

# Family Handbook

2023-24

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Dear COFS Families,

We are thrilled that you have chosen City of Fountains School for your child's education, and we are delighted to have you a part of our community.

We value your partnership in the education of your children in the ways we work together to foster a community based on mutual respect and the willingness to support the developmental understanding that underlies all education based on Waldorf pedagogy.

We believe that the parents who send their children to this school are committed, talented, and generous, and we encourage you to find just the right way to bring your energy and talents to get involved with our growing school. We hope you find supporting the school rewarding, as you become part of our dynamic community.

In addition to this Family Handbook, your school website – [cityoffountainsschool.org](http://cityoffountainsschool.org) – is a valuable resource, as well as our bi-weekly *Wellspring* newsletter. We encourage you to refer to each of these resources regularly for our current school calendar and other information.

We look forward to another wonderful year!

*City of Fountains Faculty and Staff*

## **Purpose of this Handbook**

The Family Handbook is intended to provide you with useful information regarding the school's philosophy and curriculum, parent involvement, governance and administration, and overall policies and procedures. We aim to build integrity, trust and respect among all members of our school community. As we continue to develop and progress, we encourage your input and invite you to reach out with questions, observations, and suggestions as we work towards an ever-stronger City of Fountains School community.

We hope this handbook will be a useful companion for your years at City of Fountains School. We value your partnership in the education of your children in the ways we work together to foster a community based on mutual respect and the willingness to support the developmental understanding that underlies all of Waldorf-inspired education.

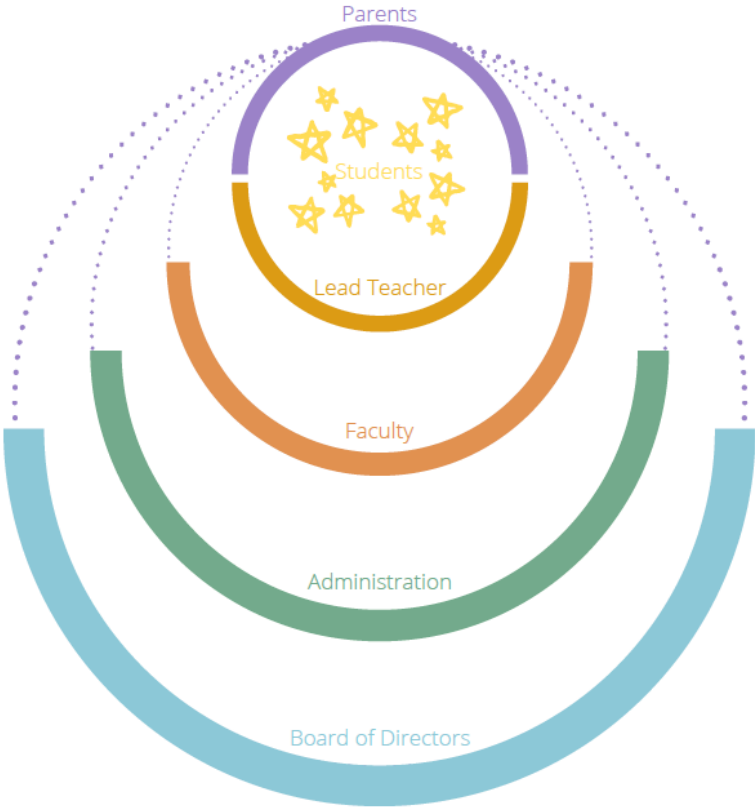
# School Organization

As is customary in Waldorf schools, City of Fountains School does not have a traditional hierarchical structure. Instead, it is governed by a three-fold structure composed of three realms: Board of Directors, which is responsible for legal and financial matters, the Faculty, which is responsible for pedagogical matters, and Administration, accountable for the day-to-day running of the school and business matters. Working hand-in-hand with parents and Lead Teachers, each realm holds as its shared priority the well-being of the children.

Decisions regarding the policies and procedures are not made by a central figure (i.e., principal), but by appropriate groups such as the College of Teachers, Administration or a designated committee. Decisions emerge from a process of discussion and consensus, based upon respectful communication among relevant school groups.

## Collaborative Governance Model

Creatively depicted in the graphic below, you'll see our governance model is structured to embrace collaboration and, most importantly, our students. The Parents and Lead Teacher form a first circle around the students – these two groups are very much at the center, as well, being supported along with the students. Parents remain connected to each of the realms, the Board, Administration and Faculty, as they play an integral part in creating a healthy, well-functioning school.



## **Faculty**

The Faculty is responsible for carrying and implementing the pedagogical aspects of the school, as well as nurturing its spiritual life. Working directly with the children and parents, Faculty members oversee the day-to-day activities of the classrooms, develop the curriculum and create many of the school's festivals. The Faculty meets weekly with Administration to make pedagogical decisions including hiring, programs and professional development, in addition to discussing matters relating to student life. We strive to offer our Faculty the opportunity for continuous growth and development through monthly anthroposophy study meetings as well as mentorship, training and evaluation.

## **Administration**

Our administrative staff brings support and oversight to a wide range of business and operation matters. The Administration carries out the necessary day-to-day business activities of coordinating and operating an organization. Our administrative staff is composed of four roles: School Administrator, Business Manager, Communications Coordinator, and Administrative Assistant. These positions strive to serve the needs of the faculty, parents and students.

## **Board of Directors**

The Board provides supportive oversight to all other realms of the school. This body is responsible for the legal, strategic planning, budget approval, fundraising, leadership and risk management oversight matters of the school.

This group, composed of COFS parents, staff and community members, meets bi-monthly to carry out the functions of budget review/approval, fundraising, and site planning and development. The Board takes input from the other two governing realms to approve budget and establish policies and procedures.

## **College of Teachers**

The college energetically supports the work that the faculty does in holding the school, understanding Waldorf pedagogy, anthroposophical knowledge and an engaged spiritual life.

The tasks of the College are threefold:

- Energetically hold, behold, and be a resource for the school
- Offer community for sharing and exploring anthroposophical understanding and support of spiritual development (self development for world development/self development for school development)
- Tend to the tasks of its ownership, such as:
  - Parent Resolution meetings

- Teacher evaluations and mentorships
- Consultation on matters of pedagogy and curriculum development

### **Parent Association**

The Parents, through the Parent Association and as individuals, support the school in many ways, including fundraising, nurturing and supporting new school families and fostering enthusiastic volunteer efforts. As a parent of a child enrolled at COFS, you are automatically a member of the Parent Association, which provides vital support to the operation of the school. The Parent Association gives our parent body a voice, and is responsible for offering input, support, ideas and enthusiasm for the purpose of creating a healthy, well-functioning school and community. Your ideas and participation are impactful and necessary to our community. The Parent Association is composed of a Chair (or two co-chairs) and class representatives from each class. If you would like to be a parent representative for your child's class, please inform administration or your child's teacher. To join or inquire about the Parent Association email [parents@cityoffountainsschool.org](mailto:parents@cityoffountainsschool.org)



## Programs

### Early Childhood

#### Parent/Child

Our Parent/Child program is designed to introduce young children, from birth through age 3, and their parents into a nurturing, Waldorf-inspired environment. The day consists of a gentle daily rhythm including free play, snack, circle time and arts and crafts. For 2023-24 Fall and Spring semesters, the Parent/Child class will meet outdoors at Cave Springs Park at 8701 E Gregory Blvd in Raytown, MO.

The Parent/Child class meets Tuesday- Thursday 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. You may choose which day(s) to attend. Here is a sample daily rhythm for this class:

9:00	Meet and greet
9:15	Free play and purposeful work
10:00	Circle
10:15	Snack
10:45	Nature hike and/or child's craft
11:15	Puppet play
11:30	Goodbyes

#### Kindergarten

Our mixed-ages Kindergarten classes are a gentle, home-like environment in which children are given the opportunity to learn and play through purposeful activity. Reverence is held for both the natural world and the natural unfolding of the child. The day is structured in a rhythmic movement that engages head, heart and hands.

The Kindergarten classes meet on campus Monday through Thursday/Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and students can be enrolled from one to five days per week. Here is a sample daily rhythm for the class:

9:00	Outdoor arrival and play
9:30	Morning Movement & Games
10:00	Free play
10:50	Snack
11:20	Artistic and purposeful work
12:10	Storytelling
12:40	Lunch

### Extended Care

For students in the Kindergarten program who need to stay past 1 p.m., the school offers an Extended Care program until 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. This program provides a nurturing environment for children that includes time for rest, stories, creative and active play.

### Grades

#### Philosophy & Approach

Students in the Grades program experience a wealth of age-appropriate, interdisciplinary subject matter. All teachers, whether Lead or Specialty, strive to awaken the enthusiasm and love of learning within each student through lively lessons and academic experiences. Beginning in Grade 1, all students explore the essential subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and sciences. These subjects are presented to students in blocks that span multiple weeks, as further explained in the Main Lessons section below.

## Grades Curriculum

<p>Grade 1</p> <p>Introduction to alphabet through images, stories and sound symbols, vocabulary development with poetry and stories, fairy tales and folktales, form drawing; whole numbers, four processes, counting/skip counting, Roman numerals; nature study through observation</p>
<p>Grade 2</p> <p>Fables, helpers for humanity, and legends of saints from around the globe, daily dictation, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure, poetry; place value, carrying and borrowing, four basic operations, multiplication table; nature studies, Native American legends</p>
<p>Grade 3</p> <p>Grammar, independent story writing, weekly dictation, reading, cursive handwriting, composition, form drawing; introduction to measurements, multiplication table, division; gardening and farming; shelters, clothing, ancient myths and cultures</p>
<p>Grade 4</p> <p>Composition, grammar, dictionary work, reading; cardinal directions, local geography, map making; fractions, decimals; mythology and sagas</p>
<p>Grade 5</p> <p>Grammar, weekly dictation, memorization of lines and actions for class play; arithmetic, decimals, ratios and proportions, freehand geometry; botany; North American geography; Ancient civilizations and mythologies</p>
<p>Grade 6</p> <p>Independent narrative writing, weekly dictation, book reports and research papers; Ancient Rome through the Middle Ages; geometry; mineralogy, astronomy, physics; North and South America geography</p> <hr/>
<p>Grade 7</p> <p>Creative writing; pre-algebra; perspective drawing; Age of Discovery, Late Middle Ages, the Reformation; physics, chemistry, human anatomy; World geography</p>
<p>Grade 8</p> <p>Elements of a short story, biographies, Shakespeare; American History; algebra, 3D geometry; portraiture, elements and principles of design; cyber civics</p>

## Sample Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8:30 - 9:00	Welcome/ Warm Up			
9:00 - 9:40	Handwork	Creative Time	Handwork	Creative Time
9:40-10:20	Snack/Walk	Snack/Walk	Snack/Walk	Snack/Walk
10:20-11:00	Main Lesson			
11:00-11:40				
11:40-12:00	Lunch			
12:00-12:40	Recess			
12:40-1:20	Music	Foreign Language	Music	Foreign Language
1:20-2:00	Movement	Skills Class	Movement	Skills Class
2:00-2:40	Skills Class	Creative Time	Skills Class	Creative Time
2:40-2:55	Closing			

## Combined Classes

A combined class is a group of students from two separate grades who work within one classroom setting. The lead teacher develops the program using curriculum from both grades according to the needs of the students in the class.

For the 2023-24 school year, grades will be combined as such: 5/6 and 7/8.

## Main Lessons

Main Lessons are structured as concentrated subject work in three- to four-week blocks. A primary academic subject that is explored in depth and intellectual learning is combined with artistic, rhythmical and practical work. For instance, a class may have a Main Lesson on arithmetic for several weeks, then move on to language arts or science or geography.

Rather than using textbooks, students create their own main lesson books, in which they write and illustrate their own academic findings, gaining practice in handwriting, grammar, art and composition along the way.

## Specialty Subjects

- **Foreign Language**
  - Educators and parents alike understand the clear benefit of language study. Our dedicated Foreign Language Program offers Grades students the opportunity to take

weekly lessons focused on a sole language. This year, students will receive an immersive Spanish experience in line with Waldorf pedagogy. The intention of this program is to develop a positive attitude toward people of other languages, cultures and countries and to encourage the development of human understanding. The goal of our program at this time is not to ensure language fluency.

- **Handwork**

- In Handwork classes, students are taught a variety of skills including how to knit, crochet, hand sew, wool felt, and weave. Older students gain experience in woodworking, machine sewing and embroidery. The curriculum cultivates manual dexterity and fine motor movement, thereby furthering cognitive development and strengthening the soul life. These skills are integrated at all grades levels.

- **Movement**

- Moving and playing games together enables students to move fully, know who they are and enter into a more healthy relationship with the world and its requirements. As the body moves becoming stronger and more agile, so does the mind reflexively become more creative and flexible, able to form stronger mental images.

Movement-classes are joyful and fun. They engage students in a variety of modalities of movement that build a greater awareness of and intentionality with their body and self. They encourage a deeper connection to the realm of outer-awareness to others and the world at large.

In class, students participate in activities such as Zoo exercises, bean bag and racquetball games, jump rope, hand claps, cooperative and competitive group games, pentathlon training, folk dance, and improvisation.

- **Physical Education**

- In middle school, the focus on movement shifts into P.E. classes to meet the developmental needs of adolescence. We emphasize activities that empower students' self-discipline, team collaboration and coordination, and healthy sense of competition. We provide them with an experience of Intramural group sports, running, fitness & calisthenics.

- **Music**

- Singing together is an integral aspect of Waldorf education. Teachers sing with students throughout the school day, from morning to main lesson to music specialty classes. Music nourishes the developing emotional and soul life of middle childhood and strengthen capacities that stretch into academics such as listening, identifying tone/mood, rhythm, mathematical patterns, and more. Along with singing, students learn

to play pentatonic and diatonic flutes, recorder and stringed instruments (violin, viola, cello) through the span of 1st through 8th grades.

- **Art**

- For younger grades, artistic activities take place as part of the main lesson experience. For upper grades, art also becomes a rotating specialty block taught by either the lead teacher or a specialty subject teacher. Through these art experiences, students will learn skills in wet-on-wet and wet-on-dry watercolor painting, form drawing, a variety of drawing techniques, beeswax and clay modeling, and printmaking.

- **Outdoor / Nature**

- Coming to understand our interbeing with all that surrounds us requires open and intimate interaction with the natural world. This reverential relationship is a pillar of Waldorf Education that reaches within the confines of the classroom and our outside environment, both at school and in the local community. In order to draw students into a more focused realm of observation and interaction with nature, lead teachers engage their classes in gardening, and outdoor school projects/lessons as part of a main lesson block, or take the occasional field trip.

During seven Outdoor Days each year, students are given a full school day to freely play with their peers at one of several local nature reserves or city parks. Curriculum is not on the agenda these days, rather the focus is on allowing time for exploration that invites wonder, curiosity and interest in nature. You will learn more about the current school year's Outdoor Days from your child's Lead Teacher, including where they will take place and what to prepare. Dates are included on our school calendar. Outdoor Days have their own cancellation policy that will be communicated at the start of the school year.

## **Enrichment**

This once-a-week program takes place on Fridays and offers homeschool families a sample of education inspired by Waldorf philosophy. Separated into lower, middle, and upper grades, the classes follow a daily rhythm including circle games, verses, music, and movement, with main lessons and daily outdoor time to follow.

Grades students also have the opportunity to enroll in this class to create a 5-day school week.

## School Life

### Start & End of School Times

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
PARENT/ CHILD		9:00 to 11:30 a.m.	9:00 to 11:30 a.m.	9:00 to 11:30 a.m.	
KINDERGARTEN	9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
EXTENDED CARE	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	
GRADES 1-8	8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	
ENRICHMENT					9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

When you bring your child to school in the morning, we ask that you say your farewells at the designated drop-off location. We will be aware of receiving each child to ease the transition to school.

Please arrive early enough to allow your child time to settle into the start of the day. If your child is in the Grades program, your lead teacher will provide you with a detailed schedule of your child's day. A tardy student will need to check-in in the administrator's office before entering the class. The children will be dismissed from their designated pick-up location at the end of each school day.

Please be mindful of your presence when awaiting dismissal. Some students are easily distracted when they see parents or siblings peering into the classroom windows. This creates a disruption for the class and teacher. Please wait in your vehicle until pick-up time.

*\*Please familiarize yourself with the arrival and dismissal details in the Welcome email shared by your child's teacher.*

### Additional Authorized Persons to Pick-up your Child

Occasionally it may be necessary to enlist the help of someone to pick up your child from school. For

your child's safety, we ask that you follow these steps:

1. At the beginning of the year please list the name and contact information of anyone that will be picking up your child on a regular basis in your BigSIS Parent Portal.
2. Inform your child's teacher of the full name of the person picking up your child prior to pick up.
3. Please have any adult who is picking up your child introduce themselves to the teacher and ask for the child by name so we can become familiar with your child's other caregivers. Please let them know that their I.D. will be asked to be seen.

### **Parking**

City of Fountains is a neighborhood school. Please be mindful and respectful of our neighbors and park in the parking lot just south of the building (across from 74th St) if you will be walking your children to school. Please do not park on the western side of the building along Washington street by the ramp as this tears-up the sidewalk. This area is marked as Disabled Parking only. Please refrain from parking along 74th street as this creates blind spots for drivers coming down the street, thus endangering pedestrians.

### **Dress Code**

Our day is centered on multiple opportunities for highly-engaged movement both indoors and outdoors, and in nearly all weather conditions. Our top priority with clothing is that children have safe and comfortable freedom of movement throughout the day. We respect the diversity of tastes, cultures and values expressed through clothing choices and ask that these choices support creating a safe and focused learning environment.

Please keep in mind when dressing your child (or suggesting clothing options for older children) that students will also be watercolor painting, engaging in other artistic mediums, and baking throughout the year. If concerned, send a labeled apron or oversized shirt for your child that can be kept at school. Watercolor stains may not wash out of clothing.

*We ask that:*

- I. Clothing choices suitably reflect the level of activity within our day.
  - Soft, relaxed-fit clothing that easily allows for both vigorous activities (such as climbing, running and jumping rope) and rest should be worn.
  - Outdoor and indoor shoes should be safe, supportive and suitable for the weather.
  - Securely fitting shoes, such as plain low-top, lace-up canvas sneakers are recommended.
  - Lightweight indoor shoes may be worn and left at school for ease of use.
  - For Early Childhood students, please select shoes for school that your child can easily take on and off without assistance.



- In the case of our youngest students, clothing must be able to be manipulated easily and independently, particularly when using the bathroom.
2. Children are dressed appropriately for all kinds of weather.
    - With cooler weather, layers are required so that children may remove and put on clothing according to outside temperatures and level of activity.
    - Shoes are supportive and weather appropriate.
    - Autumn/Winter gear includes (but is not limited to) rain pants, rain coats, rain boots, winter gloves and hats, scarves and a winter coat.
  3. Clothing choices support a simple and focused learning environment that allows children to explore their innate creativity.
    - Any media-inspired clothing, backpacks, lunchboxes and other items are considered a distraction to the carefully planned mood of the classroom and are avoided.
    - Clothing (tops and bottoms) must cover areas from one armpit across to the other armpit, down to approximately a 3 to 4 inch inseam.
    - Tops must have shoulder straps.
    - See-through or mesh garments must have appropriate coverage underneath. Please avoid large rips or holes in clothing.

### Physical Education

Upper grades students (grades 5th-8th) will attend physical education classes. They are expected to wear appropriate exercise clothing with tennis shoes on these days. Students may bring clothes to change into, or wear athletic clothing to school. If a student repeatedly forgets to dress appropriately, then they will be asked to bring an outfit to leave at school for the week. All clothes will be sent home over the weekend to be washed.

The right clothing provides comfort for all levels and varieties of activity, reduces the risk of injury and boosts confidence.

- See Dress Code Section above. Recommended clothing for Physical Education class includes shorts, t-shirts, exercise pants, sweat pants, light hoodie and/or jacket.
- We highly recommend investing in a good pair of cross-trainers. Different types of tennis shoes are designed for specific sports and activities, and cross-trainers have the versatility that will meet your student's needs for P.E. Wearing casual sneakers or activity-specific shoes might increase the risk of injury.

These guidelines may not cover all situations in which dress or appearance is an issue. Teachers may feel they need to discuss particular attire with a student and his/her parents. Please feel free to contact your student's teacher about specific articles of clothing or related concerns.

#### Outdoor Wear & Required Outdoor Gear

Outdoor activity and play is an integral part of education. All children go outside every day, weather permitting. Time outdoors is shortened if temperatures are above 95° or below freezing. Temperatures below 60 are considered too chilly to be outdoors with bare feet and short sleeves. Please ensure your child is dressed in layers so that they may enjoy their time outdoors.

If you would like your child to wear sunblock lotion please apply it to your child in the morning before class begins.

The following is a list of outdoor gear we require all students to have available for regular use:

- Coats
  - Spring/Fall jacket (fleece, hoodies and/or windbreaker), raincoat, heavy winter coat
- Pants
  - Rain pants, snow pants
- Shoes
  - Rain/mud boots, winter boots, sneakers (designated for outdoor use)
- Accessories
  - Hats (winter and sun hats), mittens or waterproof gloves in the winter, scarf

#### **Backpacks**

We recommend that all children bring a backpack with them to school. It should include the following:

- A bag clearly labeled with your child's name that contains a full change of clothing (please include underwear and socks). Wet/ dirty clothes will be sent home in this bag.
- A pair of gym shoes. If the opportunity to play in the gym arises, the wooden floors are too slippery for socks or slippers.

Please check backpacks frequently to ensure seasonally appropriate clean clothing is available for your child.

### **Items from home**

Please keep the following items at home: gum, candy, toys (including fidgets), money, jewelry, stickers, stuffed animals, watches, dress-up clothes and live animals. If your child has a particular item that they must have with them, please discuss it with your lead teacher prior to bringing it to school.

### **Snacks and Lunch**

A wholesome snack is served daily in the Early Childhood programs. Please communicate with your child's teacher regarding any dietary restrictions that your child may have.

Lunch will be eaten in Kindergarten, Grades and Enrichment classes during school hours. Please pack your child a nutritious lunch, along with any necessary silverware they may need, in a reusable container. Please refrain from sending candy for your child's snack or lunch. It is important that your child has a full water bottle each day.

You are encouraged to use reusable containers to help cut back on the amount of trash generated.

**Our school takes food allergies seriously. If there are food allergies present within a class, you will be notified by your child's lead teachers, as well as any pertinent information about how these allergies are being handled. Due to the limited amount of cross-class exposure at meal times, and the wide variety of allergies within the school, we do not feel it is necessary at this time to require the entire student body to avoid them.**

### **Student Conduct**

Our school primarily uses strong rhythm to establish good behavior within the classroom. With a strong rhythm, children know what to expect and then behave appropriately. It is our intention to strengthen the teacher/child relationship so that mutual respect arises, building within the child the reverence and desire to listen to their teacher.

At COFS, we do not permit running in our classrooms, halls, the church halls and or on the outdoor ramp. Climbing on the little library, fences, the railings, or the church walls is prohibited.

Teachers may add additional developmentally appropriate expectations for their specific classroom. These will be communicated to their families during class meetings or in Welcome letters. Any questions or concerns should be addressed directly to your lead teacher.

## **Discipline**

Our school considers the whole child during the education journey, and this is true in the area of discipline as well. Teachers handle situations based on the individual student's development. Teachers realize there is a normal range of behaviors that are monitored in the classroom. However, there are some circumstances when a disturbance of the cooperative and respectful environment in the classroom will lead teachers to intervene. Strategies for discipline include, but are not limited to, mild redirection or separation from the rest of the class.

In an instance when a child needs to be removed from the classroom, they will be sent to sit with the school administrator or another adult until they have "found their peace". If this happens repeatedly, the teacher will contact the guardian to discuss the circumstances and potential action moving forward.

If it is found that a student's conduct poses a threat to his or her own well-being, or to the well-being of the classroom, a guardian will be called to take the child home. If a guardian is called to take their child home, they are to arrive in a timely manner.

We place a high value on each child's developing sense of community in which all students can thrive within our curriculum, and also in the realm of human relationships. If a child continually shows distress through aggressive (or disruptive) behavior, the teacher will meet with the guardians to gain an understanding of the child and of what may be causing the problems. The teacher may recommend changes in the child's routine or consultation with experts in child development. If the distress continues, the child will be given a 6-week probation period with specific written expectations. This is long enough to show improvement. It may also be decided that another setting would be more helpful for both the child and the school. In the last resort, if it is found necessary for the child to leave the school, the Teachers and staff will make the final decision. In extreme circumstances, the school reserves the right to suspend or expel a child immediately and without notice.

If parents or teachers have a concern during the school year, a convenient time will be set up to talk personally or by telephone. Stressful home situations usually have a bearing on your child's behavior at school. Please share any information you feel will help us understand your child's actions or distresses. We want to ensure that each child has a positive experience in our school.

## Festivals

Seasonal festivals are an integral part of school life within the Waldorf philosophy. These celebrations serve as special milestones in the passing year. Our festivals are an expression of reverence for the beauty found in the natural world. We look forward to festivals as an opportunity to build and strengthen our community, establish a yearly rhythm for the children and nourish our souls by sharing stories, food, songs and activities.

### Michaelmas | September/ October

We celebrate inner strength and courage at the “festival of strong will”. Dragons are a central theme of Michaelmas because St. Michael, who represents courage, is traditionally pictured subduing a dragon. The primary idea behind this celebration is to inspire children to face their own challenges – in other words, their internal and external dragons. Because Michaelmas falls near the equinox, it is commonly associated with the beginning of autumn. Michaelmas serves as an important reminder for students and parents alike to use courage through the colder, darker Winter months.

### Lantern Festival | November

While nature turns towards a time of darkness, we draw together knowing that summer’s radiance now glows within and, in gathering, grows brighter. We reach out to take care of each other, wishing to uphold a greater vision of humanity and the Earth.

What began with Michaelmas, the “Festival of Strength and Courage,” continues with the Lantern Festival. This “Festival of Good Will” celebrates the impulse of service and devotion to the Other, for the Greater Good. In years past, we have celebrated through the honoring of a man named St. Martin of Tours; but he is only one of many across time and globe who have lived in the spirit of Good Will. Many cultures and religions celebrate this time of caring for others and carrying the light into the darkness. In class, students will make their own lanterns, which will light the way as we walk together in the night.

### Spiral of Light | December

The Winter Spiral is a festival that is unique in our calendar of the year. There are no presentations by the grades, no speeches by the administration. Instead, we sit in silence in a darkened room, listening to instrumental music as a candle is lit in the center of a spiral of evergreen boughs, a symbol of life amidst the dead of winter. Then, as quiet music plays, each child in turn takes a candle into the center of that spiral and lights it, then places the candle in an apple along the path. The lights brighten the path for those who come after. Each child walks alone, at his or her own pace, in his or her own way. It is a celebration of quiet confidence, of carrying light in darkness, of sharing that light with others. It reflects Winter's darkness drawing to an end and the renewed promise that Spring light and life will begin again.

### Mayfest | May

We finish our school year with this springtime celebration, which typically takes place on the last day of classes. Flower crowns are created and adorn the children's heads, handmade jump ropes are spun, outdoor games are played and, of course, there's dancing around a Maypole. The mood is one of joyful gratitude for the school year at a close, and the rejuvenating interlude of summer.

### Midsummer Bonfire | June

We gather for a celebration linked to the summer solstice since ancient times, and widely celebrated across the world. For some it is also closely affiliated with the Feast of St. John the Baptist, cousin of Jesus and a wilderness prophet. St. John preached a message of *metanoia*, "a deep calling to change ourselves, our ways of being, ideally to serve others". His message is easily aligned with the symbolism of Midsummer bonfires- one of purification and amplification of the Light within. Our festival focuses on the levity and gaiety that the out-breath of summer brings, as well as our connection to each other that allows us to truly feel the warmth and power from above and within. Let the children feel their strength and fire. We reunite to enjoy the extended daylight of summer and spend the evening outdoors among friends.

## Parent Involvement & Community Life

*"The healthy social life is found when, in the mirror of each individual, the whole community is reflected, and when, in the community, the virtue of each individual is living."*

*- Rudolf Steiner*

Each person in our community brings unique gifts, and we are immensely grateful for the involvement of parents and families in school happenings. City of Fountains School relies heavily on the participation of all parents in fundraising and volunteer activities. Active parent involvement contributes greatly to the quality of each child's education.

This high level of family commitment builds a bridge between home and school, enriching and creating continuity in the lives of the children. Being a Waldorf parent can be demanding, but it is always a rewarding experience. Many families discover that participation in school events brings about new interests and friendships that extend beyond the school's walls and into the life of the community at large. While class meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and community meetings provide you with a source of information about the pedagogical background of the school, festivals and special events help connect us all and create community. Your involvement as a parent is essential to the successful operation, prosperity and future of our school.

Tuition accounts for the vast majority of our total operating budget; the remainder is raised through donations and special fundraising activities. As an independent school, we are ineligible for most government subsidies and grants. Our ability to make school improvements, buy additional materials, grow our programs, invest in experiences for our students and develop our teachers mostly rests on funds from non-tuition sources such as gifts, grants and fundraising.

We rely on our community members far more than other institutions for the things that enliven and deepen this education. We appreciate the difficulty that comes with this level of engagement, but the more our parents, faculty and administrative staff can participate in and support these efforts, the healthier we can be – financially and socially.

### **Volunteer Efforts\***

COFS has a heartfelt and invaluable volunteer effort that strengthens the community in many ways. The time and talent offered by our school families are the solid foundation that is needed to support our pioneering effort. Volunteers gain a sense of personal fulfillment and connection to our dynamic community, while our school becomes strengthened – financially and socially.

We are grateful to the many COFS families who dedicate hours volunteering for the school. Parents are required to dedicate a **minimum of ten (10) volunteer hours** per family per school year to maintain a healthy and strong community. There are several ways that community members can support our school, whether through commitment of time, financial support or talent.

### **Committees & Volunteer Efforts**

#### Parent Association & Class Representatives

See a description of the Parent Association in the School Organization section of the Handbook. The PA sends out regular email communications, holds monthly meetings, organizes teacher appreciation and community support efforts, and collaborates on fundraising events. To join or inquire about the Parent Association email [parents@cityoffountainsschool.org](mailto:parents@cityoffountainsschool.org).

The PA works closely with our Class Representatives. At the beginning of each year, the call is made for two parents from each class to volunteer for class representatives, who act as liaisons between the PA, the parent body, and the teachers. Each pair of Class Reps coordinate with their class teacher for what they could use assistance with to make the school year go more smoothly, such as creating sign-ups for laundry or fresh flowers, collecting props for a class play, gathering auction items for the Chili Night fundraiser, or emailing reminders to class events. Class Reps also help the PA with celebrations for Teacher Appreciation week. Signing up to be a Class Rep happens at Parent Orientation, or by

contacting the PA at the above email address.

### Fundraising

This is an official committee that meets on a regular basis throughout the year, but is also an effort that one can volunteer for as able. Volunteers participate in efforts that raise and collect money and services needed to carry out the mission of the school. Some of the duties and responsibilities of the fundraising committee:

- Assist with the planning of fundraising activities that include but are not limited to: Trivia Nights, Chilli Supper, Spring Soiree Benefit, and Why Cook? Nights
- School Photos
- Yearbook
- Contribute time and effort towards supporting the operations of the set goals, including committee meetings.
- Identify and recruit external community supporters for possible donations.
- Collaborate with administrative staff to market and advertise fundraising events to our school community.

### Outreach

While not an official committee, Outreach is an area where we seek and use parent help each year. With Outreach, volunteers positively impact enrollment, outreach, retention and marketing support for and within our school. This may be done in any of the following ways:

- Focusing on increasing the demand for an alternative school inspired by Waldorf education by getting the word out about City of Fountains through some, but not limited to, the following:
  - Increase social media presence
  - Design and distribute general school flyers, posters or brochures
  - School photography and maintaining photo organization.
  - Improving community engagement by building relationships within the school and the broader Kansas City area, representing the school at appropriate events (e.g., Waldo Fall Festival, Brookside Farmers' Market, City School Fair)
  - Work closely with the Fundraising committee to improve funding and donation sources by creating relationships within the local community.

### Outdoor Day Chaperones

Every class needs 1-2 parent chaperones for each Outdoor Day through the year: Sept. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 14, Mar. 14, Apr. 18, May 16. Parent volunteers assist the class teacher with watching the children throughout the day, taking small groups to the restroom, etc. More information will be available, and a chance to sign up, during our Parent Orientation. Parents may also volunteer by emailing their



child's class teacher.

## **Administrative Policies & Procedures**

### **Admission**

City of Fountains School allows participation in its activities, services, events and programs by persons of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

#### New Families:

After the start of the school year, admissions are limited to the following timelines:

- Parent-Child and Enrichment programs: Admittance all year
- Kindergarten through 7th grade: Admittance until Spring Break
- Combined 7th/8th grade: Admittance until second semester
- Stand-alone 8th grade: Admittance open through September

The admissions process begins when a parent or caregiver completes an inquiry through our BigSIS portal. As a part of the necessary steps in applying to our school, guardians will be invited to attend an Open House or school tour. Once families have toured, they will be invited to create a parent portal in BigSIS where they will find an application for each program they are interested in. There is a one-time \$75 application fee per family.

Once an application is received, it will be shared with the class teacher. Teachers will reach out to the families in order to schedule a phone call/ or meeting to discuss the child's academic journey. After this conversation has taken place and both parties are comfortable moving forward, a shadowing visit will be scheduled. This may vary in length depending on the child's age. It may be 2-3 days. Shadowing days are only for Grades 1-8 and Enrichment. Students applying for Kindergarten may be invited to join their prospective classes for recess so as not to disrupt the daily rhythm of the kindergarten. Families considering the PC may be invited to attend one class.

Once the school visits are complete and teachers have communicated with the families/ and or the administrator about the student's experience- a student may be invited to join the class. If there are any concerns that show up during the visit, these will be discussed with the faculty and they will determine if enrolling the student is in their best interest and that of the class as a whole.

\*\* If a class is full, families should still complete an inquiry form. They will still be required to come to an OH or school tour. The child will be added to the waiting pool, and will remain there until they are

admitted or choose to attend somewhere else.\*\*

### Returning Families:

Whether it is temporary or permanently, there may be several reasons why a family chooses to step away from our school. If the circumstances surrounding their departure have changed, a family may consider returning. In this situation, the family is encouraged to contact the school administrator: [admin@cityoffountainsschool.org](mailto:admin@cityoffountainsschool.org) in order to begin the process of a possible re-enrollment. All returning families must be in good financial standing with the school prior to re-enrollment.

### **Waiting Pool**

We maintain a waiting 'pool' rather than a list. Any application received after a class has reached maximum enrollment will be placed in the waiting pool. No child will be added to the waiting pool without first submitting an inquiry form and touring the school.

Should an opening arise, the wait pool applicant will be contacted. The child's name will remain in the waiting pool until either: the child is enrolled in a COFS program or an opening is offered and refused.

A wait pool applicant does not have a specific place in the wait pool, but will be offered an available space as determined by the lead teacher based on the class composition.

### **Probationary Enrollment**

New students are initially admitted for a trial period of up to four (4) weeks (or six (6) weeks if attending less than two days per week), during which both the family and school may review the student's progress and compatibility with the class. If the student withdraws or is asked to leave during this trial period for any reason, tuition and fees are due and payable up to and including the month of withdrawal.

City of Fountains School seeks to create a community of families, teachers and staff working together for the benefit of our children. We do not anticipate requesting that a child leave the school. Where a problem exists the teacher will meet with the family to discuss possible solutions, striving to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution.

While we strive to offer a warm & wholesome environment, it must be recognized that we are not able to provide individual therapy to children at this time. We recognize that while our programs can be supportive of a broad spectrum of developmental needs, we may not be able to meet the needs of every child. The school's probationary period exists to determine if an optimum learning environment can be

provided for each individual and for the class as a whole.

### **Withdrawal**

A family may choose to withdraw from COFS with or without cause before the start of the school year or anytime during the school year. The amount of tuition owed or refunded will be in accordance with the below withdrawal policy:

A written notice is required and must be given to the administrator one month prior to the student's withdrawal date. Tuition is due during the 30 days post-date of the written termination notice, regardless of the student's attendance to the school. The family will be charged or refunded for tuition based on an Aug-April payment schedule.

In order to receive a full refund or be released from all tuition obligations, a withdrawal notice must be given by July 1st. A withdrawal after July 1st will result in the parent being responsible for August tuition plus any additional months the student attended school including the 30 day written notice period.

If a child withdraws from the school, all materials purchased with affiliation fees will remain property of City of Fountains School.

### **Lost & Found**

We maintain a lost and found. Please notify a staff member if you believe your child has misplaced an item. At the end of each semester, unclaimed items are donated to a charitable organization.

### **Student Health & Wellbeing**

Maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our students is our highest priority.

#### **Hand Washing and Sanitizing**

We recognize the importance of frequent hand washing and the role it plays in controlling the spread of infectious disease. We provide education on proper hand washing techniques to all students.

#### **Health Station**

We will have a dedicated, private area indoors for students who fall ill during the school day. COFS does not currently have a school nurse on staff, however, as standard, our Faculty & Staff are certified in First Aid and CPR (including the use of an epi-pen) on a two year rotation. Any staff member who cares for unwell children will be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment and we will continue to follow the guidelines of the public health department.

### Air Filtration and Purification

Teachers use HEPA/ UV air filters and purifiers, circulate the air with fans, and open windows when weather permits.

### When To Keep Your Child at Home

A student should stay home or will be sent home from school when exhibiting any of the following symptoms:

1. Fever of 100 degrees or higher
2. Red eyes with whitish drainage
3. Undiagnosed rash
4. Vomiting
5. Diarrhea
6. Severe cold symptoms (cough and congestion)

Parents should not allow their child to return to school until the child has been free of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for a full 24 hours without medication.

Out of an abundance of caution, children who have moderate to severe food/environmental allergies and hold a prescription for an epi-pen will be sent home if exposed to their allergen at school.

It is vital that we continue to work in strong partnership with families on a daily basis to conduct health screens for each child. You are expected to be alert for signs of illness in your child prior to leaving for school and to keep them home when they are feeling unwell. Masking will be optional in all of our programs.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Maintaining a safe and healthy environment is a top priority at City of Fountains School.

#### Accidental Injury

In case of accidental injury requiring the aid of medical providers, we will immediately attempt to contact a parent.

#### Emergency Drills

We will practice emergency drills at the beginning of each school year and intermittently throughout the year. Our building is equipped with fire extinguishers and students will practice the route to safety. In the event of a tornado, students and teachers will take shelter in the basement of the church.

As a part of a training with the KCPD, we have designed and will regularly practice a plan for school intruders. This drill will be practiced among staff; not with the children. This is to protect their sense of safety and security at school as much as possible. The routes for exit in an intruder situation will mimic fire drill routes so that children are familiar with existing procedures no matter the actual circumstances.

### Child Abuse or Neglect

Should any teacher suspect possible child abuse or neglect, observations and dates must be documented. COFS staff must notify the Missouri Division of Family Services.

### Name and Info Change

Should any personal information need to be updated (i.e., address home or work phone, medical emergency information), please make changes through the BigSIS portal and notify administration as soon as possible so that we can keep abreast of current student information.

### Tuition

Monthly tuition plans are due on the 1st of the month, Aug-April. Please see all tuition payment plan options below.

Affiliation fees are due upon enrollment and are non-refundable after May 31st of the preceding the school year.

#### **\*Tuition payment plans & terms:**

All plans require online tuition billing through BigSis tuition management. A yearly fee will be assessed by BigSIS. It is per family. If you have multiple children it will only show up on the first child's agreement.

Annual Lump Sum tuition payment:

- 1 payment due Aug. 1st, 2023
- \$25/family fee assessed by BigSis- yearly

Semesterly tuition payments:

- 2 payments due Aug. 1st & Dec. 1st
- \$49/family fee assessed by BigSis- yearly

Monthly tuition payments:

- 9 payments Aug 1st.- April 1st
- \$49/family fee assessed by BigSis- yearly

#### **\*Parent/Child Sessions tuition plans & terms:**

- Annual Lump Sum (available to all)
  - 1 payment due Aug. 1st
  - \$25/family fee assessed by BigSis- yearly
- 2 payments (Fall & Winter session sign ups only)
  - 2 payments due Aug. 1st & Dec 1st
  - \$49/family fee assessed by BigSis- yearly
- 3 payments (Fall, Winter, and/or Spring session sign ups)

- 3 payments due Aug. 1st, Dec 1st, & March 1st of the Spring semester
- \$49/family fee assessed by BigSis- yearly

Tuition is collected by auto-draft on the first of the month. If there are not sufficient funds available in your account or your payment is returned for any reason you may be charged \$25. You will be notified of the outstanding balance and an auto-draft may be run again in the following days until payment is successful. If by the end of the month your account is still not settled and you have not made payment arrangements or disputed the charges, your account may incur a late fee of \$25. If your account continues to be delinquent for 60 days or more, your child(ren) will not be allowed to return to school until your account is up to date and you may be referred to Collections; at that time, there will be a collection fee of \$50 charged to the account.

All members of our school community are greatly valued and there may be a way to assist you through a difficult time.

### **Tuition Assistance**

Families in need of tuition assistance are invited to request a Tuition Assistance Form from the administrator or business manager. The form will be uploaded and made available through the parent portal in BigSIS. Families will be required to upload supporting documentation (W2s, tax returns).

Final contracting for families requesting Need-Based Financial Assistance will be completed following the Financial Award Committee review/decision. Need-Based Financial Assistance is awarded on a first come-first-served basis with a limited availability with **up to 50% being the maximum allowed discount.**

Families requesting Need-Based Financial Assistance **must** submit a yearly application.

### **Privacy**

The privacy of our students and staff is one of our top priorities at City of Fountains. We will not disclose any personal, medical, commercial, or educational information without prior written consent.

### **Weather-Related Closings**

Typically, we follow the Kansas City Public School District for closing school during inclement weather, which may be accessed through all major local news websites or television stations. We will not close for cold temperatures alone since we do not have students who solely rely upon walking, biking or riding a bus to school. Cancellations will be announced via email by 7 a.m., on the day in question.

If teachers decide the school needs to be closed early due to weather, you will be notified and teachers will remain at school until all children are received by parents.

An addendum on Outdoor Day Cancellations is being developed. It will be released to families soon after the start of the school year.



## **Family Life**

Families choose to enroll at City of Fountains School for many reasons. For some, it is their commitment to its educational philosophy and curriculum. For others, it is an attraction to the school community. There are even some who have said it was a heartfelt response to its beautiful classrooms and their soothing qualities. Our teachers value a close partnership with parents in fostering a healthy, nurturing environment for the child.

Your primary role in this Teacher-Parent partnership is to provide a home life which affords the child the best possible opportunity for physical, mental, and spiritual growth.

### **Media Guidelines**

The growth and strengthening of the child's own image-making capacity and imagination is imperative. This allows for the healthy development of creative and critical thinking in adolescence. A child that is exposed to a lot of media (especially in early childhood, birth through 7 years) may experience difficulty in envisioning their own creative images from written and spoken word, as well as in their own creative play.

The American Academy of Pediatrics indicates "Because of their immature symbolic, memory and attentional skills, infants and toddlers cannot learn from traditional digital media as they do from interactions with caregivers, and they have difficulty transferring that knowledge to their 3-dimensional experience." \*

The same type of limitations still pertain to 3-5 year old children, and the AAP emphasizes that "the higher-order thinking skills and executive functions essential for school success, such as task persistence, impulse control, emotion regulation, and creative, flexible thinking, are best taught through unstructured and social (not digital) play, as well as responsive parent-child interactions."

Furthermore, it is explained that, on the whole, educational apps and the majority of television shows available for public use or viewing are not equipped to benefit a child's language and educational development. And in fact, ebooks that come with interactive enhancements "may decrease child comprehension of content."

Brain imaging and neurological studies involving long-term media use also indicate the strong negative impact that media use has on brain development. These include, but are not limited to, hindrances to executive functioning, behavior control, and emotional responses, as well as interference to communication between the brain and body.

At City of Fountains we highly regard modern medical studies as well as our own professional experience with young children in consideration of the role media plays in the life of children. **We require that families limit and appropriately censor media of all kinds (television, video games, radio, movies, computers, phones, tablets) for all students. We strongly request that children are not exposed to screen media in the evening before a school day and in the morning prior to arriving at the school.**

If continued evidence of media exposure is noticed (such as language, conversations, songs, play), you may be contacted by your child's lead teacher to discuss options and strategies to limit the child's exposure to media.

The use of cell phones by our students is strictly prohibited at school. If your child is using their phone in the classroom, it will be taken away by their teacher and will only be returned to them at the end of class. If your child has a cell phone, please encourage them to keep it on silent in their backpack. In encouraging the positive behavior that we would like our students to model, we also request that our parents and other family members restrict the use of their own phones while in the building or while waiting for classes to be dismissed.

*\*See Media and Young Minds: Council on Communications and Media (American Academy of Pediatrics) (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2016/10/19/peds.2016-2591>) for more information.*

*\*\*Common Sense Media is a nonprofit resource for parents that rates movies, TV shows, podcasts, books, and more for their appropriateness for children and teens. It has been a well trusted resource for families since 2003. Common Sense is also a great resource for research and how to manage media with children. ([commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org))*

## Open Communication

The relationship between child, parent, teacher, school administration and leadership is an important one, dependent on mutual respect and openness. It is our hope that we can all grow and learn together in the spirit of community. There are several forums in which communication between families and COFS can occur. You are invited to share your thoughts and questions at class and community meetings, in scheduled parent-teacher conferences and in conversations with your child's lead teacher. You are welcome to call, email, or drop in at any time to speak with the administration.

Our communication policy arises out of the expectation that everyone will practice compassion, communicate directly and clearly, and expect the best from one another. We at all times encourage you to speak directly to the school representative with whom you have a pressing issue, concern, or question. If concerns are raised early, and they are addressed informally with the class teacher or Administrator, the likelihood that they will turn into formal complaints is greatly reduced.

### Concerns

If parents have a question or concern about their child and/or their child's education, or what is happening in the classroom, the first step is to speak with their Lead Teacher. Please refrain from approaching the teacher with your questions directly before and directly after class. It is not possible to give proper and respectful consideration during this time. Instead, we ask you use the process for establishing this forum as follows:

1. Request the teacher to arrange an individual meeting at a mutually convenient time.  
Requests may be submitted either in person, via email or by phone call.
2. Please indicate the issue to be discussed as some lead time provides an opportunity for the teacher to give prior thought to the matter.

**\*\*Please note:** Unless deemed necessary by the teacher, it is generally not appropriate for children to be present when discussing questions with a teacher.

If you have a concern about another child or family at COF, then you may contact your child's lead teacher in the same manner as described above. *Teachers are not allowed to provide information about another child or family at COF without written permission from that family.* Under no circumstances should concerns be communicated directly to the other student or with the parents of the student. Such concerns must always be directed through the lead teacher. Respectful communication, with the child's needs always at the center, is required at all times.

If parents have a question or concern about another realm of the school, the first step is to speak with the school administrator. You may approach the administrator in-person, via email, or by phone and they will set up a time to address your concerns or point you in the appropriate direction.

It is not acceptable to send lengthy, emotional or heated emails and they will not be tolerated.

### **Grievances **\*\*Resolution Process\*\*****

We understand that despite our open communication policy there may be times when a concern has not been resolved through direct, clear communication. If a parent thinks their concern has been met in an unresponsive way or they are not satisfied with the resolution, they may make a request for a formal Resolution Process. In order to have your family's needs and concerns met, we ask that you adhere to the following protocol:

- I. To begin the process, please print and fill out the [Grievance Form](#) and return it to one of the school's administrators: Daniela Hindman and/ or Kari Cottrell. The grievance form is used to document your concerns, record any meeting addressing your grievance, identify all those present at the meeting, and provide an explanation of the resolution. A member of the College of Teachers will reach out to you either in person, via email, or by phone to arrange for a facilitated meeting with those involved at a mutually convenient time.

## Staying Informed

There are many ways you can stay up to date on your child's school experience.

- The Wellspring
  - Our twice-monthly newsletter will announce all upcoming events and information necessary to staying informed.
- Administrative emails
  - COFS will use email to disperse important information. It's your responsibility to read all emails from school administration.
- Teacher-to-Parent
  - Your child's teacher will follow their own schedule for updating you on student and class work. We encourage parents to contact their lead teacher regarding a child's academic or social progress.
- Class Meetings
  - Your lead teacher plans at least two evenings during the school year to acquaint parents with the curriculum and give parents a more complete understanding of what their child is learning. These are a wonderful opportunity to build your class family. Communication about the dates and times will come from your child's teacher.
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
  - These scheduled meetings take place once a year; communication about scheduling will come shortly after the start of the second semester and take place within the first couple of months.
- Parent Orientation
  - The school hosts an all-school meeting at the start of the year to provide parents the opportunity to learn more about day-to-day operations, provide feedback, and input on major issues.
- Family Information Night
  - The school hosts an all-school meeting prior to the start of enrollment period. This meeting serves as an overview of the coming school year.

## Follow us

We'd love for you to follow along and support our school online. You can find us at the social handles below. We also have a private Facebook group especially for parents in our community. Please search 'COFS Waldorf Families' to join and connect with parents and members of our school.

You can find us on Facebook, and Instagram @cityoffountainsschool

## **Contact**

You may submit any questions you have regarding the 2023-24 school year to the school administrator. Specific feedback can be directed to the following individuals based on subject matter:

### **Administration**

Daniela Hindman, Administrator  
admin@cityoffountainsschool.org

### **Financial**

Kari Cottrell, Business Manager  
business.manager@cityoffountainsschool.org