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## **Welcome to Swan School!**

You will find this is a very special place for children and their parents. Our community offers a diverse program focusing on the talents and needs of your child. The holistic focus is both our heritage and our strength, which has been evolving since Swan School began in 1983. Your interest and involvement is an integral part of continuing this tradition.

The board and staff welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. We look forward to this new year with you and your child.

Russell Yates,  
Head of School

## **Mission Statement**

Swan School builds strong learners in an environment of academic excellence aligned with creativity and personal expression. We develop wise and compassionate leaders as an investment in everyone's future.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Swan School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and financial assistance programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## **Swan School Communication**

### **School News**

Information regarding field trips, fundraisers, volunteering, school supply lists, and general educational information is regularly made available in the following ways:

- Weekly e-mail memos from the office
- Notices from your child's teacher(s)
- Letters from the Head of School
- Our Website – <http://www.swanschool.net>
- Bulletin board in the Office
- In your child(ren)'s folders (located in the office)
- Our automated phone tree, used for school closures and emergencies
- Notices on the office doors
- Swan School's Facebook page; <http://www.facebook.com/SwanSchool>

Swan School is making an effort to reduce the amount of paper we produce, and therefore will use e-mail as much as possible. This saves paper, ink, copying, time and expense. If you cannot regularly check e-mail, please let the office know and we will provide you with hard copies in your child's folder.

We do everything possible to make communication flow smoothly. However, we rely on parents to be proactive by checking e-mail, the parent board, your child's folder and the Swan School website, <http://www.swanschool.net>. **You are responsible for staying informed about events at school.**

### **Addressing a Concern About Your Child**

Questions about class subjects or general questions should be addressed to your child's teacher(s). If you need more information, the Head of School and Assistant Head of School can help you.

### **Attending Parent Meetings**

Parent meetings are regularly held throughout the year. (see school calendar). These meetings are important to attend, as we discuss such topics as school policy, curriculum, upcoming field trips, and how the students' day-to-day time is structured. There will be an effort not to assign homework on meeting evenings. Childcare is available for a minimal fee. The meeting starts at 5PM and generally lasts an hour.

## **Expectations for Parents / Families**

While we value and respect the diversity of families at Swan School, we also expect that families will share some common approaches to supporting aspects of their child's education. We also recognize that children are in the school's care for approximately 1,100 hours each year (roughly 13% of the time) and that you as parents have the strongest influence on shaping their values and behavior. We (teachers and school) are unlikely to be successful in our goals unless what we do at school complements what you do at home and in the community. Following are some of the hopes and expectations that Swan School has of its community of parents and guardians:

### **Support your child:**

- Read to or with your young child daily. Read at home yourself in the presence of your child so you are setting a good example. Visit the public library regularly.
- Listen. Find a time when you can hear about your child's day. Ask open-ended questions. Discuss successes and setbacks – academic and social. When your child faces an academic or social challenge, express to your child that this is an opportunity to learn a skill that will carry him or her through life's ups and downs. If you are concerned or confused about something a child tells you, contact his or her teacher to get the context and clarification. If

you hear something you especially like from your child, compliment your child (and feel free to pass the good news on to the teacher, too!).

- Encourage your child to write – thank you notes, stories, shopping lists, letters and emails to a relative or pen pal, or a brief description of an event for a memory album. Write brief notes to your child. These can be reminders or a “to do” list, love notes in a lunchbox, or stories of your own childhood.
- Limit and select television shows, “movies,” and computer games. Avoid those that are violent or model disrespectful interaction.
- Establish homework habits that work for your child and your family. Find the time, place, and structure that will help him or her succeed. All children are different so this may take some experimentation.
- Practice math skills assigned by your child’s teacher, but also integrate the practicing of math skills informally while at the store, on the highway, in the kitchen, or in other situations where you use numbers.
- Prepare your child for school with good manners and good habits of hygiene (regular brushing of teeth, hand washing, etc.).
- Teach safety and refusal skills as a normal part of growing up.
- Include some sort of service to the community in your family life. Children adopt the values their families live.
- Show your child that you value learning by visiting museums, zoos, historical displays, national parks and monuments, and other sources of learning. Emphasize that adults are always learning, too.
- Every year, read at least one book on parenting, child development, learning styles, and other parenting topics. Such books are available on the Parent Book Shelves in the school office.

### **Support your School:**

- Show your child you respect education, teachers, and other parents by how you interact with school personnel and fellow parents, and by how you talk about school in the presence of your child.
- Take the initiative to meet the other parents in your grade. Opportunities are available at parent meetings, on board committees and at school activities. Research shows that students are more secure and more successful when their parents and classmates’ parents are well connected.

- Read each Swan School Update and Newsletter (if you miss it the first time around, these are all available via links from our website, [www.swanschool.net](http://www.swanschool.net)).
- Read the notes and homework your child brings home. Keep in touch with what's happening at school. If you are not a regular email user, establish an "email buddy" who will call you when the school or your child's teacher sends email updates. Also remember that your child's classroom has a webpage that is designed to provide class-specific information.
- Call or email the school as soon as you have a question, concern or compliment. Contact the person most likely to be able to answer the question or solve the problem rather than "triangulating" communication by going to people who cannot solve the problem. Usually this means first contacting the teacher, and if that does not resolve the issue, then, perhaps, the Head of School. Likewise, please let the school know of student or family issues or crises. We can best support you and your child when we are "in the loop".
- Avoid spreading gossip or talking about others in a derogatory manner. Avoid "triangulating" communications. If you are unsure of a fact, check it out directly with the person involved, even if that feels difficult. This is a principle Swan School teaches students, and one we expect from teachers and parents as well.
- If your child and another child have an issue, help your child think of positive ways to resolve the difficulty, contact the other parent to brainstorm positive ideas for helping the children learn friendship skills, or seek ideas from the teacher.
- Volunteer, as your schedule allows, for school activities and attend school functions. Your presence is powerful for your child and you will learn from teachers and from "veteran" parents who have had a child in your child's grade and stage.
- Support the Annual Plant-A-Thon and other fundraisers as you are able.

## **Communication Guidelines for Staff and Parents**

Every stakeholder in our school community has direct access to appropriate individuals for communication and problem solving.

Concerns requiring decisions should be expressed to the individual responsible for making the decision; teacher, Assistant Head of School, Head of School. Only after the attempt to communicate individually should the matter be taken to the next higher authority.

Communication and trust are the cornerstones of an effective school. Respect the rights of all members of our school community by making use of appropriate opportunities and processes for communication.

Please remember that all communication should model the same elements of being respectful and responsible that our children are expected to follow.

## **School Hours**

The full school day is 9:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. for K-6 and 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. for Preschool. Doors open each day at 8:45 and school starts *promptly* at 9:00 at which time attendance will be taken. Before 8:45 the teachers are busy with preparations for the day. **Please do not drop children before 8:45 A.M. or be late picking your child up at dismissal time.** Teachers are regularly available for parents ½ hour before and ½ hour after the school day.

## **Pre-School Weekly Schedule**

Pre-school students have the option of attending three, four or five days a week. In order to foster the most positive classroom environment, and best facilitate the learning process, students will attend on consecutive days. Those choosing a three-day week will attend Monday – Wednesday, four-day a week students will attend Monday-Thursday.

## **Drop Off & Pick Up**

We encourage parents to either carpool, bike, or walk their children in order to lighten the impact on the neighborhood. **Preschool and Primary students** should be dropped off and picked up at the Kuhn Street entry. **Intermediate students** should be dropped off and picked up near the 24<sup>th</sup> Street entry. (**NOTE:** It is important that drivers enter and exit Kuhn Street via 24<sup>th</sup> Street – **please do not proceed past 23rd Street.**)

At the end of the day, to avoid interrupting, please wait outside the school. Your child will not be dismissed at the end of the day until you arrive to get them.

**Dismissal Time is 3:30. PLEASE BE PROMPT.**

## **Supervision**

During school hours, the school is responsible for your child. Parents are responsible for their children prior to 8:45 A.M., after dismissal, and at after-school functions.

## **Attendance & Absences**

It is very important that your child arrives at school **on time, every day**. Attendance will be taken promptly at 9:00 a.m. Late-arriving students must report to the office. If your child will be absent or tardy for the day, please call the school before 9:00 a.m.

Your child's first years in elementary school are an important time in which she or he will begin to form behavior, attendance, and study habits that will last throughout his or her lifetime.

In order to maintain continuity and facilitate teacher planning, it is expected that your child will be in school every day that we are in session. Exceptions to this policy naturally include ill health, emergencies and family obligations.

If you are planning to take your child out of class early or if you are planning a trip and your child will be missing several days of school, please let the teacher and office staff know ahead of time. Also, it is very important to let the office or teacher know if someone else will be picking up your child.

### **Parent Commitment & Fundraising**

Parent commitment at Swan School is two-fold: a financial commitment and a service commitment. Parents accept responsibility for the cost of tuition for the current year as stated in the tuition and enrollment agreement. Swan School is not subsidized by any government or church-related organizations, the costs of operating the school are not fully covered by tuition. Therefore, we rely on your generosity-both in time and financial support for specific projects and fundraisers-to help keep tuition levels down.

### **Parent Service Commitment**

Parent involvement during the school year saves the school thousands of dollars in expenses which otherwise would be reflected in higher tuition costs. Your service commitment is **a minimum of 4 hours per month**, or 40 hours over the course of the school year, per family. Each hour completed in volunteer service is worth \$25.

We realize that time constraints can limit your availability for service, and therefore also offer the option of "buying out your time." Each hour completed in volunteer service is worth \$25. You can fulfill your service obligation in hours, in money, or a combination of both.

If you opt for a complete buy out of your hours, your total financial obligation is \$1000 for the year.

Your monthly tuition invoice will reflect a running total of your volunteer hours worked thus far.

You can fulfill your family's volunteer hours, or grandparents, family friends, etc., can fulfill them. Please be sure to record all hours in the Volunteer Hours Record folder in the office.

Parents may choose from such activities as serving on the Board of Directors, transporting students on field trips, purchasing supplies, ordering books, assembling homework assignments, helping in the classroom, maintaining school facilities, teaching special programs, organizing or assisting with fundraising, helping with playground supervision, etc. A volunteer Job board in the school office lists jobs to be done and is updated weekly.

## **Tuition and Fees**

At the time of acceptance to Swan School a \$150 non-refundable enrollment fee and a signed Enrollment Contract is due.

Please refer to your enrollment contract or the school's web site for this year's specific tuition amounts. K-6 siblings receive a 10% discount.

Tuition is broken into ten monthly installments, September through June, with each installment due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Families who are able to are welcome to pay the entire year up front. Tuition can be mailed to the school or left in the locked tuition box in the school office.

Swan School relies on families to make timely payments of tuition. All invoiced amounts are due the first of the month. **If the payment is more than 10 days late, a late charge of \$30.00 will be assessed.** If a family discontinues payments or gets more than 30 days behind, the student(s) will not be able to attend school until tuition payment is current or a payment plan is agreed upon.

## **Financial Aid**

We are able to provide some financial assistance via a formal application process each spring. The maximum award available is one quarter of the year's tuition. Please do not hesitate to inquire or check our web site for more information.

## **Merit Scholarships**

We award scholarships to students in Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade who not only have the characteristics of a successful student, but also demonstrate exceptional abilities in at least one of the following areas:

- Academics
- Creativity
- Leadership

The decision of whether or not to offer an award, and in what amount, will be based on the following criteria:

- The student's responses to the questions on the application form
- Two letters of recommendation, at least one from a previous teacher
- A student's prior history at Swan School, where applicable

As part of their merit scholarship application process an interview with the student and the student's parent(s) or guardian will be scheduled for those students new to Swan School.

All scholarships are granted at the discretion of the school and are non-negotiable. The decision of the school will be final. Each scholarship's duration is for one academic year,

after which time a new scholarship may be applied for and awarded for the following year. Scholarships awarded by Swan School apply only within the school and are not transferable.

Scholarships are not need-based and are independent of financial aid. A student is welcome to apply for both a scholarship and financial aid. A student must have a Swan School enrollment application on file to be considered for a scholarship.

## **Music Program**

All students at Swan School participate in a comprehensive music program. This program begins in kindergarten with general music exploration and then continues with both choir and various instrumental options in the older grades. Our instrumental options may include violin, recorder and piano/keyboard. The instrument choices and grade levels at which they are offered vary somewhat from year to year based on staffing and schedules. Students enrolling in one of the instrument programs make their choice for the school year beginning in September. They may change to a different instrument at the beginning of the next school year.

## **Technology**

Computers are a wonderful tool for learning as well as productivity. Although students need to learn about computer technology and gain some specific skills, the real purpose of our instruction is for students to view computers as any other tool, they should be as "invisible" in their use as pencils are.

Computers, and especially networked computers, have the potential for some unpleasant and very inappropriate consequences for misuse -- for this reason, Swan School has an acceptable use policy that is outlined in a 2-page letter and form titled "Elementary Student Computer/Internet Use." Prior to any student using a computer at school, they must have a signed agreement and permission form on file.

In the Adventurers classroom students will each be issued a personal computer, in order to fully integrate technology into the learning environment. Purchased by the school, these HP Netbooks are highly portable and can be linked to the classroom's very own social network. Parents have the option to reimburse the school for the cost of the Netbook on a monthly basis

## **Field Trips**

Community integration is an important part of the Swan School curriculum. Your child will therefore have the opportunity to participate in various field trips. Throughout the year and parents will be needed to provide transportation. Below are the guidelines for volunteer drivers:

- **Proof of Liability Insurance:** Must carry at least minimum amount of liability insurance required by the State of Washington on the vehicle you will be driving.
- **Age:** Must be at least 25 years old, or if under 25 years of age, have approval to drive from the Swan School teachers.
- **Driving Record:** Must verify that personal driving record reflects no citations other than minor violations, as defined by the State of Washington (i.e. non-moving violations, speeding infractions of less than 15 mph, etc.) and your driver's license has not been revoked or suspended in the past five years.
- **Speed Limits:** Will abide by all posted speed limits on this trip.
- **Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Substances:** Drivers will not smoke nor allow anyone in the vehicle to smoke on the field trip. During the 12 hours preceding the trip and between the time of departure and the return, drivers will not consume alcohol or any other substance that could adversely affect driving ability.
- **When volunteering to drive, please consider the following:**
  - Be on time
  - Each child in the car must be individually seat-belted
  - Properly secure child seats and booster seats for those children who need them.
  - Children should not be placed in the front passenger seat of vehicles equipped with airbags.
  - No detours

The school generally pays for all ferries, parking and admission expenses for drivers and students, but not for gas. **If you are joining the trip but are not a driver, you will be expected to pay your own way.**

Children should not be given extra money for treats and souvenirs unless instructed by the teachers. Teachers will assign students to vehicles and there will be no changes after the trip begins unless permitted by teachers. **If your child uses a car seat, be sure to leave it at school on field trip days.**

Please help students be good ambassadors of the school by behaving appropriately in public, cleaning up after themselves, being good listeners, and keeping noise at an acceptable level.

## **Volunteer Guidelines**

When volunteering at Swan School please know that smoking is not allowed on Swan School's campus. In addition, volunteers must not consume alcohol or any other

substance that could adversely affect their ability to interact with students and staff in a meaningful and appropriate way.

## **Homework**

Homework is assigned to develop good study habits, refine and promote mastery of skills, and involve parents with their child's academic education. Each classroom handles homework differently; you will get more information from your child's teacher.

To assist your child with their homework, parents should:

- Expect your child to spend an appropriate amount of time on homework regularly.
- Establish a homework routine that includes a regular time and format for learning at home.
- Provide a comfortable, well-lit area away from television and other distractions.
- Monitor television watching and evaluate outside activities to be sure your child has sufficient study time.
- Encourage and support your child in his/her efforts without assuming the responsibility for completing the assignment.
- Regularly check over homework assignments when your child is finished to help monitor completion, neatness and effort.
- Communicate with the teacher if there are any concerns about the homework.

## **Snack/Lunch**

Please send a healthy snack (fruit, vegetables, cheese and crackers, cereal bars) for your child along with lunch. We have a morning snack time in each classroom. Lunches are brought from home. If you wish a hot lunch please bring food in a thermal container, as microwave ovens are not available.

Children have 20 minutes of eating time at lunch, followed by a recess.

## **Recess/Playground**

Two 15-minute recesses in addition to a 15 minute lunch recess are scheduled each day. Teachers, aides, and/or parent volunteers supervise children on the playground. Playground rules and boundaries are reviewed with the students throughout the year. Climbing trees on school property is prohibited for liability reasons.

## **Birthdays & Special Occasions**

Your child's birthday is of course a very special day. Swan School acknowledges each child's birthday as appropriate. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance if you wish to bring something for a celebration.

Families also have the opportunity to celebrate their children's birthday with the donation of a book to the Swan School library. You and your child can select the book together, inscribe it in their honor and present it in a classroom celebration. The book could be a favorite of your child's, or one that is needed in the library.

If you are planning a home birthday party, please send invitations rather than distributing them at school, unless you plan to invite all children in your child's class. This avoids potential hurt feelings. For the same reason, gifts and birthday cards should be distributed outside of the school setting.

Swan School acknowledges special holidays. The children learn about various celebrations, sing songs, complete art projects and read stories about different cultural celebrations and traditions. More information is available throughout the year as holidays approach.

## **Lost & Found**

Please label your child's clothing whenever possible; this helps get lost items back to their owners quickly. Lost items are kept in a box in the school office, and the teachers periodically go through the box at school assemblies. Unclaimed items are distributed to charitable organizations once or twice a year.

## **Student Behavior**

We at Swan School believe it is important to differentiate between who children are and their behavior. Children are respected as individuals with unique temperaments, abilities and needs. Appropriate behavioral expectations are communicated routinely to the children throughout the year. The three overarching expectations are: Be Curious, Be Responsible and Be Respectful. Each of these categories is further defined, listing what it means to exhibit these three things in the context of school life. Positive feedback and various reinforcers are given to encourage appropriate behaviors.

For students who choose not to be curious, responsible, or respectful, staff may help the child by taking the following steps (not necessarily in order):

- Privately bring the problem to the student's attention
- Give the students an "Oops! Problem solving Form" to complete
- Student loses "Friday Free Choice Time" option, or recess time.
- Student goes to a time-out (in same or another classroom).
- Teacher privately takes away student's leadership card.
- Teacher calls parent.
- Parent will be asked to pick up child for the day.

Basic parameters that apply to all students who attend Swan School:

- Verbal and/or physical behavior that is hurtful to self or others is not tolerated.
- Behavior that is harmful to the environment is not allowed.

Swan School has no tolerance for violence, threats, harassment, drugs or weapons. This includes no tolerance of “play” violence as well. Toy guns or other toy weapons are not permitted. Swan School’s policy regarding dangerous weapons (as defined in RCW 9.41.250 and RCW 9.41.280) such as pocketknives, squirt guns, paintball guns and look-alike weapons is as follows: First incident, confiscate the weapon, notify the parent and the student receives a written warning. If a second incident occurs, the child is expelled.

Although Swan School strives to provide a learning program to fit all students’ needs, we are not equipped with the necessary resources to adequately serve students who may fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Students who display severe behavioral problems.
- Those requiring special education programs.

In situations where behaviors are displayed to a degree beyond what is typical, a parent-teacher conference will be held and appropriate measures will be employed (e.g. referral to professional evaluation and support services). In the event that the child’s needs are beyond the scope of what can be addressed at Swan School, enrollment may be terminated.

## **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Teachers will meet with parents twice a year—once in the fall and once in the spring. At the first conference, the student’s progress will be discussed in addition to setting a goal for the student. This goal may be academic or social depending on the student’s strengths and challenges. We ask that parents come to the conferences with ideas of a goal, and then work with the teacher to make an appropriate one.

School is dismissed at 12:30 during conference days. See the school calendar for dates ([www.swanschool.net](http://www.swanschool.net)). A sign-up sheet for conference times will be posted prior to the scheduled conference week.

A parent or teacher may request additional conferences at any time.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Immunizations**

As required by law, all school children must be immunized or properly exempted in order to attend school. Immunization records must be on file before the first day of classes.

### **Illness**

The health of all the children at Swan School depends on each family acting responsibly. Please consider these general guidelines.

- Since colds and childhood disease are most infectious before symptoms appear, it is wise to keep a child home if he or she is extremely irritable or if you notice unusual lassitude.
- Vomiting is frequently a symptom of oncoming illness; therefore, do not send your child to school for 24 hours after such an upset.
- Keep your child home if he or she is experiencing diarrhea.
- A child should remain at home 24 hours after a fever.
- An extra day at home is good protection against a relapse/re-infection.

**Please notify us immediately if your child contacts anything that is contagious** and also act promptly with medical care. We will provide information for dealing with contagious situations as the need arises.

### **Injury or Illness at School**

If a child becomes ill or injured at school, every effort will be made to contact you or your emergency contact. If, in our opinion, the child is too ill to be at school, it is the parent's responsibility to pick up the child as soon as possible. In the event of an injury or illness too severe to warrant waiting for the parent, we will call for an aid car to take the child to the nearest emergency room. **Please be sure that all current emergency and work contact information is on file in the school office.**

### **Medication**

By law, Swan School is not allowed to administer any form of prescription medication. If your child requires medication during the school day, please arrange a time to come to the school to administer the medication. We can administer over-the-counter medication only if we have signed permission slip on file.

### **Vision & Hearing Screening/Lice Checks**

Swan School conducts vision and hearing screening once each year. Parents will be notified if their child's results fall outside the ordinary parameters. We also conduct lice checks throughout the year as necessary. Please notify the school immediately if your child has lice. Your child will need to be nit and lice-free in order to return to school.

### **Appropriate Clothing**

At Swan School, children go outside in all kinds of weather. Please always consider this when your child is dressing for school. On P.E. days send your child dressed to participate with sturdy, non-slip shoes. We believe that students and parents can choose apparel that demonstrates individuality, as well as maintain the standards of appropriateness to ensure that the school environment is conducive to student learning.

## **School Closures**

If we need to cancel school or have a late start due to inclement weather, you should expect to receive a short pre-recorded phone message from our automated system. In addition to the phone message, we will send out an email (if we have power) and get closure information to King 5 Television News. If you don't receive a phone message, email, and/or see notice on the morning news, then that means "all is well" and we will see everyone at school.

Should it be necessary to end school early due to weather or other natural disaster, we will make every effort to contact you or the people you have listed as your emergency contacts. Be sure to let your friends/relatives know you have listed them, and again, make sure this information is always kept up-to-date.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

### **Fire Drills/Earthquake Preparedness/Lock-down Drills**

The teachers will supervise and conduct fire, earthquake and lock-down preparedness drills throughout the year.

### **Emergency Comfort Kits**

Your child will have an Emergency Comfort Kit that is kept at school. These kits are kept in a safe location at school and will be made available in the event of an emergency where the kids might not be able to reconnect with their families right away.

### **Emergency Preparedness Brochure**

The school has prepared an excellent brochure regarding our policies and procedures in event of various types of emergencies. These are available in the office. Please be sure that you have one in an easily accessible location.