Time management will become much more important in order for students to complete assignments on time. This is where parents can be most supportive: to help their children develop the habits necessary to start and complete projects in a timely manner and of a high quality.

## **Student Report Cards**

Student progress is reported through parent/teacher conferences held twice a year, as well as through written reports sent out twice per school year. Mid-Year Reports are sent home following the Winter Break and give an overview of how the student is doing in meeting the standards. The End of Year Report includes a narrative overview of the student's progress, main lesson and skills content, and a Standardized Report of progress made. This report is sent home during the last week of school.

A portfolio of student work is collected over the year as evidence of student learning and is shared with parents during conferences, as well as sent home at the end of the year. Results of ongoing assessments will be shared with parents to communicate student progress using rubrics and skill checklists based on the standards.

## **Students with Special Needs**

The educational staff of JRCS understand that all students have differing needs: socially, emotionally and educationally. Some have been identified and have formal Individual Educational Plans (IEP) in place and many others have not been identified. It is the philosophy of JRCS that we strive to meet the needs of all children. Through our CARE program, our goal is to make sure that students with IEPs are receiving all the support necessary to meet their goals, as outlined in their IEP. In addition, all other students, whether they are gifted, twice exceptional, or are struggling with academic, social, emotional, and/or behavioral issues are given all of the support the school has at its disposal to ensure they are successful. Our CARE program will work in conjunction with teachers to identify all students needing support, provide needed interventions, and assess and track progress towards individual goals

## **Communication Policy**

The staff at JRCS is dedicated to good communication between the school and parents. Some ways this will be accomplished is by the regular classroom newsletter sent out by each teacher, the emailed JRCS Recorder, Parent Evenings, and direct communication with your child's teacher.

JRCS has a website that contains important information and updates about the school. Please review the website periodically to stay informed. JRCS Website: [www.juniperridgeschool.org](http://www.juniperridgeschool.org)

Another good source of information is our Facebook group and Facebook page. In addition to our school page, each class has a closed group page specific to that class. Please consider "friending" us to receive the updates and information sent out on these sites.

Every effort will be made to communicate all needed information to you. Please let us know if you have special considerations that need to be addressed in order for you to get timely information.

## **Emergency Communication Protocol**

The school will setup and maintain a contact list of all parents and guardians to be contacted in case of emergency or school closure. The mode of contact will be through mass text, unless otherwise requested. Please see administration staff to make other arrangements if needed.

## **School Closure – Inclement Weather Policy**

*UNLESS* you are otherwise notified, JRCS will follow the same inclement weather policy as District 51. Log onto D51 website at <http://www.mesa.k12.co.us/>. Look in the upper right hand corner where it says: Emergency Information. If the district has called a snow day, or late opening, you will see it posted there. If no alert is posted there, the district considers it a normal school-day schedule. *However*, Juniper Ridge reserves the right to differ with the district. It is not a decision we would take lightly. In cases when JRCS differs from D51, parents will receive a text or a call from the school by 6:15 a.m. In the event that a late start is ever called either by the district or by our school, please note that teachers will still be on hand to receive the children by 8:10 am from those families who have to get to work regardless of the late start.

## **Grievance Policy: Guidelines for Conflict Resolution**

The Grievance Policy provides a means by which conflicts can be resolved. Parents, students, teachers or staff may initiate this process. Whenever possible, involved parties are encouraged to resolve conflicts directly. If, however, a conflict arises that cannot be resolved among the interested parties, the following steps will be followed:

The parties will make every attempt to solve the issue themselves, communicating the concern directly to the teacher or parent(s) in question. An appointment should be set up where the concern can be expressed in private. Care should be taken to express concerns calmly and respectfully so that an environment conducive to resolution can exist. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction may serve as a mediating facilitator if needed. Parties will document concern and resolution and file it with the Administrative Director.

If the parties are unable to come to a resolution, they may file their concern in writing with the Administrative Director. The Administrative Director will schedule a meeting between these parties, which will be held at a location agreeable to both parties. The Administrative Director will either ask the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to become involved or the Administrative Director will become directly involved. Documentation will be recorded as to issue and resolution.

In cases where the concern has been addressed with the Administrative Director and any party remains dissatisfied with the decisions made to resolve the conflict at this level, or the concern is with the Administrative Director, that party may take their concerns to the JRCS Board of Stewards, who then may assign a mediator or pass it along to the Grievance Committee.

The Grievance Committee is comprised of no less than two members of the JRCS Board of Stewards. Such a complaint will be made in writing as outlined above, and the complaint shall be submitted to the Chair Person of the JRCS Board of Stewards, who will convene the Grievance Committee. Upon receipt of the written grievance, the Grievance Committee will review the grievance and within 10 days schedule a meeting with the grievant. After this meeting takes place, the Grievance Committee will research the grievance, and get back to the grievant with their findings and recommendations for resolution of the grievance. A recommendation for res-

olution will be made by the Grievance Committee to the JRCS Board of Stewards for their consideration at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Stewards. This Board of Steward's decision shall be final.

Emergency issues will be dealt with on an as-needed basis, with the Board of Stewards and/or the Board Chair responding prior to its next regular public meeting.

Exceptions: This procedure is designed to moderate the effects of and to assist in the resolution of all of the types of conflicts listed above. An exception will normally be made in the case of student conflicts with other persons and student conflicts with students. In those cases, every effort will be made to resolve the conflict at the first step, with deference to the expertise and opinion of the teacher and Administrative Director and/or the matter may be subject to one or more other policies of the school, such as the Discipline Policy. In such cases, the Administrative Director is authorized to determine whether the matter should be resolved through the further levels of this Grievance Procedure.

### **Creating Community**

The investment that parents have staying in touch with their children's teachers, volunteering at events and in the classroom, and participating in the festivals, gives Juniper Ridge children and parents the unique opportunity to create a community of like-minded families raising our children with similar standards, parenting strategies and goals. We consciously foster this sense of community and encourage parents to support it through their willingness to participate. We view ourselves as more than a school where you send your children. We are an extension of your home-life, and know that holding to this high ideal will create a happier, safer and more productive learning environment. Please let us know if you are able and willing to help with any of our school activities or would like to setup a community building activity. We could always use the help.

### **Parent Involvement**

A charter school is created to provide quality education free of charge to families in the community. A community school such as JRCS depends on additional support from parents in the way of volunteer hours. Although we do not require volunteer hours, we ask that parents contribute as much as they are able. Help with festivals, fundraising events, plays and work parties are some suggestions, however, parents know best where their talents lie, so we welcome and encourage their creativity in determining what they would like to do. All volunteer ideas that impact the campus must go through an approval process with the Administration.

A list of volunteer opportunities will be posted on the school's volunteer website, a link to which can be found on the school's website. The Volunteer Coordinator will assist you with using the online form or can direct you to varied volunteering opportunities. Teachers can also provide many opportunities for parents to make a contribution. Parents are asked to keep track of their volunteer hours and report them to the Volunteer Coordinator. Such volunteer hours are a great help to the school when applying for grants or demonstrating parent support.

Thank you in advance for your help! Without community-wide participation, the volunteering falls on the shoulders of a handful of parents who are all-too-soon over-taxed.

### **Parent Council**

We have a strongly committed group of parents coming together to support the growth of our Juniper Ridge community. The purpose of the Parent Council is to give parents an opportunity to make a difference in their children's experience at Juniper Ridge. It is also a place where parents can come together and have a community voice. The sphere of influence of this group will grow and define itself as it seeks where it can support the school. They play an instrumental role in planning and carrying out upcoming festivals and events, looking to partner with restaurants for fundraising events, establishing a scrip program with stores, and creating a volunteer network among parents when teachers need more "hands on deck" to work with a project. Your participation is welcome and needed. Meetings are open. They are regularly announced on our Facebook page. Membership in parent council is open to every parent at Juniper Ridge.

### **Parent Enrichment**

Juniper Ridge staff offers through the year gatherings for parents to come and deepen their understanding of Waldorf methodology and practices. These evenings are offered at least once a quarter through the school year. We strongly encourage your participation.

### **Reading Groups**

Second and Third graders have weekly reading groups in school. It is not always easy to find parent volunteers throughout the year from those grades who have the time to come in. We want to open this opportunity up to parents (and grandparents) from other grades. If you have the time and inclination to help out with reading groups, please contact the front office to find out the days and times these groups take place. Thank you!

### **Classroom Parent Representatives**

Each class needs a parent representative who can provide support for the teacher. Such support may include communication with parents, field trips, festivals, class plays and other events. Interested parents are asked to contact their child's teacher. Teachers will solicit the help of a Classroom Parent Representative if one does not volunteer. All Classroom Parent Representatives are encouraged to attend a clinic held at the beginning of the school year, at a time to be determined by Administration. Classroom Parent Representatives are also members of Parent Council.

### **Parent Evenings**

Four times during the school year, parents are expected to meet in the classroom as a parent body together with their child's teacher. At these meetings, parents gain insights into the classroom experience, view and hear about work the children have covered, as well as work to come. It is an opportunity to ask questions of a grade-specific nature (as opposed to questions about your child). The focus of these meetings is to inform parents about what is being taught, how it is being taught, and why we are doing it in this manner. In addition, the teacher will discuss what parents can do to support the work of the classroom. Two of these meetings are scheduled to occur the week before the individual Parent-Teacher conferences when parents

have a private meeting with their child's teacher to discuss their child's progress. It is mandatory that at least one parent/guardian from each family attend and is advisable that both parents attend. Parent Council will arrange to have childcare available here at the school.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Twice during the school year, parents have the opportunity to meet individually with their children's teachers, once in the fall, and a second time in the spring. The focus of the meetings is upon the child's progress and challenges. The fall meeting is between the parents and the teacher, without the child present. The spring conference is a child-led tour of the work of the year.

Parents are always welcome to make appointments with their children's teachers for a conference as needed throughout the school year. Please contact the teachers either through a note, voice mail, texting or email. Teachers will get back to parents at their earliest convenience to set up a time to meet or hold a phone conference.

### **Faculty Training at the October Conference**

During the first week in October, we take the week off. Children have time off and hopefully families can get away for some fall fun. The teachers at Juniper Ridge, however, participate in a local professional development conference. During the course of the conference, teachers attend keynote speakers and then a variety of break-out sessions ranging from middle school science, to water color painting, to math in the grades, to drawing and clay modeling, naming just a few of the options. We are excited and look forward to the opportunity to learn more about Waldorf methods while spending some time together outside the classrooms.

### **Fundraising**

The program at Juniper Ridge is much deeper and richer than can be covered by the funds we receive for each child from the state of Colorado. Everything from the high-quality supplies we use to the community events that we sponsor has a price attached to it. In order to continue offering a rich experience for your children, as well as continue to expand our program, we, like so many other schools, rely on parent fundraising.

There is a special task force on our Parent Council that focuses on every possible approach to raising money for our expanded programs. Their commitment is not only to raise funds, but to do it in a way that is entertaining for our community members as well, whether it is a walk-a-thon, a book fair, a restaurant event, or our Renaissance Faire. Our Scrip Program offers parents a nearly effortless way to contribute to the school by doing nothing more than signing up, enabling us to receive money from the places you shop with no cost to parents. If you have an idea, bring it to Parent council. If you have expertise in these fields, teach us what you know. If you just want to help out, come lend a hand (we're always in need of volunteers). Help us build a stronger community around our children. If you have ideas, let us know. All fundraising ideas must be submitted to the Parent Council and will then be sent to the Board of Stewards for final approval.

## **Lost and Found**

We ask parents to clearly mark all coats, hats, gloves, boots, sweaters, lunch boxes, backpacks, water bottles, etc. with the student's name. The Lost and Found area is on the back porch of the Main Office building. Attempts may be made to contact the parents of children who have items turn up in Lost and Found; however, this is a volunteer position, and may not always be occupied. Best practice is for parents to check Lost and Found regularly to retrieve items that may be lost. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of each quarter. The amount of clothing donated is considerable, so **PLEASE, PLEASE MARK ALL CLOTHING**.

## **Music Program**

Juniper Ridge has a diverse music program. Beginning in Kindergarten, children are daily encouraged to join in age-appropriate singing. In first and second grade, the children learn to play the pentatonic flute. In third grade, the students take up the soprano recorder. By middle school they may add the tenor and bass recorders to create an orchestral feel.

Beginning in third grade, students begin a more formal musical training. In addition to learning how to read music, students take up playing one of three traditional stringed instruments: the violin, the cello or the viola. Lessons in school occur twice weekly. By fifth grade, the instrument offering is expanded to allow students who are not comfortable continuing with a stringed instrument to move on to a wind instrument, namely the clarinet or the silver flute. By seventh grade, the trumpet is added to the repertoire. Families are asked to rent or purchase the instrument for their student. If this presents a financial hardship, please see the music teacher or administration.

Our music program is dependent upon children practicing at home. When students do not practice outside of school, each class is reduced to starting over again. Music skills cannot be learned by a twice-a-week exposure of 40 minutes in a group lesson. We rely on parents to make sure children are practicing between these lessons. We strongly encourage parents to consider private lessons as well to support their child's musical success.

There is a Practice Record of weekly home practice, to be signed by both a parent and the student. There is an instruction sheet on: How to Practice and What to Do If... Lastly, there is the practice assignment for the current week. We want to make sure you have what you need in order to support your student's music lessons. Questions can always be directed to our current instrument teacher.

## **Media Exposure and Our Children**

Juniper Ridge recommends, *along with doctors and other educational professionals*, that parents strive to limit exposure to electronic media as much and as long as possible. Violent images, whether through video games or movies, we consider never appropriate for the Kindergarten and elementary school child. Juniper Ridge asks parents to strive to limit and strictly monitor screen time of all students, and for the younger children, even eliminate it. We support that children are provided at home an environment for creative play and family participation through chores for as long as possible.



Electronic media is an undeniable presence in our lives. We use it for communication, work, diversion and entertainment. It comes in an ever-widening variety of forms and sizes, from large screen monitors that can span a wall, to the cell phone in our pockets that is in reality a palm-held computer that makes phone calls.

Electronic media is a wonderful, fascinating boon to our lives. It also has its shadow side. As a society, we are becoming ever more aware that we face a growing media addiction. It is becoming increasingly easy (and acceptable) for us to turn to some form of electronic media (video games, texting, music, sports, movies and shows) to distract ourselves from work and use as a replacement for social interactions. It is difficult for us to even speak about this because we have accepted it as part of our way of life.

Our children are the most vulnerable. From the not-yet-speaking toddler right up to the high school student, they see adults daily using these machines for work, for communication and for diversion. Children are savvy. They learn by imitating. What they see us using, they want to use as well. Alcohol, tobacco and driving have legal age limits that prevent too early use. Electronics do not. And therein lies our challenge.

What parent has not given the cell phone to a fussy baby to gain a few extra minutes to finish a conversation or to pay at the store? And then, for the older children, it is so tempting to give in to the demands to have screen time. It begins so modestly, just half an hour a day, and then it grows. After all, it serves the same purpose: we get a bit more time to finish whatever we were doing. Or we tell ourselves it is family bonding to watch something together. And we were all kids, too, remember? Imagine what happens when we aren't monitoring their play.

As teachers at Juniper Ridge, our concern in this matter arises when we hear a Kindergarten child asking to go home because he would rather play video games than play with his classmates. Or the fourth grader who openly rejoices that school is over so he can go home to his video games and zone out. When we first opened school, we were astonished how many children, primarily boys, who could not figure out what to do at recess unless it involved shooting at one another and zipping around pretending they were in an armored or flying vehicle. Clearly, their play was dependent upon the images from the video games they were playing at home.

With our children, the issue of media use becomes urgent. Current research has discovered that, in children, excessive exposure to media watching has a direct adverse effect on brain development. In school as well as in the home, we are puzzled by the increase in attention deficit disorders and other learning disabilities. Teachers who have spent longer than two decades in the classroom (and we have such teachers in our school) can clearly point to the drastic rise of these disorders since the flood of readily accessible electronic media. We also sadly see a dramatic fading of the powers of memory, imagination and wonder.

Young children are by nature "doers." Media exposes children to an artificial world that allows no engagement of their own will and imagination. They become "receivers." This evokes unnatural responses in a child's being and stunts the seeds of human development.

Not only is the nature of the media foreign and directly harmful to the child's developing brain and inner being, the content of most television programs, video games and movies is glaring in its disregard for what childhood is really meant to experience. Most media, after all, is selling us something either directly or as a hidden agenda. Media exposure works at cross purposes with what Waldorf education strives to bring and awaken.

For these reasons, the Juniper Ridge faculty and administration ask parents to protect their children from exposure to electronic media. Without your efforts to keep your home a safe place for the vulnerable developing minds of your children, it will in turn be difficult for us to educate and nurture them.

Suggested reading on this topic:

*The Children of Cyclops: The Influence of Television Viewing on the Developing Human Brain* - Keith Buzzell

*Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* - Jerry Mander

*Endangered Minds and Failure to Connect* - Jane Healy

**We offer parents the following guidelines regarding media use:**

1. For children in preschool and kindergarten: No exposure, or as little as possible.
2. For children in grades 1 – 3: No television, video games, computers or movies during the school week; minimal parent-directed media use on weekends and during vacations. Ideally, we would recommend no exposure. However, we do not live in an ideal world, so we recommend that you strive to limit exposure.
3. For students in grades 4 – 8: No television or video games or computers in the morning before school; a minimum of parent-directed media use during the school week; parental involvement in determining appropriate media and computer-use choices at all other times.

**Please Note:**

No electronic entertainment devices of any kind are to be brought to school, or at a school event or field trip without the permission of the child's class teacher. Any such device found on campus will be confiscated and the parent may retrieve it from the office at the end of school. At the second instance, a meeting with the parents must be held before the device is returned. An exception is made for cell phones for the purpose of student communication with the parent or guardian before or after school. They must be turned off and kept in the student backpack during school hours. If they are seen by a staff member during school hours, they will be confiscated and returned at the end of school.

We realize that these guidelines will appear strict to many households. Yet consider how normal it is for us to use entertaining media as a form of distraction, child-care, bribery, or reward. It is, after all, very successful in doing this. We invite you to look at the number of quality hours your child is spending playing a video game or listening to music or watching a movie or a show. Clearly, and without argument, electronic media is brilliant at occupying our children's attention and interest for hours at a time, day after day. Then we must ask ourselves, are the values

and messages embedded in what the children are watching and listening to the values we want passed on to them?

## **Lunch and Snack Guidelines**

During the school day, the children at Juniper Ridge will take a mid-morning break for snack. At noon, they take another break for lunch. Juniper Ridge does not have a snack or lunch program as we do not have a cafeteria. Students eat in their classrooms with their teachers. Each student is required to bring a snack and lunch to school each day. We do not have the facilities to prepare or refrigerate school lunches. Parents are asked to pack lunches with thought given to the health and growing needs of children. Healthy, well balanced meals provide essential nutrition for their brains and bodies to perform optimally. We encourage that every morning you give your children a nourishing protein-rich breakfast as a foundation for the work of the day. A hungry child makes a poor learner. Please send with your children a healthy snack and a nourishing lunch. Leave candy and sugar-filled snacks at home as an after-school treat. Hot water will be available in the classrooms for children bringing instant soups.

Make sure that your teacher is aware of any food allergies, intolerances and restrictions. Students are fascinated by what comes in the lunch baskets of their classmates and there is often an active and lively trading (even when it is discouraged by the teacher). Children with adverse reactions to some foods have been known to experiment, not always to their advantage. Inform your teachers.

As a rule, please send snacks and lunches that do not require heating up. Every classroom does have a microwave. However, imagine a class of 24 children, 15 of them requiring use of the microwave for one minute each. Lunch is already a scant 20 minutes long. Teachers have recess duty and cannot remain behind with children who have not finished (or begun) their lunch. We may not leave children unattended in the classroom. Help us to avoid this no-win scenario by sending lunches that do not require heating.

Be mindful that as your child grows older, appetites can suddenly increase. It is not uncommon for children who could barely finish their lunch, suddenly to eat both snack and lunch at snack time. A rule of thumb is to pack enough food so that something will come home. If you are seeing an empty lunch bag after school, ask your child if you should be packing more food. Some families have their children pack their own lunches. If this is your practice, it is essential to monitor what your child is packing. Too often, children who pack their own food come with too little or inappropriate choices of foods.

Juniper Ridge does not have a free lunch program. When children do not have food for snack or lunch, the teacher will ask in the classroom if there is anything their classmates can share. We do not keep a stockpile of lunches in the office for them. At Juniper Ridge, it is the parents' responsibility to feed their children.

## **Special Dietary Issues**

If a child has special dietary issues, parents are asked to make these known to the office and the Class Teacher. Food allergies must be reported on the Student Information Card on file in

the Main Office prior to the start of school. Teachers will receive a list of student health needs in August of each year or upon arrival of a new student if applicable. The designated Health Aide/Administrative Assistant is responsible for timely circulation of this confidential list.

## **Medication Policy for Students**

District policy prohibits school personnel from administering prescription, nonprescription and herbal medications to students unless appropriate administration cannot be reasonably accomplished outside of school hours and the parent or legal guardian is not available to administer the medication at school. In order to administer any medication to a child, a copy of the original prescription or doctor's permission letter must be on file at the school. All medication should be brought to school in the original container listing proper dosage information and the child's full name. A medication administration form must be filled out by the parent(s) before any medication can be administered by our staff.

Medication will be administered only by the designated Health Aide pursuant to the Nurse Practice Act. JRCS Administrative Director and Assistant are trained as Health Aides in the absence of the School Nurse.

All medication brought to school **MUST** be given to the designated Health Aide or Nurses' Delegate at the beginning of the day. Medication of any kind should never be kept in a child's backpack, cubby or lunch box. The exception would be if a child has an inhaler and has the proper self-carry authorization signed by a doctor on file. Medication will be kept in the office in a locked container until it is given back to the authorized adult at pick-up.

Medication that must be refrigerated will be kept in a locked container in the refrigerator. In cases where a prescription must be in the classroom (i.e., EPIPEN), approval must be received from the designated Clinic Aide. Approved guidelines must be followed.

## **Testing and PARCC**

Juniper Ridge is a public charter school, and as such, is required to test all students for proficiency on the Colorado Content Area Standards. While it is true that we would probably opt out of these tests if we had that option, there is benefit in the information that they provide. As many of you know, our curriculum does cover all of the standards, but we follow a different sequence. This means that our kids **will** show proficiency by the later grades, if not before. By taking the PARCC tests, our students will provide the evidence that what we are doing works. With that said, we approach the taking of the tests differently.

It is our belief that if we are teaching the way kids learn, they will do well on the test, but the preparation that we do is more covert and organic in nature. We will let the kids know that the tests are coming and may even give them some basic coaching if we feel that it will help how they feel when taking the tests, but the message that we want them to come away with is that these tests are but one small part of the school experience and not the whole reason for our existence. We want our students to know that we believe in them, we believe in our school and that how they do on these tests will not change that. We trust them to do their best, and we want you to as well. Some may not do as well as the state says they should but we know that

they will show mastery of the content when it is their time, and not only that, they will also know how to think for themselves.

Please help your children to process their experiences. We do not “teach to the tests.” We are very aware that children will be asked to answer questions that they have not had lessons on. As a charter school, we follow a different curriculum than standard public schools as well as a different time schedule when to present particular core lessons. This can result in your children feeling anxious at being asked to work with questions they have not been prepared to be tested on. Please help them to find the proper relationship to the tests. We are not expecting them to be able to answer content we have not taught. Yet we are compelled to administer the test. We are confident (and other established Waldorf charter schools prove this), that over time, our test scores will not only be comparable with standard public schools, but surpass many. Our first years, however, we must feel our way. Please be patient with us, and support that your children come to school with a positive attitude, fed a nourishing and sustaining breakfast, and dressed appropriately for that day’s weather.

### **Supply Usage and Replacement**

At our school, we provide the students with high quality art supplies, writing materials and all necessary tools and materials for handwork projects. They are expensive. Your supply fee only covers a portion of what is used. For this reason, if a student does not treat the materials provided with care and respect and they become lost or damaged, we will ask that families cover the cost of replacement of said items.

### **Use of and Reserving JRCS Facilities**

For the daily use of a JRCS facility, or to use a JRCS facility on weekends for meetings or special events please follow these steps:

- If you are a parent or teacher, please sign up for the room at the front desk of the main office building with the Administrative Assistant.
- To use the facility for classes or events by people/organizations outside our school, a facility use agreement must be filled out and approval given by the JRCS administrative offices. Rental fees will apply, as well as proof of liability insurance to protect attendants and the school in the case of an accident, etc.

### **Enrollment**

JRCS is a MCVSD 51 Public Charter School. Our charter allows us to enroll students from Kindergarten through Grade 9. Enrollment is open to any child who resides within the school district and to any child who resides outside the district, subject to compliance with Colorado public schools of choice statutes and District policy. JRCS has its own open enrollment policies, as dictated by our charter.

- Prior to choosing JRCS, prospective parents *must* attend an informational meeting. Parents of prospective students must turn in an enrollment request form to the Main Office to be considered for enrollment during our open enrollment period.

- Employees are also expected to turn in such enrollment applications for their children to be considered for enrollment. Children of staff receive priority status during Open Enrollment.
- Students who are currently enrolled at JRCS must re-commit for the following school year during the designated period prior to open enrollment. Once a child has been enrolled as a student at JRCS, they have the right to continue here until they have completed the highest grade we offer.
- Families that have children on the waitlist for a particular class will be given the opportunity to continue on the waitlist for the new year. They must fill out a re-commitment form as well.
- Priority enrollment is given to siblings of existing JRCS students. All effort will be made to give them a space, but there are no guarantees.
- If the number of applications for particular grade exceed the maximum number of available slots in that grade, a lottery is held. Once classes are full, a waiting list is created.
- All applicants for enrollment are placed on the waiting list in the following order: siblings of current students, students from the prior year's waitlist who have chosen to continue, new student applicants in the order of their lottery position.
- Enrollment after the open enrollment is subject to available openings and considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Kindergarten Enrollment Age**

District Policy mandates that children must be 5 before or by July 15th in order to be eligible to enter Kindergarten. JRCS adheres to this policy. Because we use turning 6 by June 1st as one indicator of First Grade readiness, many kindergarten aged students may complete two years of Kindergarten before moving up to First Grade. For this reason, JRCS has a mixed aged Kindergarten.

### **Protecting Early Childhood**

The Waldorf Curriculum provides children with a gradual academic start that accelerates in the later grades. We believe that the young child establishes a stronger foundation when raised in an environment that supports them in developing social skills and integrates them into the rhythm of the seasons. This means that the Kindergarten is activity focused and we do not expect or require that children can read before entering first grade. Waldorf students are generally caught up with their traditional public school counterparts by fifth grade, and by eighth grade will often outpace them.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

JRCS's educational program is nonreligious, nonsectarian and consistent with applicable law and District 51 policy. JRCS will not discriminate against any individual on the basis of race,

color, creed, national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, ancestry, disability or need for special education services. Teachers and staff will exhibit professional behavior at all times in regards to our non-discrimination policy.

## **Festivals and Special Events through the school year at Juniper Ridge Community School**

The Waldorf Curriculum offers a number of rich cultural festivals primarily based around the seasons. The children will participate in these festivals mostly during school hours and on occasion after school. For many of these, parents are welcome to come to support and participate. What follows is a description of the common reoccurring festivals and special events in the school calendar.

### **September**

#### **Michaelmas, The Festival of Strength and Courage**

This festival falls on September 29th, and schools celebrate it around that time. It is a harvest festival, and yet encompasses so much more. It derives its name from the legend of the earthly battle of Michael (in other traditions, George) with the dragon. Students delight in hearing the classic clash of the knight against the fire-breathing beast. As the children grow older, they begin to see behind the story, behind the metaphor, and recognize the truth of the battle each one of us wages against the shadows (the dragons) in our lives. For some of us it is the battle against bad habits, against differing degrees of addiction, against overwhelming odds in our personal life brought about, for example, by relationships, job, or financial challenges. The lesson of the story for the children (and perhaps for us as adults as well) is that we can overcome the challenges, but we must first muster the courage to face them. The knight in the story exemplifies the human frailty we feel when standing before overwhelming odds. What a terror to face a wild, fire-breathing beast with claws the length of my arm and teeth the length of my leg! However, the knight discovers that his biggest challenge to overcome is his own fear. Once he has mastered fear, the battle is not quite as daunting. This is an essential lesson for the children. It is fear alone that often keeps them from stepping forward to try something new—or to reach for their dreams.

To honor this event, we hold a special day of celebrations at Juniper Ridge. We gather at an assembly and share stories with one another of strength and courage. We admire our own hoarded dragon-treasure (see Food Drive below). We sing songs together and some classes may perform for the whole. We even get to hear a story! Then we witness the enactment of the battle with the dragon (not to be missed!). We end the day with games of strength and courage. Parents are welcome to attend. We cannot pull this off without parental planning and help. This event is only possible with parent volunteers. Please sign onto the volunteer page.

#### **Food Drive**

One of the nasty distinguishing traits of a dragon is that it is driven to hoard. It collects coin, precious gems and food, with no greater goal than to sit on it and keep anyone else from using

it (I know some two-legged dragons like that!). At this time of year, we want to use the dragon's methods against him. We call for a Food Drive over the two weeks before our Michaelmas festival. Just like a dragon, we collect, gather and hoard...and then we give away every bit of it to those less fortunate than ourselves. Please support this venture. We are not asking parents to go out and buy anything. Take a couple items from your pantry. Whatever you can manage. We are collecting only non-perishable items. Send these items with your students to the classroom. Then come and see what we have amassed at our festival.

## **October**

### **Juniper's Halloween Journey**

We want to provide families an imaginatively-rich alternative to going from door-to-door trick or treating. It is not meant to replace this practice, which every child loves, but to offer a more fantasy-rich alternative for the evening. For the space of an hour, between walking neighborhoods or visiting parties, we invite Juniper Ridge families to come to our enchanted campus for a stroll along the Pumpkin Path. We offer you the chance to be presented (in your costumes, of course) to the King and Queen of the Pumpkin Path. There might be a visit with mermaids, or some exotic Arabian belly-dancing, and it would not be Halloween without meeting up with some witches and having to brave passing by a haunted cemetery before arriving at the safety of a bonfire where you can stay as long as you like and enjoy cider, popcorn and s'mores. Come and enjoy the fun. Entrance fee (to cover our costs) is \$5 per family. We look forward to seeing you (of course, since it's Halloween, we won't have a clue who you are—nor you us, for that matter. Whoo-hoo! What fun!).

### **Halloween Parade**

Halloween is a children's favorite. In addition to our evening Halloween Journey, we offer the children the opportunity to show off their costumes in a school-wide Halloween Parade. This takes place at the end of the school day on October 31, or the nearest last day of school before Halloween. Children who do not wish to participate are welcome to stand on the sidelines and enjoy the display of costumes. Since we are a school, we have guidelines on what is appropriate for walking in the daytime parade. Here are the Juniper Ridge...

#### **Halloween Costume Guidelines:**

- No scantily dressed children
- No blood or gore makeup (save that for your evening outings)
- We request archetypal images rather than media-driven ones. That means, if the costume character comes from a movie, comic or computer game, we encourage you to keep looking. Images may be taken from any stories told in our rich curriculum.
- Toy weapons as part of your child's costume are permitted. However, they are allowed with the understanding that the weapon may not be drawn while in school. Children who cannot respect this, will have their weapons confiscated until it is time to go home.

We reserve the right to not allow costumes that we deem to be inappropriate or gratuitously violent in nature.



These guidelines only apply to our Halloween parade at school. Children may not arrive to school in their costumes. We will have a normal school day (well, as normal as the spooks allow), reserving the last period of the day for changing into costumes and parading. Kindergarten children will have their chance to parade through the classrooms before the end of their regular school day at 12 noon.

If you have any questions, please contact the Administrative Assistant at our front desk.

## **November**

### **Down with Darkness, Up with Light!**

As autumn progresses nature no longer provides us with the gift of long days and abundant sunshine. To keep our spirits raised, we have entered the season of a succession of light festivals, stemming from various cultures. This is a time when we bundle up against the cold, yet find opportunities to let the warmth in our hearts shine forth in acts of kindness and good cheer.

### **Lantern Walk**

Fall is a busy time in a Waldorf School! No less so at Juniper Ridge! On November 11 we hold our annual Lantern Walk. Traditionally, this event is reserved for the Kindergarten and first and second graders. Students make lanterns in the classroom. Then on the evening of November 11 (or the closest school day), we gather just before dark, light our lanterns and sing lantern songs as we process around the property. We will end with a bonfire, warm drinks and popcorn.

As in the words of one of the lantern songs: Each of us is one small light, but together we shine bright!

## **December**

### **Sharing the Light**

This is the season of growing darkness. Juniper Ridge offers numerous opportunities for the children to experience how different cultures maintain the inner light and keep it kindled. Halloween, with its lit Jack o' Lanterns in the evening darkness, starts this season off. Our Lantern Walk is another such event. December, as the darkest month of the year, offers several more. It is an essential part of our curriculum to share with the children the way different cultures have approached guarding the light in the season of short days and long, long nights. This is part of our charter and what sets us apart from traditional public schools. We do not promote any religious beliefs nor any single religious practice. These customs lie deep within our human psyche and predate organized religions. It is our generic reaction to winter and the loss of daylight. Religions recognize the human struggle of light against darkness, and we teach the children various songs and poems coming from different traditions around this theme.

A unique custom in our school in December is to display a Solstice Wreath. It is a wreath of evergreens, to signify that nature has forces within itself that can resist the drying, withering forces of winter, just as there is a force within each one of us that strives against the death forces in nature. The wreath is set up with four candles. Each of the weeks of school following Thanksgiving is given to highlighting one of the four “kingdoms” or “worlds” of nature, without which this planet would be like any of the other lifeless rocks that circle the sun. These kingdoms are the mineral, the plant, the animal and the human.

Another custom specific to third graders, in accordance with their Old Testament studies, brings a unique custom coming from followers of the Jewish faith: the Chanukah Candles. This is an observance that unfolds over eight days during the month of December (it can occur any time from the end of November through the latter days of December—the fluctuation of date from year to year is due to the Hebrew calendar following moon cycles, rather than sun cycles, which is part of the secret behind the fluctuating date for Easter—all of which makes for fascinating lessons in the sixth grade astronomy block). Beginning with one candle, every day, an additional one is lit, until the Chanukah candelabra (called a Menorah) sports nine flames. There is a legend attached to the kindling of light over eight nights, which the children hear. Children also learn to play the dreidel, a spinning top. The dreidel is a fun game for this season to help children while away the long nights. We want to raise our children in a culture of tolerance and understanding, and we have found this happens quickest when they learn the customs, poetry and music of other cultures and how they mark the seasons. As an experiential curriculum, we take this beyond intellectually learning about the customs. We experience them together.

### **The Spiral Garden**

There is a custom in Waldorf schools to give the younger children in the school (K-3) an opportunity to walk the Spiral Garden. At Juniper Ridge it will be offered outside of school hours and participation is by interest only. It is a unique activity carried out in silence. This silence is required from parents as well as children from the time they arrive until they leave. Gentle music is played in the background by live performers. The Spiral Garden is a Waldorf tradition practiced around the world. Some sources trace its origin to Scotland. One account is that it was begun in the 1920s by Dr. Karl Schubert, a remedial teacher in the Stuttgart Waldorf School. He was struck with how supportive the spiral movement was as a curative form for the rhythmic and sensory system. He was also inspired by folk customs where people created moss gardens with fir twigs and lit them with candles mounted on apples. The practice begun by Dr. Schubert at his school has continued to evolve to this day. Using evergreens and moss, teachers build a large spiral as a meditative labyrinth walk. The child walks out of the darkness of the room toward the light at the center of the spiral in order to kindle the candle s/he is carrying. This speaks to the soul of every child, who faces the daunting task growing up and finding his and her own guiding light and place in the world. Meditatively walking the spiral sets a different mood for the holiday season, filling it with more stillness, reverence, contemplation and beauty. This can work as an antidote to the prevalent hustle and bustle of shopping, parties and market-driven commercialism that clouds our experience of the season of darkness.

## **March**

### **St. Patrick's Day Pet Parade**

On Monday, March 17, in connection with St. Patrick's Day, we celebrate our annual St. Patrick's Day Pet Parade! Children are always talking about their pets, and this is an opportunity to finally show them off to their classmates.

Guidelines: Pets may not come to school with children in the morning. We ask parents to come with the family pet at 2:45 pm. Only non-aggressive pets are welcome. Pets must be restrained (no free-running dogs, please). Your pet has to be relatively comfortable around other animals (so if you have a cat that bolts at the sight of a dog, perhaps it will be best to leave it at home, or to bring it in a caged carrier). Once gathered, we parade around our field so we can admire everyone else's pets. I expect some of the school rabbits and guinea pigs will make an appearance as well. If a pet is too strong to be restrained by the child, we ask parents to take the leash. We hope to have some Irish Dancing as a prelude to our parade. It is a great gathering! Leave at home pets that can turn aggressive or panic in crowds of kids or in the presence of other animals. We want everyone, pets included, to enjoy this spring event.

## **May**

### **Maypole and Mayfair**

With the coming of warm weather in May, it is a tradition in Waldorf schools to dance the maypole. The maypole as a way of marking the arrival of spring was a common practice throughout northern Europe since Medieval times. There are still many towns in Germany, Scandinavia, and Great Britain where the maypole is yearly lifted and woven.

The children in grades three and four are taught three traditional maypole dances. Ribbons are hung from the top of the maypole, and accompanied by music that the fifth and sixth graders have prepared, the children learn both simple and complex forms. The dances teach the children sequencing, cooperation, working as a group, coordination, focus and trust. Not to mention, in the end, that it is downright fun to do and to see the woven maypole. The children come away with a sense of pride and accomplishment. It is one of those activities that the children have to work at to get right, and once they manage to do that, they have the satisfaction that goes along with learning a new skill, this one only possible by working together.

Parents are welcome to attend our in-house celebration, which will happen before noon. To gain an experience of what we hope to develop in coming years, we encourage families to attend either of our regional schools for their traditional Mayfaire. River Canyon School here in Grand Junction holds its Mayfaire in the first weekend of May, and has crafts, dancing, singing, a puppet play, food, and a huge silent auction of gift baskets. The Waldorf School of the Roaring Forks in Carbondale also hold their Mayfaire that weekend. They have craft activities for all ages, and their 7th grade presents a marionette play with marionettes they have made themselves. It is a rich experience worth the long trek!