



# 2020-2021 Parent Handbook

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”

-William Butler Yeats

## Our Mission

Mangrove School of Sarasota is dedicated to providing a nurturing, inspiring space in which children can love, learn, and grow. We seek to engage the whole child in their education - head, heart and hands, while also honoring our inherent connection to nature through frequent exploration of and hands-on experience in our majestic natural surroundings.

## Our Vision is to:

Honor childhood. Your child only gets one. It should be amazing.

Respect that each child has their own journey and will unfold in their own time. Meet children’s needs at each stage of their development.

Recognize that children are not empty vessels to pour information into – instead - nurture the child’s natural curiosity and sense of wonder that is essential for real, life-long learning.

Offer a developmentally appropriate, dynamic academic curriculum, integrating arts, movement, music and meaningful activities into traditional academic subjects.

Instill reverence for humanity, animal life, and the Earth through frequent service and exploration opportunities and by fostering supportive relationships within the class and community.

Promote world peace and responsibility for one's actions.

Foster connectivity of the children to themselves, each other, and all of humanity, through all we do.

Challenge children to discover the full range of their capacities.

Instill children with the confidence to try new things, take calculated risks, and find their growing edges.

Model and value creativity, innovation, sustainability, and problem solving.

Cultivate compassion and empathy for all, including oneself.

## Our Community

We are an intentional school community founded by parents, teachers and friends seeking a unique, progressive education for our children. Serving early childhood through adolescence, Mangrove School of Sarasota honors imagination as the heart of every child’s learning foundation to cultivate creativity, courage, confidence and contribution to the world.

## School Policies and Information

### School Hours

Children should arrive at their class by 5 minutes to the arrival time below. EC students shall wait in the car in the designated area on Upper Elmwood Ave. for their teacher to retrieve them. Grades parents may choose to park in the Sanctuary or Community Center Parking lot for their convenience of drop off location, within sight of their child's teacher. Please text any important messages that need to be delivered to the teacher such that the drop off procedure is expedient.

#### **Class hours**

##### **8:30 am to 12:30 pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday:**

- Seahorse Nursery

##### **8:30 to 1:30 Monday through Thursday**

- Sandpiper VPK (wrap around Monday)

##### **8:45 am to 1:45 pm, Monday through Thursday**

- Starfish Kindergarten (meets at Phillippi)

##### **8:30 am to 2:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; 8:30 am to 1:30 pm Thursday;**

- Grades 1 (Meets at back playground); Grades 2 and 3 (Meets at Grandmother Oak Tree near the playground)

##### **8:30 to 2:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday; 8:30 am to 1:30 pm Thursday:**

- Grades 4 and 5 (Meets by soccer field near Sanctuary building)

##### **8:40 to 2:40 pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday**

- Grades 6-9 (Meets by their class area)

**Friday times are generally 8:30 to 2:30 for all programs, unless otherwise noted, on our Forest Friday Schedule handout**

Pick up will be from the same location. Please be mindful of picking your children up on time, as this fosters a feeling of security. In addition, the teachers have other responsibilities to attend to after they dismiss their class.

### Extended Care

#### **Until 2:30pm**

- **Little Siesta** for Early Childhood Students.

**Until 4:30 pm** for Early Childhood and Grades students.

**Please see Appendix A for Extended Care rates and policies.**

## Attendance

### **Absences**

Regular attendance encourages the social and academic success of the student. We understand that this year, attendance may need to be flexible due to our enhanced illness policy as well as self quarantine measures that must be taken after travel. As great care is taken with the preparation of the day's lesson, and missing even part of the day can create gaps in your child's learning, as much as is feasible, grades lessons will be uploaded to our online platform such that your child can follow along at home. Students who wish to take on "hybrid" schooling can also choose to attend on campus Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and engage in distance learning Monday and Friday.

An excused absence is one that results from:

- Illness.
- Funeral or death in the family.
- Religious observations and holidays.
- Family emergencies.
- All other absences must be submitted to the teacher via email, prior to the absence, for approval.

If your child will be absent, please:

- Text your child's teacher by 8:30 to let them know.
- Upon returning to school, please email [mangrovesarasota@gmail.com](mailto:mangrovesarasota@gmail.com), with the subject line "Absence" and your child's name with the reason for the absence.
- If a student has an unavoidable medical appointment during school hours, please text the teacher beforehand.

An unexcused absence is one that results from:

- The reason for the absence did not meet the excused absence criteria or was not documented.

### **Excessive Unexcused Absences**

Consistent attendance in class, either in person or from home, and prompt arrival are encouraged for your child's well-being and out of respect for the class itself.

Excessive absences will warrant one or more of the following actions:

- Parents are notified in writing that absences are excessive.
- A meeting with the student's class teacher and Director.
- A written plan created by the parent, student, and school to resolve the problem.
- A faculty review.
- Additional charges may be incurred if your child is in need of after school tutoring to catch up on material they have missed.
- Students with excessive absences are at risk for repeating their grade or dismissal from the program.

### **Tardiness**

Children who arrive late miss their teacher's greeting and the opening verse (in the Grades), or for EC, can feel out of synch with the class' rhythm.. Tardiness is disruptive for both the student and the class.

For your child's comfort and to prevent interruption during the main lesson activities, please be sure that your child

has used the restroom and washed or sanitized their hands prior to coming to class.

If your student arrives late:

- Please text your child's teacher before 8:30 to let them know your child will be arriving late, and to arrange their drop off spot and arrival
- Please wait with your child until the teacher is ready to receive them.
- Arrivals cannot be accepted after 9:30, except for the case of a documented appointment.

### ***Excessive Tardiness***

Exceeding 5 tardies per semester or 10 tardies per year will result in the following actions:

- Parents are notified via email that tardies are excessive.
- A meeting with the student's class teacher and Director.
- A written plan created by the parent, student, and school to resolve the problem.
- A faculty review.
- Additional charges may be incurred if your child is in need of after school tutoring to catch up on material they have missed.
- Students with excessive tardies are at risk for repeating their grade or dismissal from the program.

### ***Early Release***

If your child needs to leave school before the end of the day please let your child's main teacher know as soon as you know your child will need to leave early, and what time you will be picking them up, so they may advise you on the best pick up location.

### ***Illness***

In the event that your child is ill, it is extremely important that they stay home and rest. Students may return to school **72 hours minimum** after their symptoms have subsided, in order to prevent the spread of contagious illness, and allow them adequate rest. If you are unsure about the guidelines for other indicated illnesses, the Dr Sears website is helpful in this regard: [www.askdrsears.com](http://www.askdrsears.com)

Children must stay home for the following illnesses:

- Fever of 99 degrees or higher
- Headache
- Exhaustion or fatigue
- Spasm or convulsion
- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Lice
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours.
- Sneezing or coughing
- Any cough that causes the child to become red or blue in the face
- Loss of smell or taste
- Nasal discharge that is cloudy, thick or yellow/green. A child with any continuous drainage that affects classroom hygiene should also remain at home.
- Infected eyes, especially red eyes with discharge and drainage, or matting of the eyelids
- Presence of any communicable rash
- Any exposed or open sores
- Any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in class activities and/or results in

greater care than the teacher can provide, without compromising the safety or health of the other children in the class.

Parents will be notified and asked to pick up their child if they become ill at school with any of the above symptoms. If the parent is unable to be reached, the emergency contacts listed on the child's Health Emergency form will be called and asked to pick up the child.

*Additionally, if your child contracts or you suspect they have contracted any highly contagious condition, please let your child's teacher and administration know via email immediately. In order to be proactive, any incidence of these types of conditions will be relayed to the community, while protecting your privacy, such that parents and teachers can take preventative measures to avoid transmission to other students.*

### **Injuries**

A parent is notified immediately when serious injury or sudden illness occurs during school hours. For this reason, please notify the office when there is a change of phone number or of persons to be contacted when you cannot be reached.

- In the event of a serious injury or accident, that may require medical attention, or your child being picked up, an incident report will be prepared for a parent to sign. It will be kept on file in the office.
- A parent is routinely notified if a child receives a blow to the head, whether or not it appears to be serious.

### **Weather-Related School Closings**

When the Sarasota County Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather or other emergency, Mangrove School of Sarasota will be closed. Due to being completely outside, we may also close for any days that we anticipate will endure intense prolonged storms. If we are closed for any reason, a Remind message, and/or text will be sent, with as much notice as possible.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

In order to protect our children from the EMFs of cell phones, as well as provide them with our undivided presence, please refrain from using your cell phone during drop off or pick up. Additionally, we request that the children do not bring cell phones or other devices to school. We also strongly recommend delaying their personal device ownership and use; please see [www.waituntil8th.org](http://www.waituntil8th.org) if you are interested in learning more about this recommendation.

### **Code of Conduct**

The faculty at Mangrove School of Sarasota is committed to practices that focus on the development of a positive self-image in children, reinforcing positive behavior and de-emphasizing the negative. At times, consequences are necessary and appropriate, yet also respectful and relevant to the offense at hand.

Five basic rules are upheld at our school. These parameters are important because their primary purpose is to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and the educational climate of the classroom:

1. No child shall hurt or endanger others.
2. No child shall endanger or hurt him or herself.
3. No child shall destroy or damage property.
4. No child shall leave the supervision of the teacher without that teacher's knowledge and consent.
5. Each child is expected to follow basic rules of the school and classroom code of conduct.

In order to ensure that our community has a social atmosphere that supports learning and tolerance, we expect all community members to their developmental degree, to follow these tenets:

1. I will be courteous.
2. I will be respectful of my peers, teachers, and all visitors to the school.
3. I will consider the safety of others' emotional and physical well-being.
4. I will take care of my own property and that of the school and others.
5. I will use polite and socially acceptable language at all times.
6. I will be accepting of the differences of others.
7. I will ask questions, and utilize direct communication to the person or people involved, rather than spreading misinformation.

## **Disciplinary Responses**

Learning appropriate social boundaries and how to constructively express emotions is a part of learning. Violating the Code of Conduct presents an opportunity for learning. All children will be treated with respect during a resolution process.

The disciplinary response to any violation of the Code of Conduct draws on the professional judgment of the teachers and administrators responsible for making such decisions, using a range of discipline management techniques. Discipline action may include one or more of the following responses depending on the age of the children and at the discretion of the teacher:

Redirection  
Pedagogical stories  
Peacemaking  
Verbal correction  
Cooling off time  
Confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process  
Extra chores  
Exercises  
Modified Schedule  
Sending students to the office, or to another classroom

For more serious or consistent violations, the class teacher and Director will meet with the parents to discuss specific behavior and disciplinary action to be taken, up to and including dismissal from the program.

Corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances at the MSS. If a student presents an immediate danger to his or herself or to others, he or she may be physically restrained for the purpose of ensuring either their own safety or the safety of others.

It is very important that all children feel safe at school. If a child is behaving in an aggressive manner, the child will be sent home from school. The teacher will write up an incident report and the parents will need to sign it upon the child's return. Teachers may ask for a meeting with the parents prior to welcoming the child back to class.

## **Communication**

- **Parent Partnership Update:**  
The Parent Partnership Update will be sent via Remind to all Mangrove School of Sarasota families weekly. Upcoming festivals, events, and any requests or reminders can be found here. Please read it carefully-it will keep you in the know! In addition, you will receive a monthly blog update from our class teachers, to include detailed descriptions of what our students are doing in class.
- **Remind:** Our community wide texting service will also be used for reminders and updates to our operations. Please make sure your sign up, as this service will also be used for inclement weather emergencies, so please

make sure you opt in.

- **Office Memos:**

The office may send timely email reminders that contain information about enrollment or billing issues. Please ensure that we have your correct email address.

- **Class Notices**

Notices from your teacher regarding class specific activities, needs, or field trips will be sent via Remind. Please speak with your class teacher if you have any questions regarding class specific information.

- **Social Media**

Please “Like” the Mangrove School of Sarasota Facebook page for upcoming events, articles of interest to families, and pictures of Mangrove Sarasota happenings. We are also on Instagram. You may also ask to be added to the private Mangrove School of Sarasota Parent Partnership group or the Mangrove Garden Collective group for community connections.

- **Parent Class Meetings**

This valuable time together is used to share essential information with parents about the curriculum, to discuss any concerns that parents may have about life in the classroom, and to answer general questions about school programs. Parents are expected to attend these meetings. We recommend that all adults who are responsible for parenting the child are in attendance.

- **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Class teachers will schedule formal individual conferences with parents during the Fall and Spring terms. These conferences offer an excellent opportunity to discuss the progress of your particular child, the class itself, and any concerns you may have, therefore they are mandatory. Conferences are of direct benefit to your child as they enable the teacher and parent to be jointly supportive of the child’s progress.

- **Communicating Directly With Your Child’s Teacher**

Your child’s teacher will let you know the best times to communicate an issue. All conversations about the children should not occur with them present.

- **Communicating with Administration**

Please email [mangrovesarasota@gmail.com](mailto:mangrovesarasota@gmail.com), or message Mangrove on Remind for any questions or concerns you may have, to update your child’s file, reports absence or highly contagious illness, or if you have any requests. During the school day students are the primary focus of our teachers and staff, thus most messages will be responded to after school hours. Topics of an emergent nature can be texted as well.

- Please do not use facebook or instagram as a means of communicating with teachers or staff regarding school issues. Please use email instead.

- **[www.mangrovesarasota.com](http://www.mangrovesarasota.com)**

The website is a place to obtain current information throughout the school year, including the most current and updated calendar.

## Daily Rhythms

Daily rhythms vary by program and will look similar to previous years. With current Covid guidelines in place, for Early Childhood, teachers will meet families at their car to retrieve each child individually and bring them to the play yard to begin their day. Their days will include free play, circle time, snack preparation (on campus only), meal time (s), nature and artistic activities, story time, and clean up. At the end of the day teachers will bring children to parents at their vehicles. For lower grades, drop off locations are staggered but still allow for free play time before beginning their day. Upper grades will meet in their learning space. Each day all grades will first retrieve their classroom belongings and bring them to their class space. Their daily rhythm will include a warm up time, their main lesson, meal times and recesses, and specialty classes. Towards dismissal time they will help close out the day, such as putting their belongings away and help perform community contributions, such as caring for the compost, filling water stations, taking out garbage, watering plants, and more. Pick up will be in the same location as their drop off location.

## Dogs

Dogs are permitted in green space area and must be on a leash at all times. Thank you for understanding.

## Dress Code

Students will be outside and active during their school day. Clothing should be comfortable and allow for unrestricted movement. They should bring a backpack with a hat and rain gear.

- Natural fibers are recommended for maintaining a desirable body temperature.
- Flashy or revealing clothing are not appropriate for school. Be mindful that clothing is neither too tight nor too loose. Clothing should fit well.
- Keep in mind how clothing will act if the student jumps, rolls, hangs upside down, etc.
- Clothing should be weather appropriate, as the children spend much of their time outdoors. **A raincoat, rain pants, and rain boots or waterproof shoes should be kept available. Please make sure to label these.**
- A comfortable sun hat should be available at all times.
- Clothes should be clean, without tears.
- Clothing should be free of pictures and words, including logos and advertising.
- Midribs should not be visible.
- For safety, avoid dangling jewelry (including earrings, bracelets, and necklaces).
- Flat, comfortable, closed-toe shoes (suitable for running and games) are required. Socks are helpful in avoiding ant bites. No sandals, flip flops, wheeled shoes or shoes that light up, please.
- **EC: Please send an extra set of clothes to school in a soft bag to be kept at school. Please make sure to label these, and replace as needed.**
- **Please do plan ahead for cooler weather.** We are an “all weather” school; aside from dangerous meteorological events, the children are outside daily, for extended time periods. Please plan on having layers, as well as cold weather gear such as hats and mittens or gloves for your child’s comfort during any cold spells we may have.
- Please avoid the use of perfumes or colognes (and other scented products), as many are chemically sensitive to these substances.

In observance of special festival days and events, please eschew t-shirts, sweatpants, and sweatshirts.

Inquire with your teacher which types of clothing would be appropriate for particular events. On the most formal occasions, students are invited to attend in dress pants/shorts, collared shirts, dresses, or skirts to encourage an atmosphere of reverence for the occasion.

**Reminder: Should your child have any outgrown outdoor gear, please consider donating it to the school, for another student to utilize, or as extras in the classroom.**

## Flow of the Year

The following is a description of the events of a typical year. We don’t know with certainty what this year holds in terms of large community gatherings, and for now we will not have potlucks. Specific information about each event, as applicable, will be included in the Parent Updates throughout the year.

## Community Work Days

Working side by side for the betterment of our children’s educational environment supports a feeling of true community spirit, as we collectively set the intention for another successful and productive year. In an effort to meet everyone’s scheduling needs, we have blocked off several days dedicated to community contributions. Prior to this, we will email the list of tasks that must be accomplished in order to be ready for the first day of school, and families can then schedule a time to come and help. This could be during the day, or in the evening for your convenience, as well as take home projects.

## Mandatory All-School Parent Partnership Meeting and Orientation

This event is an opportunity to learn more about our school and community. You will get a sneak peek of what is to come for each grade over the year, as well as meet other parents and teachers within the



community. Please plan on having at least one parent attend.

### **Autumn Equinox Festival**

The Autumn Equinox Festival is the first festival of the school year and celebrates the first day of Autumn – when day and night are perfectly balanced. This year our festival is a bit later than usual, on Saturday, 10/2. This equilibrium also represents the duality of light and darkness that exists within human beings. This festival honors the courage and strength in each of us, as we face this part of the year, of longer nights - a natural time of turning inward, reflection, and facing our own darkness. This is traditionally pictured as the brave warrior in the act of subduing a dragon, which represents the dark side of human nature. For the younger children, this message is not overtly stated, but rather, this time of year is filled with stories and songs of the brave and true. The children learn that with great valor, dragons can be beaten.

For our festival this year, the Grades students will perform a play for the community that depicts the story of George and his battle with the dragon. Finally, the children are invited to perform various challenges, testing their bravery and skill.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences are offered twice a year, Fall and Spring, by appointment.

### **Halloween Walk for Young Children**

An alternative Halloween experience for the young child, sweet and not scary, children go off on a journey and meet some townsfolk bearing gifts along the way. Older students help transform the grounds into a magical space of wonder. This year, the walk will take place on Saturday, 10/24 beginning at 5 pm, in small groups.

### **Full Moon Hike for Older Students and the Young at Heart**

An alternative Halloween experience for older students, darkness naturally provides a bit of intrigue and mystery, as each group walks through to see Crowley from a different perspective and encounters a few surprises. This event will take place on Friday, 10/30 at 7 pm.

### **Lantern Walk**

The lantern is the symbol of our own light which we can shine on a dark world, and we celebrate this festival by holding a reverent “lantern walk.” This year, our lantern walk will be held on Saturday, Nov 21st at 6:00 pm.

This family walk is complete with lanterns made lovingly by our dear children, as well as songs they have learned in class. Comfortable, warm clothing is recommended for this event. We do ask that you do not allow your child to run, in order to maintain the reverence for this event. (This behavior also tends to be contagious!) Quiet conversation is fine, however, please do not get so engrossed that you are distracted from supervising your child.

### **Santa Lucia Day**

Santa Lucia is celebrated during the school day on December 11<sup>th</sup>. This festival celebrates the warmth of light and giving. The 2nd/3rd grade, dressed in white and singing traditional song, visits each class with a special treat for each student.

### **Winter Assembly**

Before winter break, students hold an assembly to share some of the teachings they have taken up in the fall. Parents, grandparents and friends are warmly invited to attend as each class offers a performance for the rest of the school, followed by a picnic lunch.

### **Winter Solstice Camping (Very tentative - Crowley Forest Days are likely instead)**

Typically we come together for a camping trip to observe and honor the coming of winter! We have some planned activities, plenty of chores, as well as ample time for freedom of exploration of the woods and witnessing its subtle winter changes. Children 4th grade and up can stay overnight without a parent, or can be dropped off for the day without staying overnight. Younger students are welcome to attend overnight or for the day with their parents. We will need to know your RSVP by December 1st so we can plan accordingly.

### **Winter Spiral Garden**

This year our Winter Spiral will take place in nature, at Crowley Museum and Nature Center. Families will first gather to dip their own beeswax candle. We will do this in small groups beginning earlier in the afternoon. Once the spiral begins, we ask for you to please maintain the reverence for this event. EC families will sit with their families; grades children will sit with their classes, and one by one, each child will take a turn to slowly walk the spiral, holding a red apple with a small unlit candle inserted into it. As the child reaches the center, he or she lights the candle and then returns out of the spiral, when they will place the apple and candle near one of the golden stars. Each child lights the way for those who will come after them. As children take their turns, more and more lit candles light the spiral, and it begins to glow. The evening is quiet and moving. With the winter days being short, and the nights long, the spiral celebrates a kindling of our inner light, and holds a promise that spring, light, and life will begin again. This year our Spiral Garden will take place on Thursday, December 18th, at 5:00.

### **Mermaid Faire (Very tentative)**

Mermaid Faire is a day filled with magic and wonder for all ages. Enchanting activities, educational opportunities, live music, and delicious food make this a true family event with something for everyone. This event is possible thanks to the hard work and dedication of parents, teachers, older students, alumni and staff, and is a great opportunity to fulfill service hours. We will need all hands on deck; a sign up sheet will be emailed about 8 weeks prior. This wholesome, endearing, event is not to be missed for Mangrove families and friends.

### **Kite Festival**

For this festival we rejoice in the arrival of spring! Students will create their own kites to fly, for anyone else in attendance, handmade and store-bought kites welcome! Join us as we set our kites aloft, transforming the sky into a dancing mosaic of brilliant shapes and vibrant colors!

Early dismissal follows. This year's Kite Festival will be on Friday, March 12th.

### **Roll-a-thon**

This event is a student endeavor. Each student will receive a pledge sheet to complete and return. Students may ask family and friends to support them as they see how many laps they can do! Sponsors for our t-shirts are also welcome. Then, our students will take to the pavement with their scooters, skateboards and bikes to raise funds, supporting our school. Afterwards they can enjoy unlimited water slide rides, carnival type games, and juice snow cones. This year we hope to plan this for the last Wednesday in April.

## Festival of May

A few years ago, our former “May Day” was updated to better reflect our seasons here in Florida. Families gather before dusk for an evening at the beach, dressed in white or pastel “spring like” colors for a festival of “Letting Go”. Students will make head wreaths and dance the maypole with their class. The evening will be complete with music and dance as we celebrate the freedom and relaxation that comes with summer. This year the Festival of May will take place on Friday, May 7th, on Siesta Key Beach at 5:30.

## Rose Ceremony

Another ceremony that has been updated is The Rose Ceremony. Typically done to warmly greet first graders as they walk the bridge from Early Childhood to Grades, our first grade is the bridge itself. In order to meet the young child of today, our first grade offers the beginning of academics as usual, but still recognizes the need for more play and more work for children under seven. Thus our Rose Ceremony marks both the beginning of first grade, and the end, to honor the large developmental leap they have completed.

## End of Year Assembly

At this assembly we will see the culmination of the entire year, as each class offers a performance for the rest of the school. Teachers, staff and key volunteers are honored for their dedication to our school and community.

Other events that will occur throughout the year might include Family Fun Nights, Crafting Events, Adult Enrichment opportunities, and more. Information about these events will be included in the weekly Parent Update.

## Food Guidelines

Now more than ever, do we need children to be eating for health. Attention span, immunity, mood, and impulse control are all directly influenced by food and drink. Sugar, specifically, has been known to lower immunity. **Natural, unprocessed foods help children have enough energy to participate fully and to avoid behavioral issues. Foods that are highly processed, high in sugar, non-satiating, and low in nutrients can significantly affect your child during school, as we remain active throughout the day.** In the interest of providing the best possible learning and healthful environment for all students and staff, we have developed a Food Guidelines policy based on the experience of the faculty and related current scientific data. **Please check the ingredients on packaged foods carefully.** If you have any questions or comments about the Food Guidelines, please speak with your teacher.

- Each grades student should bring a healthy snack and a full lunch in a basket or lunchbox (**no pictures or characters, please**) and two cloth napkins.
- Early Childhood students may bring a healthy snack, as they prepare a mid-morning meal together. They should also bring lunch if they are staying for Little Siesta rest time.
- Two full water bottles should be brought to school each day. Please label this with their first and last name Children bring their water bottles outdoors, so a rugged design is recommended. **Please bring water only.**
- **All foods containing added sugar, food dyes, artificial additives or preservatives may not be brought on campus, and will be returned home. This includes, but is not limited to:**
  1. Soda or other sweetened beverages, gatorade etc
  2. Gum
  3. Candy
  4. Non-nutritional chips (Doritos, Cheetos, etc.)
  5. Non-nutritional yogurt (Gogurt, etc.)
  6. Pudding/Jello cups

## 7. Sweetened granola bars

## 8. Cookies, cakes, etc

- In consideration of students with food allergies, lunches may not be shared.
- Please also keep packaging waste in mind. Please use reusable containers whenever possible. Leftover fruit and vegetable scraps can be composted.
- **Some suggestions of what to bring – a balance of various foods, such as, whole grain sandwiches, fruit, veggies and hummus, Lara Bars, soups, salads, cheese, crackers, etc.**
- Children of all ages can assist with lunch packing or unpacking on some level. Please talk to your child's teacher if you are unsure of what a developmentally appropriate expectation of this responsibility should be.
- **To further promote harmony and ease in the classroom, we request that students do not eat any of the offending foods before coming to school, as well.**

The faculty and staff are greatly appreciative of the steps families make in adopting the Food Guidelines for their students. We truly believe that eating whole, natural foods is one key to a productive and enjoyable school experience for all, in addition to promoting good health.

## Forest Fridays

Every Friday that is a full school day, unless otherwise noted, our students will participate in "Forest Fridays" for a day immersed in nature. Our locations will rotate, to provide a balance for the needs of the community members, regarding factors such as distance and cost. You will receive a schedule prior to the beginning of each semester. This year we will also be incorporating more service into our nature practice. When we are at Crowley Museum and Nature Center, students will have access to the Crowley woods and farm, and will be responsible for certain farm chores each week. Drop off will be at Crowley at 8:30 am, near the screen house. The cost for this field trip will be \$5/family.

## Fundraising

Our affordable tuition covers approximately 90% of our operating expenses. MSS relies on internal and external fundraising to meet our annual budget needs.

All families are expected to participate in annual fundraising efforts, through contributions or volunteerism. Even if you are not able to give a lot, all families are encouraged to give some amount, or engage family and friends who wish to support your child so that our annual participation rate is 100%. This allows our school more grant opportunities.

This year some of our fundraisers include The Giving Challenge through the Community Foundation, Family Fun Nights, Mermaid Faire, Roll-a-thon, Merch sales, Student based businesses, and more. Additional information will be available in the Update as events approach.

## Issue Resolution

### **Mangrove School of Sarasota Resolution Process**

We strive to resolve issues and conflicts in a healthy and transparent manner. Conflict resolution occupies an important role in building a community. We sincerely hope that if you have a concern, you will let us know, so we can help resolve it in a timely manner.

When an issue or concern arises please follow these steps in this order, as needed.

1. Speak directly with the individuals involved. Often issues can be resolved through open, direct and respectful communication.

2. Inform the Director
3. Have a mediated discussion if necessary. Notes from the meeting will be documented.

All concerns will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately, as quickly as possible.

We appreciate and welcome your feedback.

## Media Guidelines

The use of computers, laptops, handheld devices, tablets, and television by students is strongly discouraged. Media interrupts the child's natural inclination to:

- Move their bodies
- Create original pictures in the mind
- Engage in lived experiences.

Additional concerns include:

- Inhibited neurological development
- Shortened attention span
- Consumerism
- Inappropriate content/attitudes
- Interrupted sleep patterns
- Body image issues
- Loss of patience

We recommend that children under the age of 10 avoid media of all types. Older students may use screens sparingly, avoiding it altogether on the evenings before a school day. We strongly recommend that children under 14 do not utilize a smartphone or social media.

It is our sincere desire that each family consider the available research and recommendations regarding media and become whole-hearted supporters of our media guidelines.

If you have any questions about the media guidelines or how to reduce screens in your child's day, please speak with your teacher. The links below will further explain our position on media and screens.

- <http://www.waldorftoday.com/2013/01/the-sorcerers-apprentice-mind-over-machinery/>
- [http://nytimes.com/2011/10/23/technology/at-waldorf-school-in-silicon-valley-technology-can-wait.htm?ref=gradingthedigitalschool&\\_r=0](http://nytimes.com/2011/10/23/technology/at-waldorf-school-in-silicon-valley-technology-can-wait.htm?ref=gradingthedigitalschool&_r=0)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge5G\\_cYpj8G](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ge5G_cYpj8G)
- [www.waituntil8th.org](http://www.waituntil8th.org)

## Service Hours

Volunteering provides a meaningful and necessary service for the school, while enriching the experience of both the child as well as the family. Mangrove School truly needs and appreciates the active support and gifts of its volunteers. Our school offers many opportunities for parents, grandparents, and friends to invest their time in our community, and the students' education. It is because of previous volunteers that the school exists today.

We have found, however, that often just a handful of very dedicated volunteers do the work that should be spread out over the entire community. For this reason, we now require each family to engage in service hours for a minimum of 20 hours per school year. Offering your time helps keep costs down, is supportive to community life, and is an excellent impression for your child to take in at any age! We recognize that volunteer time requirements

can be challenging to manage, and there are times within every family when you are able to give more, and sometimes less. There are many tasks that can be done from home, and are very flexible to fit a variety of schedules. In your enrollment packet you will find your timesheet for tracking these hours. **This year we are also specifically looking for a Volunteer Coordinator, a Campus and Grounds Chair, Parent Education Coordinator, and a Fundraising Chair. If you are interested in holding one of these leadership positions, first of all, thank you(!) and secondly, please message us, and we will give you more details.**

## Sleep

Children who get the optimal hours of sleep per night are able to meet their day with vigor and positivity. A full night's rest also helps to prevent illness, as it strengthens the immune system. The following chart lists the recommended hours of sleep for each age:

Child's Age	Recommended Hours of Sleep
4-12 Months Old	11 - 15 hours per day
1-3 Years Old	12 - 14 hours per day
3-6 Years Old	10 - 12 hours per day
7-12 Years Old	10 - 11 hours per day
12-18 Years Old	9 - 10 hours per day

## Smoking

Smoking and e-cigarettes are not permitted on the campus for the safety and comfort of students and staff. Thank you for understanding.

## Student Progress

### *Parent-Teacher Conferences*

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. Please allow 30-45 minutes for the meeting. Both parents are encouraged to attend the conference to best address both parents' concerns effectively. The meeting will address the academic, social, physical and emotional development of the student. You will also receive a written update mid year. Additional parent-teacher conferences may take place throughout the year, as needed. Please contact your teacher if any issues arise.

### *Progress Reports*

You will receive a brief written summary of both parent teacher conferences, as well as one mid-year. At the conclusion of the school year, a comprehensive End-of Year narrative report will be mailed home.

## Student Support Services

It is our sincere hope to provide as many children as possible with this unique, progressive education. We strive to serve children with diverse learning needs whenever feasible. Sometimes, however, children will need additional support in order to reach his or her full potential.

If your child is noted to exhibit any learning or behavioral concerns, they will be referred to the faculty for a child study. This detailed discussion, as well as observations during class will help decide the best course of action to take

for your child. Faculty will then make recommendations for classroom interventions, individual tutoring, extra lesson, further evaluations or parental support.

You may be referred to Child Find, for a free developmental assessment through the Sarasota County Schools system. If it is determined that your child is eligible to receive services, they can take place on our campus and will be free of charge. You may also be referred to a private provider for evaluation or services.

Please let your child's teacher know if your child begins any therapies during the school year, such that the teacher can establish and maintain communication with therapists to ensure that we are meeting your child's educational and social-emotional needs.

If you have any additional questions about this policy, or for more information on requesting an assessment through the county, please contact the office. 941.927.3711

## **Tuition and Arrears**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the financial health and stability of the Mangrove School of Sarasota. To that end, the following financial policy has been established:

### ***Tuition Payments***

- The first tuition payment of the school year is due on July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The July 1<sup>st</sup> payment holds the student's place for the 2018-19 school year.
- For families choosing the 10 month payment plan, payments are due on the 1st of each month through April.
- Although tuition can be broken into payment plans for affordability purposes, it is not a month to month obligation, but rather, an annual commitment.

Unfortunately, there are times when a family is unable to make a payment due to illness, job loss, etc. We do not want any family to leave due to inability to pay. However, it is your responsibility to contact the office as soon as possible if you are having difficulty in making your tuition payments. In the event that a payment is late/missed and an arrangement has not been made with the administration, the following arrears policy applies:

### ***Arrears***

1. Payments made after the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the month will be assessed a \$29.00 late fee by TADS.
2. After 10 days, an email will be sent as a reminder.
3. If a payment is not received by the 14th day, the Operations Manager will notify the family via email that the student(s) may not attend class until payment arrangements have been made.
4. When 30 days have passed, a 5% finance charge will be assessed on the total arrears.

**The financial stability of the school costs us time and resources. Please be mindful that any excessive activity in collecting payments is taking away attention in other areas of school operations and prevents school growth.**

## **Education Resources**

### ***Books***

*Simplicity Parenting* by Kim John Payne

*You are Your Child's First Teacher* by Rahima Baldwin

*School as a Journey* by Torin Finser

*School Renewal* by Torin Finser

*The Education of the Child* by Rudolf Steiner

*Creativity in Education* by Rene Querido

*Beyond the Rainbow Bridge* by Barbara Patterson and Pamela Bradley

*Waldorf Education: A Family Guide* by P. Fenner and K. Rivers

#### **Online Resources**

Waldorf Online Library: [www.waldorflibrary.org](http://www.waldorflibrary.org)

The Alliance for Childhood: [www.allianceforchildhood.org](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org)

Wait Until 8th: <https://www.waituntil8th.org/>

Positive Parenting Solutions

## **The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Mind over Machinery**



By DOUGLAS GERWIN, PhD

The term “media” has an interesting and surprisingly short biography. As recently as the 1970s the *Oxford English Dictionary* listed only three meanings for this term—the oldest going back no further than the 1840s—and none of them had anything to do with newspapers, magazines, radio, film, or television, though the phrase “mass media” has circulated in popular American parlance since the 1920s.

Instead, “media” is listed in the *OED* as a biological term denoting the middle membrane of an artery, while in phonetics it refers to a soft mute sound, such as in the consonants “b”, “g”, or “d”. The third definition is simply as the plural of the noun “medium”. On this view, iron bars or pools of water or even table tappers could be described as being “media” for sounds, waves, or disembodied spirits.

Today “media” is such a common (and sometimes abused) currency that we all know—or think we know—what we mean by it. Let’s explore different aspects of what by now we call “the media”, especially in their relationship to technology as vehicles or platforms for education. . . .

### **When Is Technology a Tool? When a Crutch? The Role of Technology in Education**

During the course of history, advances in technology have typically been accompanied by stern warnings about their false promises and dangers to our physical or mental health. Listen only to the words of Thamus, legendary king of Thebes, who according to Socrates had this to say to the divine Theuth when the Egyptian god presented the king with a new technology for recording events and memories called



“writing”.

“If men learn this,” exclaimed the king, “it will impart forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder.”

“And it is no true wisdom that you offer your disciples,” he went on, “but only its semblance, for by telling them of many things without teaching them you will make them seem to know much, while for the most part they know nothing, and as men filled, not with wisdom, but with the conceit of wisdom, they will be a burden to their fellows.” [Plato, *Phaedrus*, 275a-b]



Similar outcries during the Renaissance were launched against the printing press, and in more recent times we have heard laments about the corrosive effects on our language of the tape recorder, the typewriter, the word processor, spell check, and now email and Twitter and AAA — the Age of Acronyms and Abbreviations. A modern-day Cassandra might well tweet, “OMG. How un42n8!”

Thamus’ words of caution did not prevent writing from becoming an increasingly widespread tool, first among priests and scholars and by now in the pudgy hands of every eager first grader. No elementary school teacher would wish it otherwise.

And yet there is prescience in Thamus’ warning. Our powers of memory today, it would seem, are no match for those of the Ancient Greek bards, who we are told could recite Homer’s epic poems by heart, hours at a time. And I hear high school teachers say they can tell by its tone and fluency whether a student’s essay was hand-written or composed on a keyboard.

Do I wish to imply that we should roll back the teaching of writing or extend “Screen-Free Week” to all electronic communication? No. (How, after all, could I expect you to be reading this article, if I did?) Rather, my point is to suggest that Socrates’ cautionary tale hints at an aspect of technology we may be

prone to overlook.

As the root meanings of the word suggest, technology [Gr. *techne*, “tool” and “way, means”] implies something about instruments, on the one hand, and something about ways to use them, on the other. Now, before you can make use of a tool, you need first to develop a measure of skill to carry out on your own the physical or mental deed that the tool is intended to make easier. Don’t give toddlers a hammer, for example, until they have mastered some level of skill at hitting things accurately. Keep calculators away from children until they have acquired some proficiency in arithmetic operations. In the first case, youngsters need to build up physical muscle before a hammer can serve as a useful (rather than as a recklessly destructive) tool; in the second case, children need to build up “spiritual muscle”—say, through mental math—before a calculator can function as a useful aid to intellectual operations rather than as a substitute for them.

Herein lies the key: give a child a tool early on in life, and it will supplant the very skill it was intended to supplement. In other words, tools become prosthetics, or crutches, if introduced too soon. Their use also tends to become addictive.

The same case can be made about any piece of technology, to the degree that it enhances a human skill or way of doing something. Electronic media are no exception. The fundamental questions remain the same:

1. Which human skill are these electronic “tools” designed to assist or even mimic?
2. At which age will children have developed these skills sufficiently so that these “tools” can serve rather than subvert them?

Let’s take television, perhaps one of the more controversial examples. Television mimics the human ability to create pictures. According to Rudolf Steiner, children learn to think by inwardly creating mental pictures and mental images. If pictures are outwardly supplied ready made, they rob the child of the opportunity to build the “imaginative muscle” needed to become independent thinkers. Since the ability to think unfolds gradually, the age at which children can benefit from television, rather than become slaves to it, will vary. A general guideline, though, will be: the later, the better, recognizing that we cannot shut off our children from all exposure to these kinds of tool.

Indeed, Rudolf Steiner cautions against banning tools of technology outright. In a lecture given shortly after the outbreak of World War I [“Technology and Art”, Dornach 28 December 1914], he declared: “It would be the worst possible mistake to say that we should resist what technology has brought into modern life, that we should protect ourselves . . . by cutting ourselves off from modern life. In a certain sense this would be *spiritual cowardice*.” [emphasis added]

Instead, Steiner goes on to say, the more we expose ourselves to technology (rather than flee from it), the more we need to strengthen in ourselves—for instance, through the arts— precisely those human capacities that technology mimics or supplements.

In our present time, attention is turning to the appropriate use of computers in schools. Paradoxically, we read about kindergarten teachers who are encouraging the use of computers and tweeting in preschool while some university professors are banning them outright from their lectures and seminars. In this hotly contested field of enquiry, the same questions suggested above can be posed:

1. Which human skills does the computer mimic or supplement?
2. At which age will children have developed these skills sufficiently so that the computer can assist

rather than hijack them?

### **The first question: Which human skills does the computer mimic or supplement?**

It is tempting to think of the computer as a fancy calculator or stern grammarian, and for many people (myself included) this device does indeed serve these functions. But what makes the computer distinctive from other technological devices is its ability to *simulate human experience*. In fact, as one respondent suggested, we should rename the computer “the simulator” in recognition of the tremendous benefits that the computer has wrought in our culture, especially in the fields of engineering, medicine, and—yes—entertainment and even broadcasting.



Computer models allow us to test new engines, fly new airplanes, try out new drugs without even creating them in the physical world. Using virtual models, we are able to experiment with new designs and simulate their effects. By the same token, every weather map you see on the evening newscast and just about every vehicle or building you see get blown up in a scene of a so-called “action movie” these days is some kind of computer simulation. If you have remained seated in the cinema long enough for the end of the credits, you will know just how many people work on a film’s computerized “FX”.

So, what’s the problem with that? The problem is the same as for all examples of technology. It’s great when it *supplements* a skill you have already developed, and it’s not so great when it *supplants* it. If you have mastered some drawings of projective geometry, the computer can enhance your understanding and appreciation of this mind-bending subject through models of geometric forms set whirling in simulated motion. But in teaching this subject, I would never wish my students to work with these simulations until they had first achieved a measure of skill in making their own drawings. It’s the difference between listening to a recording of music you don’t know and listening to a recording in which a skilled soloist plays precisely the piece you have struggled for months to play for yourself. The recording is all the more thrilling if it supplements your own experience rather than replacing it.

There, then, is the first point: the computer supplies us with a virtual experience that can serve to supplement our actual, that is to say *lived*, experience. The mischief—including, I would suggest, the beginning of addiction—begins when the computer supplants it.

Virtual experience is of a different order of being than lived experience. It is like an advertisement for a loaf of bread: the promise—but not the delivery—of nourishment. If anything, the image will stir the craving but not, of itself, relieve it.

### **The second question: At which age will children have developed these skills sufficiently so**

## that the computer can assist rather than hijack them?

If we can recognize the specific genius of the computer as being its ability to simulate human experience, then (at least in an abstract way) we have already answered the second question. The child will be ready to benefit from simulated experience to the degree it has already engaged in its own lived experience.

But here's the rub: who is willing—or even able—to withhold the computer from children for that long? As one set of parents reported in response to our questions, the more they try to keep the computer from their children, the more they run after it. So we need an alternative approach.

Here's one. Let's ask a practical question: what are children *not* doing while engaged with the computer that otherwise they might be doing? Three things come to mind:

1. They are not *moving*
2. They are not *creating their own mental pictures*
3. They are not *engaged in lived experience*

Empirically, we know that children need to exercise all three of these capabilities if they are to enjoy a healthy physical, emotional, and spiritual life, both in childhood and later in adult life. In the context of Waldorf education, we know that all three of these exercises involve the child's developing sense of self, or "I". When the child's "I" is engaged, the child will develop healthily; when the "I" is not engaged, the child will not mature.



Empirical studies show that the "I" is most engaged when the child is stirred to physical movement (especially in the preschool years), when it is inspired to create mental pictures (especially during the grade school years), and when it is motivated to embrace self-directed lived experience (especially in high school and in the years that follow). To the degree, then, that children spend their time on the computer at the expense of exercising these three capacities, to this same degree their caretakers—that is, we as their parents and teachers—need to provide all the more opportunities to develop them.

A ratio of computer time to movement time; a ratio of computer time to mental creativity time; a ratio of virtual computer experience to lived experience needs to be calculated — perhaps negotiated and modified, as the child gets older. The key point, though, is that movement, mental creativity, and lived experience are "front loaded", so to speak. *First the real, then the simulated, or e-real.*

Otherwise, the child will run the risk of growing up without the full involvement of its "I" or ego. And when ego is treated as e-go, in time it will be e-gone.

*This article originally appeared in Center & Periphery: A quarterly online newsletter of the Center for Anthroposophy. [www.centerforanthroposophy.org](http://www.centerforanthroposophy.org)*

About the author: Douglas Gerwin is the Director of the Center for Anthroposophy and Co-Director of the Research Institute for Waldorf Education, and has taught history, literature, German, music, and life science at the Waldorf high school level since 1983. He presently divides his time between adult education and teaching in various North American Waldorf schools. Douglas is the founder of the Waldorf High School Teacher Education Program at the Center for Anthroposophy and editor of several books related to Waldorf education.

Notes about the images and the title “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice” -Ed.

The images are from “Fantasia” by Walt Disney and from Goethe’s “Der Zauberlehrling.” The Sorcerer’s Apprentice (German: Der Zauberlehrling) is a poem by Goethe, written in 1797. The poem is a ballad in fourteen stanzas. The poem begins as an old sorcerer departs his workshop, leaving his apprentice with chores to perform. Tired of fetching water by pail, the apprentice enchants a broom to do the work for him — using magic in which he is not yet fully trained. The floor is soon awash with water, and the apprentice realizes that he cannot stop the broom because he does not know how.

Not knowing how to control the enchanted broom, the apprentice splits it in two with an axe, but each of the pieces becomes a new broom and takes up a pail and continues fetching water, now at twice the speed. When all seems lost, the old sorcerer returns, quickly breaks the spell and saves the day. The poem finishes with the old sorcerer’s statement that powerful spirits should only be called by the master himself.

Der Zauberlehrling is well known in the German-speaking world. The lines in which the apprentice implores the returning sorcerer to help him with the mess he has created have turned into a cliché, especially the line Die Geister, die ich rief (“The spirits that I called”), a garbled version of one of Goethe’s lines, which is often used to describe a situation where somebody summons help or uses allies that he cannot control, especially in politics.

Fantasia, the animated dialogue-free 1940 Disney film Fantasia popularized the story from Goethe’s poem, and the Paul Dukas symphonic poem based on it, in one of eight animated shorts in Fantasia based on classical music. In the piece, which retains the title “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” Mickey Mouse plays the apprentice, and the story follows Goethe’s original closely, except that the sorcerer (“Yen Sid”, or Disney backwards) is stern and angry with his apprentice when he saves him. Fantasia popularized Goethe’s story to a worldwide audience. The segment proved so popular that it was repeated, in its original form, in the sequel Fantasia 2000.

Some versions of the tale differ from Goethe’s, and in some versions the sorcerer is angry at the apprentice and in some even expels the apprentice for causing the mess. In other versions, the sorcerer is a bit amused at the apprentice and he simply chides him. The sorcerer’s anger with the apprentice, which appears in both the Greek Philopseudes and the film Fantasia, does not appear in Goethe’s Der Zauberlehrling.

## Appendix A

### Little Siesta for Seahorse Nursery students

Until 2:30 Monday-Thursday \$12 per day drop-in or:

\$160 per month, in advance for Monday-Thursday

\$120 per month, in advance for 3 scheduled days each week.

\$ 80 per month, in advance for 2 scheduled days each week.

\$ 40 per month, in advance, for 1 scheduled days each week.

### Little Siesta for Sandpiper VPK and Starfish Kindergarten

Until 2:15pm Monday-Thursday \$10 per day drop-in or:

\$128 per month, in advance, for Monday-Thursday

\$ 96 per month, in advance, for 3 scheduled days each week.

\$ 64 per month, in advance, for 2 scheduled days each week.

\$ 32 per month, in advance, for 1 scheduled days each week.

### Aftercare for Early Childhood and Grades students

Until 4:30pm Monday-Thursday \$14 per day drop-in or:

\$192 per month, in advance, for Monday-Thursday

\$144 per month, in advance, for 3 scheduled days each week.

\$ 96 per month, in advance, for 2 scheduled days each week.

\$ 48 per month, in advance, for 1 scheduled days each week.

If you are interested in customized care, including care beyond 4:30, please notify the office. If possible, your request will be accommodated and priced accordingly.

