



# Family Handbook 2021-22

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## Introduction

Welcome to Urban Prairie Waldorf School. This handbook contains a brief history of our school, the details of daily school life, and additional information about the structure of our school.

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with this handbook and refer to it as necessary throughout the year. Your e-signature on the tuition agreement indicates your willingness to abide by these policies and any updates communicated to the community throughout the academic year.

## Contact Information

1310 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, IL 60608  
312.733.5337  
<https://www.urbanprairie.org>

## About Us

We are a vibrant community of educators and families passionate about Waldorf education, the environment, and responsible global citizenship. Founded in 2009, Urban Prairie Waldorf School is a not-for-profit, independent pre-k through eighth-grade school located just west of downtown on the near west side of Chicago, situated between the Illinois Medical District, Little Italy, and Pilsen neighborhoods.

## Mission

Urban Prairie Waldorf School educates children by awakening a love of learning, encouraging reverence and wonder in the world, and nurturing the capacity to impart purpose and direction to their lives.



## Vision

We envision Urban Prairie Waldorf School at the leading edge of Waldorf education in America. We innovate on the ideas of Rudolf Steiner and contemporary pedagogical philosophy to build an educational program that is developmentally engaging, meets the here and now, and prepares our students for an ever-changing future. Our school is a magnet for seekers and doers, who build a close-knit community that is diverse yet connected by shared ideals. We are intentional, accessible, and collaborative. Our relationships are deep and meaningful. Our campus is in harmony with our surroundings and emphasizes ecological and societal awareness. Our education contains the seeds for social transformation.

## Values

- Vigorous and inspired academics infused with meaning, art, and beauty
- Social connectedness and self-confidence
- Free thinking informed by a strong moral compass
- Delight in and respect for nature in our urban environment

## History of Urban Prairie Waldorf School

Urban Prairie Waldorf School was born out of the dreams and hard work of many people. In 2006 several preschool parents decided to start a new school. With 3- and 4-year-olds at City Garden early childhood center in Pilsen and Sunflower Children's Garden in Hyde Park, they saw how healthy Waldorf education was for their children, with its emphasis on outdoor free play during all seasons, daily and seasonal rhythm that their children brought home, rich storytelling, preparation of whole foods for shared mealtime, and a homelike atmosphere, complete with chores. They formed a Board of Directors, created a budget, hired a founding faculty, and set a start date.

Urban Prairie opened its doors to a 1st grade class of 12 students on September 9th, 2009, ninety years after the opening of the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart, Germany. Angela Kiefer was our founding teacher. Since opening our doors in a small storefront at 16th and South Halsted Street, we have grown significantly, increasing from 12 families to over 100 families. In 2013-14, Urban Prairie signed a five-year lease for the former school building at Our Lady of Pompei Shrine at Lexington and Racine. We spent five years in that space, undertaking a Middle School strategic plan focused on high school and life readiness, building blacksmithing forges and beehives, and filling Arrigo Park across the street with the joyful play of our children at recess and the myriad games of our movement classes. There, we graduated our first class of 7 children, including 3 of the original students.



In 2017, with the strong support of our community, we purchased the 1310 S. Ashland building. We began the 2018-19 school year in our new facility, having grown in ten short years from a one-room school to a large building with a gym, woodworking facility, beautiful Early Childhood space, and classrooms to meet all of our programming plans and dreams. This thriving school now offers parent education, workshops in special interests, as well as social events and festivals for our community to gather together and celebrate.

## Inclusion and Equity Statement

Urban Prairie strives to be an affirming space that welcomes a diverse group of students, faculty, parents/guardians, and community members. We are committed to developing the human potential of every student by providing an educational environment that is free from impediments to learning and a curriculum that offers windows into the experiences of others and mirrors to reflect their own life experiences.

We support inclusivity at our school by:

- Convening a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team that meets regularly to hold ourselves accountable for meeting our Inclusion and Equity Statement.
- Engaging in ongoing evaluation and development of a Waldorf curriculum that reflects the richness of the human experience represented both in our school community and within our city.
- Ensuring Faculty, Administration, and Board participation in relevant training (e.g., Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity), discussions, and studies.
- Providing gender-neutral bathroom facilities.
- Actively seeking and welcoming students and staff of many different races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender expressions, physical ability, and spiritual values.
- Promoting cultural awareness through parent education events, festivals, and other activities.
- Encouraging open dialogue among faculty, staff, and community members about implicit bias and systemic oppression.

## Governance

UPWS has a living Governance Model. The Governance Manual is revisited, revised, and reapproved annually by the Administration, Faculty, and Board, the three bodies responsible for governing the school.



Following are the fundamental principles upon which UPWS Governance is founded and which all UPWS governance policies and processes adhere to.

- ❑ UPWS Governance clearly delineates the authority and responsibilities of each realm and role/position.
- ❑ UPWS Governance provides clear accountability, both “for what” and “to whom.”
- ❑ UPWS Governance is informed by our belief that healthy, effective decision making—in all areas of the school and in all decisions, large and small—requires a consideration of the holistic impact of each decision, along with a correspondingly balanced consideration of organizational input and perspective.
- ❑ UPWS Governance allows for holistic, high-level oversight of, and accountability for, the school’s health and efficacy in regard to both the day-to-day functions and stewardship of the mission, vision, and values of the school.
- ❑ UPWS Governance reflects a respect and appreciation for each of the fundamental realms of our school—and the distinct way in which each is a necessary part of “the whole.”
- ❑ UPWS Governance recognizes that Waldorf education and teaching are primary to our mission, vision, and values, and we will staff our administration to most effectively support our pedagogical aims.

## Servant Leadership

Individuals who take on leadership roles for the school do so in the spirit of servant leadership, guided by the principle of service to the whole. Urban Prairie exists by virtue of the support of a wide community of parents/guardians and friends and all who share our vision of Waldorf education. The health and growth of our school depends on the strength of these relationships.

### To Our Many Volunteers:

*On behalf of the Administration, Faculty, and Board, a hearty and heart-felt **thank you** for your willingness to serve!*



# Daily Life of the School

## Grade School Practical Matters

### Drop-off and Pick-up Times

Monday through Friday<sup>1</sup>

Drop off: 7:45 – 7:55 a.m.

Pick Up: 3:05 – 3:20 p.m.

### Morning Drop-off Procedure

Staff and teachers will be present to meet children in the playlot at 7:45 a.m., gather the classes, and begin the school day at 8:00 a.m. Please aim to drop your child off by 7:50 a.m. to provide ample time to greet schoolmates and be gathered by their teacher.

### Children Unloading and Loading Zone Rules

*If you wish to walk your child to the playlot, bring supplies, or visit outside of the designated drop-off or pick-up times, please see the parking instructions below.*

- Drop-off and pick-up take place on 13th Street, between Ashland and Simpson school.
- You **must drive east-bound** on 13th Street, south of Jewel Osco, in order to drop off or pick up your child.
- For everyone's safety, guardians are to remain in the car while school staff assist the children with the transition in and out of the car and to and from school. Cars continue to move forward in the line as others exit the line.
- For the safety of the students, please exit at the front of the line only, unless otherwise directed by a staff member or volunteer on duty.
- No parking or standing is permitted in this designated drop-off and pick-up area. If arriving by foot, bicycle, or scooter, drop students off at the West door on 13th Street.
- Parents and guardians are not permitted in the playlots during drop-off and pick-up.*

### Parking

Street parking available on Hastings and 13th Street (adjacent to the school).

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<sup>1</sup> **NEW in 2021-22:** Thursday pick-up is the same as all other days.



## Punctuality and Tardiness

The beginning of class is a time when teachers weave the individual students into the whole fabric of the class, setting their group intentions for the day. Students who arrive late miss this important beginning of the Morning Lesson and disrupt the rest of the students. *Please aim to drop off your child by 7:50 a.m.*

Students will be considered tardy if:

- They have not arrived at the school before the doors close at 7:55 a.m., *and/or*
- They are not seated at their desks when school starts at 8:00 a.m.

Please use the Daily Health Screening form in [Operoo](#) to notify the school if your student will be absent due to illness or other reasons. (All families will receive a prompt each morning to submit the form.) Please follow all protocols for submitting doctor's notes to return to school, as outlined in the Health and Safety Handbook.

## Tardiness Procedure

Teachers will lead students inside by 7:55 a.m. After this time, please park and accompany late students to the School Office to be checked in. Once the West door is closed, all students and visitors must enter through the Ashland door. Late students must:

- Be signed in at the front office by the parent or guardian dropping them off.
- Receive a tardy slip.
- Put their items in their cubby or locker.
- Place their hand on the window of the classroom door and wait outside the room until the teacher greets them for the day.

## Afternoon Pick-up

Pick-up is between 3:05 and 3:20 p.m., Monday through Friday. Any child not picked up by 3:20 p.m. will go to aftercare, and charges will apply.

At dismissal, all students and classes go to the playlot to be dismissed. If you are picking up by foot, bike, or scooter, please wait on 13th Street by the driveway to the West door, and notify the dismissal staff to call your student(s).



For the students' safety, guardians must notify Administration if anyone else will be picking up their child, or if a child is allowed to leave on their own. If the individual is not on your list of designated contacts, identification will be requested from that person at the time of pick-up.

## Early Pick-Up

For early pick-up, inform the Administration and your class teacher by phone or email at least one school day prior if possible. Your student will be waiting in the School Office. Please strive to align with one of the following designated early pick-up times:

10:00 a.m. 11:20 a.m. 12:10 p.m. 1:05 p.m. 1:40 p.m. 2:30 p.m.

## Aftercare

Urban Prairie is pleased to serve busy families with our Aftercare Program, which will be offered daily immediately following school until 5:30 p.m. Aftercare is available every day that school is onsite/in person, except:

September 8 - 10 (first 3 days of school)

December 17 (day before winter break)

June 8 (last day of school)

A flat rate will be charged for staying in aftercare each day. Refunds will not be issued for days missed.

To enroll your child in Aftercare or to sign up for a drop-in day, please complete an Aftercare Contract form (see below for options) provided in your [Operoo Form Library](#).

## Annual Aftercare Contracts

Plan ahead and receive our discounted Annual Contract rate; early sign-ups receive an additional discount. Watch for sign-up information to come from Administration. The Annual Contract is non-refundable.



## Trimester Aftercare Contracts

Our flexible Trimester contract allows you to cancel for the upcoming period. Email reminders will go out to confirm whether you will enroll for the next trimester.

**First Trimester:** September 13 - December 3

*The first trimester fee will be charged on September 15*

**Second Trimester:** December 6 - March 9

*Cancel by November 15*

**Third Trimester:** March 14 - June 7

*Cancel by March 1*

## Aftercare Daily Drop-In

Aftercare is offered daily immediately following school until 5:30 p.m. Drop-in spots may be limited and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please notify the School Office by 2:00 p.m. to request a drop-in day.

A flat rate of \$50 will be charged for staying in aftercare at the drop-in rate. Drop-in fees will be charged monthly to your tuition account in TADS, our third-party tuition management firm. Charges will appear by the 15th of the following month.

## Building Access

All visitors, including parents/guardians, must enter through the front of the building on Ashland Avenue. Please ring the buzzer for access and proceed to the School Office to sign in and obtain a visitor's pass. Please sign out when leaving the building.

If you are attending an evening event, you will be notified by the event organizer which door to use.



## Security Procedures

### Fire Drills

Urban Prairie collaborates with our local fire department to hold regular fire drills. All teachers, administrators, and classes are trained and participate, including early childhood. Our goal is always a calm, timely, and orderly exit of the building to our designated gathering spot in the Simpson High School parking lot adjacent to our property.

### “Shelter in Place” Drill

Urban Prairie is required by both the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) to hold Shelter in Place drills annually, in partnership with the Chicago Police Department.

### What is “Shelter in Place”?

The safety of your children and our staff is our highest priority. The aim of our “Shelter in Place” plan is to ensure that the adults in the school are prepared to respond quickly, calmly, and effectively to keep our children and themselves safe in the case of a hostile intruder. While fire drills teach students how to exit the building safely, this plan provides a process to be safe inside the building.

### How will the drill be communicated to students?

The faculty take a developmentally and age-appropriate approach as they preview the drill with the students:

#### Grades 1-4 and Early Childhood

- Teachers do not discuss the potential of a hostile intruder, nor any potential dangers to the children.
- Age-appropriate stories and instruction lead the children to quietly gather, out of sight, in the classrooms, that is, to find “shelter in place.”

#### Grades 5-8

- As children in these grades are more broadly aware of the world around them, the teachers may lead discussions of how or when Shelter in Place may be used.



- Even in middle school, the focus of the discussion and the drill remains on the adults quickly and calmly gathering the children into safe shelter in the classroom.

### How can you support your child during this process?

We will inform you when the Shelter in Place drill is completed. In the weeks ahead or directly afterward, your child may bring home their teachers' stories and their own experience. We suggest that you mirror your child's experience and answer any questions in an age-appropriate manner. If you have children in both upper and lower grades, please do not discuss hostile intruders at times when younger children are present.

While we have constructed our plan with the assistance of law enforcement experts and a keen eye toward minimizing harmful effects, should your child experience any adverse symptoms following this drill, such as bad dreams, asthma attacks, or not wanting to come to school, please inform the Head of School. We will use this information to fine-tune our plan to further minimize harmful effects.

## Inclement Weather Policy

There may be days when weather conditions make travel to and from school, or the school site itself, unsafe. The Administration will make a determination regarding inclement weather based on actual conditions, rather than forecasted conditions. There are three courses of action that may be taken: (1) school closure, (2) delayed start, and (3) early dismissal. Parents will be notified via email in the event of a snow day, other inclement weather, or emergency situation. Following are the actions for notification that the school will take in each scenario:

### School Closure

A decision will be made that school will not be held due to inclement weather conditions by 5:30 a.m. or sooner if possible. If conditions seem to warrant a school closure, guardians should check their email for information from the school. Notification of the school closure will be made via an email sent to the all-school Google group.

### Delayed Start

By 5:30 a.m., a decision will be made that school will start later than usual. If conditions seem to warrant a delayed start, guardians should check their email for information from the school. Notification of a delayed start, including the time school will begin, will be made via an email sent to the all-school Google group.



## Early Dismissal

There may be days when school must be dismissed early because of inclement weather conditions. If such a situation arises, families will be notified via e-mail to the all school Google group as soon as the decision to dismiss early has been made. It is vitally important on early dismissal days that the school has updated contact information (phone numbers, emergency contacts). The school will make all attempts to reach guardians, via email and telephone.

*Please note that if a significant number of hours are missed due to school closings, delayed starts, or early dismissals, additional days or hours may be added to the end of the year.*

## Attendance

### Doctor, Dental, and Other Appointments

If possible, please strive to schedule doctor, dentist, and other appointments outside of school hours or during school breaks when possible. If you are aware in advance that your child will be absent from school, please notify Administration as soon as possible by calling 312-733-5337 or email [attendance@urbanprairie.org](mailto:attendance@urbanprairie.org). Please contact your student's teachers directly to make arrangements to complete missed learning experiences.

### Mandatory Event Attendance

Attendance is **mandatory** at all scheduled classes, festivals, performances, field trips, and class trips including those that take place outside of regular school hours. Exceptions must be approved by the class teacher. If a student is unable to participate in any subject class, the guardian must provide a signed note to the office. If the student is unable to participate regularly in a class, a doctor's note is required.

### Illness or Other Unanticipated Absence

If your child will be absent from school, please respond appropriately in the [Operoo](#) Daily Screening & Attendance form, in response to your daily prompt. Contact the school at 312-733-5337 or [attendance@urbanprairie.org](mailto:attendance@urbanprairie.org) if you are unable to complete the Operoo form. Please follow all protocols for submitting doctor's notes to return to school, as outlined in the Health and Safety Handbook.

### Attendance and Tardiness Record Keeping

In case of excessive absences or tardiness, the student may be placed on academic probation, and the class teacher will determine the appropriate manner for the student's family to assist the student to make up learning missed during excessive absences.



In extreme cases, make-up work due to excessive absences may necessitate outside academic tutoring at the family's expense. Students must provide evidence of knowledge and skills delineated by the teacher as a condition for re-enrollment for the following year. Absences will be reviewed monthly, and if a student has excessive absences, the family may be contacted by Administration to address any concerns.

Urban Prairie does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences or tardies in our records. All absences and tardies become part of the student's permanent record.

## Snack and Lunch

### Snack

Students should bring a healthy snack for mid-morning break that falls within the guidelines of our allergy policy (see page 27).

### Lunch

All students should bring lunch from home every day. Please keep the following in mind as you prepare your child for their school day:

- Children will need a full water bottle daily.
- Candy, gum, soda, and foods high in refined sugar are not allowed.
- No juice (whether in boxes or otherwise) at school.
- NO NUTS in any form are allowed**, see below for detailed allergy policy.
- NO EGGS in whole form are allowed**, see below for detailed allergy policy.
- Trading of food is not allowed.
- Students may refill water bottles at the school's EPA-certified filtered water fountain.

We encourage our community to join with us in a practice of reusing and full-using first, before moving to recycling. Please send a lunch with containers that can be used repeatedly. This helps to teach your children to respect the environment and normalizes reuse. There are recycling bins. Teachers will instruct the students to bring home any compostable or food waste items.

### Forgotten Lunches

Parents/guardians may bring forgotten lunches to school to be left in the office for staff to bring to students. Snack is at 10:00 a.m. and lunch is at 12:10 p.m.



If bringing the lunch is not an option, faculty and staff will do their best to provide an appropriate snack. Lunch will be provided in the form of frozen meals.

## School Supplies, Instruments, and Fees

Urban Prairie supply fees allow the school to provide the tools your child will need in the classroom. Parents may be asked by their individual teachers to provide readers, supplies for special projects, binders, pencil bags, or other small items. Please do not send additional supplies, toys, or items from home unless requested by or discussed with your teacher.

Urban Prairie works with William Harris-Lee to provide high-quality instruments to students. Procedures for renting with WHL will be sent out at the beginning of the school year. Instruments furnished from other providers must meet quality standards.

## Field Trips

Field trips are an important part of the grade school curriculum, offering students a chance to work together and experience subject matter firsthand. Students may attend overnight field trips in addition to day trips as determined by the class teacher. Parents must sign a travel authorization form in order for their child to participate in field trips.

These trips are chaperoned by the class teacher and selected parents (as deemed necessary by the teacher). The chaperones will be oriented by the class teacher. Chaperones act as representatives of the school, assuming role modeling and mentoring relationships with students. All chaperones must adhere to the following policies:

- The class teacher leads the trip. Chaperones are asked to assist and follow the lead of the class teacher and be available to help manage practical tasks so that the teacher can attend to the pedagogical work of the trip.
- Make an effort to engage with as many of the children as possible on the trip. In addition to sharing this experience with your child, this is a wonderful opportunity to get to know other children in the class. Please make your best effort not to show favoritism.
- Approach children with a kind heart and without passing judgment. If you have any concerns about a child or group of children, please bring your concerns to the class teacher. If you believe a child is in need of discipline beyond simple redirection, please make the class teacher aware of this also.
- Show respect for the rules of each location that we visit. It helps us to make a good impression for future trips and teaches the children respect for space and hosts through your positive example.



- As a chaperone, you have the fantastic opportunity to assist the children in their experience of nature and culture without the intervention of media.
- Except in the event of an emergency, chaperones should not contact UPWS or community members during the trip.
- During the trip, please refrain from posting any images or information on social media regarding the trip.
- Reporting to other parents about the trip is not permitted and undermines the trust and integrity of the group. If needed, the teacher will contact the designated contact person back home.

**Chaperones may not engage in:**

- use of foul language.
- activities that distract from the tasks of the group. This includes use of email, texting, and social media, which may distract from chaperoning responsibilities. If you must use a cell phone, please do so out of sight of the children except in an emergency.
- gossip about children, other parents, or UPWS community members.
- overstepping disciplinary boundaries. Please leave discipline to the class teacher, but do inform the children if you see unacceptable or unsafe behavior.
- consumption of alcoholic beverages.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated in the class with a special observation. Please contact your child’s teacher for more specific guidelines and to plan birthday celebrations. Please note that children are not allowed to bring treats to share in the classroom at this time.

## Photography

Urban Prairie ceremonies and festivals are a time for families to reflect, enjoy the moment, and create lasting memories for the child, family, and community. Urban Prairie will organize members of our community to film and/or photograph events, which will be used in our annual yearbook. We ask that when attending any festival, assembly, or other school-wide event you refrain from using cameras/cell phones to photograph children.

A photo/video waiver is included in annual forms for your submission, to note your permission for the school to use photos and videos for marketing purposes.



## Social Media Posts

**Please do not** post pictures to social media sites, blogs, or other websites of other children at school events *without the express consent of those guardians*.

## Visiting the School

At this time the school is limiting visitors, but some exceptions will be made. All visitors must sign in at the School Office.

## Custody Agreements

All relevant portions of custody agreements (household or financial), must be provided to Administration. Please call or email the School Office at [administration@urbanprairie.org](mailto:administration@urbanprairie.org) for instructions on how to submit.

## Parent/Guardian Travel

If you will be out of town while your child is in school, we ask that you notify both your class teacher and Administration who will care for your child and how to contact them, as well as how to get in touch with you in case of an emergency.

## Student Dress

### Dress Guidelines (All Grades)

The Urban Prairie dress guidelines are designed to support an active learning environment and create a respectful atmosphere. Our curriculum provides numerous physical activities throughout the day (both inside and out), and clothing should fit well while being sturdy enough to provide for optimal movement. Please keep the following dress guidelines in mind before your child leaves for school each morning.

### Clothing & Footwear

#### 1st and 2nd grade Extra Clothes

Please provide an extra set of clothes (including underwear) at school. Place these in a bag labeled with the student's name to stay in their cubby.



## Shoes

- All students must have a pair of indoor shoes with non-marking soles which will remain at school.
- Shoes should be supportive and light enough for the children to take part in the various movement activities throughout the day.
- Children should wear socks.
- Please no flip-flops, slippers, crocs, or light-up shoes.

## Clothing

- Students' clothes should be clean, well-mended, and well-fitted so students can move easily.
- No clothing, shoes, or accessories with cartoon characters, advertising or media-oriented logos or slogans, or athletic team logos or jerseys.
- Any logos should be small enough that they can be covered by 2 adult fingers. Anything larger than that is inappropriate.
- Outerwear may have logos.
- In order to assure movement, pants, skirts and shorts must stay up, not exposing underwear. Use a belt, if needed.
- Shorts and skirts must be long enough to assure unrestricted ease of movement. Students should wear shorts, leggings, or tights under skirts to allow for maximum movement during classroom and outdoor activity.
- Shirts must allow for unrestricted movement without frequent adjustments. Strapless shirts and midriff-baring shirts are not recommended due to our movement curriculum.
- No hats are to be worn inside the school, including baseball hats. Hooded sweatshirts can be worn but the hood must stay down while inside.

**Note:** Students in Grades 6-8 that repeatedly fail to follow the dress code may be referred to the Student Support Team for coaching. For students in grades 1-5 who repeatedly fail to follow the dress code, parents will be contacted to discuss ways to adhere to the dress code.

## Outdoor Wear

The children go outside every day multiple times per day, and should wear or bring appropriate clothing for any weather conditions that may occur while they are at school. Exceptions to this policy are severe conditions such as wind chill factor of -15 or greater. Without proper attire, students may miss outdoor recess or be asked to find items from the lost and found. The following attire is needed for weather conditions throughout the year:

**For Rain:**

**For Cold and Snow:**



Rain Pants  
Rain Boots  
Rain Coat

Warm Boots  
Snow Pants  
Winter/Waterproof Coat  
Mittens/Gloves  
Scarf/Hat  
Thermal Underwear

*See Middle School Handbook for additional guidelines for middle school students.*

## Lost & Found/Stolen Items

If you are missing something, please ask the School Office to check our lost and found areas. The school is not responsible for replacing or reimbursing students or families for lost or stolen items.

## Medical Policies

### Emergency Forms

Emergency contacts for each student must be reviewed each year and kept up-to-date by updating them in TADS, our third-party tuition management company, or by informing the main office. Any special dietary or health concerns should be clearly documented with the student's health forms and communicated directly to Administration. Insurance information should be updated as part of annual form submission.

### Medication Policy

If your child must take medication during the day, parents/guardians must provide a medication plan to the School Office. Under Illinois law, school personnel cannot administer medication to students with the exception of auto-injectable epinephrine (e.g. Epipen®/Epipen Jr.®). This includes prescription medicine, homeopathic medicine, aspirin – anything taken orally or by injection. In an extreme medical emergency, such as a severe asthma attack, school personnel may administer medicine that has been provided by the guardian with written permission. In the event of a suspected serious allergic reaction, school personnel may administer injectable epinephrine if available. This is considered emergency first aid and would be accompanied by a call to 911, followed by a call to the parents/guardians. Students may self-administer medicine with written permission from medical staff or a parent/guardian to be kept on file at school. Please administer medication at home when possible.



## Significant Medical Conditions (Asthma, Diabetes, etc.)

If your child has a significant condition, please let Administration and the teacher know. We ask that you provide a copy of your child's medical plan and bring medication to the Administrator's Office with the medication plan. Backup medication/inhaler should be left with the School Office.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that there is adequate medication available and that it is not expired. This should be checked on a monthly basis.

## Auto-injectable Epinephrine

Illinois law allows teachers to administer auto-injectable epinephrine to students in need. If your child needs an auto-injectable epinephrine with them at all times, you must provide two doses/injectors to the school. One will be kept in the office, and the other will be in the classroom or outside with your child's class at all times. Injectors must not be expired.

## Cough Drops

Cough drops are permitted if they have been prescribed to manage ongoing symptoms and specify prescribed usage. Cough drops should be provided by the parent/guardian and kept with the class teacher or in the school office to be provided to the student upon request. These cough drops should never be shared with others.

## Health and Immunization Forms

Collection of these forms is required by the Illinois State Board of Education and our accrediting bodies.

**Immunization:** Each student must have a vaccination medical report on file. Forms are available from your child's doctor or from Administration.

*Who:* Early Childhood (submit annually), new/transfer students, students entering 1st and 6th grades.

**Medical Examination:** Forms are available from your child's doctor or from Administration. The report must state that the student is in good physical condition, free from communicable and infectious diseases, and is immunized against childhood diseases.

*Who:* Early Childhood (submit annually), new/transfer students, students entering 1st and 6th grades.

**Dental Examination:** Forms are available from your child's dentist.

*Who:* Students in 2nd and 6th grades, new/transfer students



**Eye Examination:** Forms are available from your child's optometrist or doctor.

*Who:* Students entering Kindergarten, new/transfer students

Parents or legal guardians who object, for medical or religious reasons, to their child being immunized for school entrance must submit a Certificate of Medical or Religious Exemption, which must be signed by a health care provider. Certificates must be submitted annually.

- Students who are not immunized may be excluded from school during outbreaks of specific communicable diseases following Center for Disease Control guidelines.
- Students who are not immunized for Tetanus may be excused from Woodwork, Practical Arts, and/or Gardening.

## Illness and School

### Contagious Diseases

Please refer to our Health and Safety Guidebook for guidelines on Covid-19. In addition, if your student has a reportable communicable disease, contact Administration immediately and keep your child home from school. These include:

- Chicken pox
- Mumps
- Measles
- Whooping cough

While maintaining confidentiality, we are legally required to notify the community if we have a student that contracts any of these diseases. Students will need a note from a licensed healthcare professional to return to school.

### General Illness

**Please keep sick children at home.** Rest at home will support quicker recovery. In addition to our Covid-19 guidelines provided in our separate Health and Safety Handbook, below are symptom guidelines for keeping your child at home:

- Acute cold with sneezing, coughing, and/or runny nose
- Sore throat and/or swollen glands
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Listlessness, weakness, chills and headache
- Fever
- Eyes that show redness, puffiness, discharge, aversion to light



- Earache
- Parasitic infestation such as intestinal worms, lice or scabies (see below)

Students must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

## Illness at School

A child who becomes ill at school will rest in a quiet area of the front office, and parents/guardians will be notified. If it becomes clear that the child is too ill to remain at school, we will contact the parents to pick up their child.

## Illness and Recess

**All children will be expected to go outside.** We cannot accommodate children inside during recess, as staff will be outside the building with the children. Please take this into consideration when making decisions about illness and school attendance.

## Parasitic Infestations

Students with parasitic infections, including intestinal worms, lice, and scabies, will not be allowed in school due to the extremely contagious nature of such parasites. Please notify Administration immediately. Parasites can be contracted by anyone; it is not an indication of poor hygiene. In Illinois, it is legally mandatory that we notify the school community of these conditions, but the student will remain anonymous.

## Lice

- Parents must notify the school if a child has nits/lice.
- Urban Prairie Administration will notify the community that a student has lice and request that all guardians check their child for lice and nits.
- If it is discovered that multiple children have lice or nits, Urban Prairie may contact a lice specialist in an effort to check all students. Parents will be notified if an outside service is called to assist.
- During an outbreak, children with long hair with or without lice/nits are asked to have hair pulled back to reduce the risk of contracting lice.
- If evidence of lice is found on a student, guardians will be notified immediately to pick up their child.
- Brushes, hats, and other accessories that come in contact with hair should remain at home at all times.
- Students may return to school when they are nit-free or with a clearance from a medical professional.



## Injuries at School

In the event of a mild injury at school, the student will be given simple first aid. This may include cleaning of a wound, antibiotic ointment, and a bandage. The parent/guardian will be called if it appears that the injury requires further attention and is more serious in nature. The adult who was supervising the injured child at the time of the accident will complete an accident report form, which the parent/ guardian will be asked to sign at pick up. In the event of a more serious injury at school, school staff will call 911 if necessary and the parents/guardians.

## Insurance

Students may not participate in overnight class trips without health insurance. The school's accident insurance does not cover all health emergencies that may arise. Proof of insurance, including a copy of both sides of the insurance card, must be on file in the School Office. If your family is in need of health insurance, please visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

## Mandated Reporting

According to Illinois Law, all faculty and/or staff members are classified as mandatory reporters and are expected to report any incidents that cause reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Any such situations will be handled with discretion and in accordance with the law. Visit <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=1460&ChapterID> for more information.

## Food and Environmental Allergy Policy

Urban Prairie Waldorf School is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for our community, including working in cooperation with parents/guardians, students, and their physicians to minimize risks to all students and faculty. Allergy management includes prevention, education, awareness, communication, and emergency response.

## Goals

- To maintain the health and protect the safety of children and faculty who have life-threatening allergies or adverse reactions to foods and/or beverages; ensure the ability to participate in and benefit from the services, activities, or opportunities offered by the school; promote self-advocacy and competence in self-care.
- Implement preventive measures, interventions, and individual health care plans for students with serious environmental allergies, food or beverage allergies, and food or beverage intolerances based on medically accurate information and evidence-based practices.



## Requirements

A student with a **life threatening active history** of allergies or adverse reaction to an environmental substance or food is required to submit the Illinois Food Allergy Action Plan and Treatment Authorization for before the start of the school year. A student that develops a new allergy during the school year must submit an Illinois Food Allergy Action Plan form as soon as possible. A student's healthcare provider must complete the form with the guardian(s) or guardian/designee. This form must be signed and include a recent photo of the student.

A student with a **non-life threatening active history** of allergies or adverse reactions to an environmental substance or food must have that information on file with the school.

## Process

A student's Food Allergy Action Plan will be utilized by Administration and the student's classroom teacher to develop a prevention plan in collaboration with the student's parent/guardian as necessary. A prevention plan includes identifying substances that should be restricted from the classrooms and/or other areas in accordance with the prevention plan, communicating these restrictions to all UPWS staff and parents, and reinforcing behaviors within the classroom and other areas as needed to prevent exposure to an allergen. The prevention plan shall be implemented at the beginning of the school year and may need to be updated as needed.

## Emergency Response

Each year, UPWS staff will review the process for identifying, managing, and ensuring continuity of care for students with life-threatening allergic reactions. UPWS will stock auto-injector epinephrine at the school for emergencies. The purpose of the stocked epinephrine is to make the medication available in emergencies to individuals without prior history of serious allergies who develop an anaphylactoid response or when a student's personal dose is found to be flawed or ineffective or not immediately available. As noted above, students with an active history of serious food or environmental allergies should provide two doses of auto-injector epinephrine to UPWS.



## Community Life of the School

Parents/guardians are a vital part of the Urban Prairie community and are encouraged to actively participate in the life of our school. Parent/guardian involvement helps create a rich community environment that provides greater support for the students and their education.

### Volunteering

Urban Prairie has a strong volunteering tradition. Parents pioneered the founding of this school and continue to provide a strong backbone of support for our efforts. Volunteers are expected to follow the same expectations we have of employees with regard to professionalism and confidentiality and may be required to have background checks. Here are some ways to get involved as a volunteer:

- School-wide Volunteer:** Volunteer for school-wide projects such as clean-up days, all-school festivals, or performances. Seek out year-round opportunities with a committee within Community Connections (below) for more consistent contributions.
- Outreach:** Post flyers for school events; write online reviews about UPWS; invite friends to open houses; sign up for outreach events.
- Class Delegate:** Join the Community Connections group to support events, festivals, and fundraising efforts.
- Room Parent:** Work closely with the class teacher, assisting them in a variety of ways. Room parents are asked to facilitate communication between teachers and parents by relaying important information about classroom events and activities. They are regarded as the “turn to” resource for the classroom teacher and should be prepared to help in whatever ways will best serve the class. They may:
  - Help organize field trips, festivals, and other classroom events
  - Create or procure supplies and materials for the class
  - Organize other class volunteers

### Community Connections

Community Connections is our school parent/guardian organization. The **purpose** of Community Connection is to coordinate parent/guardian volunteer opportunities for faculty and classroom assistance, assistance to Administration, community building, and parent education, as well as to foster communication among parents/guardians and the governing bodies, including the Board of Trustees, Faculty and Administration. Its **mission** is to actively engage parents and guardians in the school community through volunteer opportunities, including the following:

- Fostering parent/guardian enrichment and support
- Facilitating teacher support



- Engaging in community building and outreach
- Assisting in the fundraising goals of the annual fund

These volunteer opportunities are coordinated by teams. Interested in joining a team? Contact your class delegate or email [info@urbanprairie.org](mailto:info@urbanprairie.org).

- Welcome Wagon
- Yearbook - *Helps produce our annual yearbook*
- Facilities - *Helps keep our outdoor space clean and welcoming*
- Library - *Manages and provides volunteers for the school library*
- Class Delegates - *Connects the class to Community Connections opportunities*
- Makers' Guild - *Makes fabric-based items needed in the classrooms*

## Festivals

Festivals connect us with the cycle of the year, creating ritual and celebration. As we celebrate the passage of the seasons through art, music, and story, we deepen our connection to the working rhythms of nature. The purpose of the school's festival life is to give students a sense of orientation in time and bring the community together. The Festivals Committee has studied our festival calendar in hopes of distilling the nature of the festivals while adding others in order to be more representative of the diverse cultures, religions, and ethnic backgrounds of our families.

Some of our festivals are small, in-school events that may mark an occasion that is tied to the curriculum of a particular grade. Other festivals, such as all-school assemblies, are for our school family. These festivals are a way for students to share their works in progress. Evening musical and dramatic performances are somewhat more polished. Other larger festivals like the Festival of Courage are meant to include our broader community and neighbors.

The following is a list of all-school festivals and assemblies. Information on class specific celebrations is provided by each class teacher.

**Opening Ceremony** marks the beginning of each new year at Urban Prairie Waldorf School. During this ceremony, we officially mark the beginning of the school year and warmly welcome the incoming first grade class into their eight-year journey with our community. Each first-grader receives a rose from an eighth-grader. This is an all school assembly. Parents are encouraged to attend. Priority seating will be reserved for first-grade families.

**Festival of Courage** (previously called Michaelmas) is a festival common to almost all Waldorf schools. The story of St. Michael is one of goodness facing and overcoming adversity; St. Michael tames the dragon with his sword. Michaelmas is a festival of inner strength and initiative. It is about all of us, as individuals, finding the will to perform rightful deeds in the world.



Students undertake meaningful work projects around the school and participate in a Michaelmas pageant. All families, along with the community, are invited to take part in this festival.

**Halloween** is celebrated on October 31st or the school day closest to October 31 if it falls on a weekend. Students wear or bring costumes that follow their teacher's recommendations and are usually drawn from their class curriculum. In keeping with our dress code, we ask that students not wear costumes depicting media, cartoons, or gruesome images.

**Dia de los Muertos** (Day of the Dead) is celebrated on the school day closest to November 1 with a memorial display (ofrenda) of loved ones who have passed over and related craft activities.

**Festival of Thanks** celebrates the bounty of the harvest; it falls on the Friday before Thanksgiving. The students help to prepare a shared lunch, and parents are invited for an all-school assembly.

**Festival of Light** (Winter Solstice) is celebrated by many cultures as shorter days and winter comes. In Christian cultures this festival is called Advent; Ancient Egyptians celebrated the Festival of Osiris; the Celts and Druids held great festivals of light and fire; and Jews celebrate Hanukkah.

**Solstice Spiral** is a tradition to celebrate our inner light as the darkest days fall upon us. Children are told a story by their class teacher and then proceed to walk a double spiral of pine boughs laid out on the floor. In the center, there sits a lit candle on a log, which the children light their own candles on. The path out is lined with gold stars, of which the children choose one to place their candle on. Placing a lit candle on the gold stars is symbolic of offering the highest part of ourselves in service to others. There is an in-school spiral as well as an evening community spiral.

**MLK Day Festival of Compassion** is an in-school assembly to honor civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. and others who have fought for peace and equality.

**Chinese New Year**, also known as the Spring Festival, is a widely celebrated festival which marks the beginning of the Chinese Lunar Calendar. Taking place over fifteen days, it is a time spent with family welcoming the health and prosperity of the coming year, bringing about reconciliation, and ushering in harmony. The children participate in various activities associated with the festival, which culminates with an all-school assembly and sharing of work.

**Festival of Renewal** (recognizing Earth Day) is celebrated as a day to inspire appreciation and conservation of our natural resources. Students may have field trips to local sites of interest and then return to school to act as stewards of the park and the surrounding area.



**May Faire** is the ancient tradition of celebrating the arrival of summer. This festival has historically included an all-school potluck and games.

We end the year with a **Closing Ceremony** where we reflect on the events of the year and, echoing the Opening Ceremony, the first-graders give roses to the graduating eighth-graders. Families are invited to join us for this assembly. Eighth Grade Graduation honors the completion of 8th grade, celebrating the work of the graduating students and the contributions of their teachers.

## Fundraising

Urban Prairie offers a variety of fundraising opportunities to support the mission of the school. This fundraising is critical to our annual budget, allowing us to provide a vibrant and well-rounded curriculum and plan for the future. Like most independent schools, the costs of running our school and creating a stable future may not be fully met with tuition dollars.

**Annual Fund:** The Annual Fund is an invitation to support the mission and vision of our school in a direct way. We strive for 100% participation from Board members, faculty, staff, and parents/guardians and encourage each family to give as generously as their circumstances allow.

**Fundraising Events:** The school holds events, galas, or concerts in support of the mission of the school.

## School and Family in Partnership

Enrolling your child in Urban Prairie initiates a partnership between your family and the school community. The goal of our education is to support your child's cognitive, social, and emotional development, and we can best do that when we work in partnership with you. Communication between teachers and parents/guardians forms an invaluable support structure beneath our students.

## Parent-Teacher Communication

There may be times when a parent/guardian would like to talk to a class teacher. Please be mindful that during the school day, including drop-off and pick-up, the teacher is on duty and cannot engage in lengthy discussions. Teachers will provide their class parents/guardians with office hours. It is best to email to find a mutually agreeable time for discussion unless a teacher has specified another preferred method of communication.



If parents/guardians need to take a concern further, they may contact the Faculty Level Chair or the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for further support.

### 2021-22 Faculty Level Chairs

Early Childhood: Caitlin Flannery  
Lower School (grades 1-5): Mat Riendeau  
Middle School (grades 6-8): Megan Cather  
Special Subjects: Xuefen Ding

## Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conferences

Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences are scheduled two times a year; the dates for the conferences are shown on the school calendar. These conferences offer a significant opportunity to learn about your child's progress, in their main classroom as well as special subjects. This is also an opportunity for teachers to learn about parents'/guardians' concerns and questions. When possible, it is recommended that both parents attend these conferences. Parents/Guardians should feel free to contact their class teacher whenever there is a question about their child's progress in school rather than waiting until the Parent/Guardian-Teacher Conference.

If you are unable to attend the scheduled conference dates, it is at the discretion of the teacher to reschedule an agreed-upon conference.

The link to the online sign-up system will be shared in "Administrative Weekly" updates and class teacher communications prior to the scheduled conference days.

## Mid-Year and Year-End Reports

Parents/Guardians will receive written reports (through the BigSIS parent portal -- see below) from their class and special subject teachers in the middle of the year and at the end of the school year. These reports summarize the work done during the year, address the child's strengths and weaknesses, and offer suggestions for the future. In middle school, block reports will also be sent home throughout the year and may require a signature.

## Parent/Guardian Evenings

Parent/Guardian Evenings are scheduled several times per year, and parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to attend all Parent/Guardian Evenings. The class teacher will determine the frequency of these meetings. Parent/Guardian Evenings are educational and social events. It is important for all families to know each other and for parents/guardians to work together to help the students grow and learn. At each Parent/Guardian Evening, the class teacher will



present something of interest – it might be a lecture, a sample lesson, an in-depth discussion on a particular topic, an artistic project, etc. The idea is to give the parents/guardians a deeper appreciation and understanding of what the children are experiencing. There will be time to ask questions and share stories with other parents/guardians. If there are two parents/guardians in the household, we recommend that both try attending these evenings.

## Media Policy

Waldorf education strives to nurture children’s growing capacities for imagination, independent thinking, healthy feeling, and active willing. Cultivating the imagination is necessary for the development of critical thinking. Urban Prairie recommends that parents limit the exposure their children have to media, especially during the school week.

It is well documented that consuming media, including television, movies, video games, and computers, can interfere with the development of these critical and imaginative capacities. A reliance on ready-made pictures reduces a child’s ability to visualize both the written word (when reading) and the spoken word (when listening to stories or given imaginative pictures orally). Students accustomed to passively receiving impressions often have difficulty with the inner demands necessary to sustain imaginative thought. Media influences easily enter the classroom and the rest of the class is easily affected by any images or messages brought to them.

Please contact your class teacher for media guidelines by grade. If you have questions on this topic or would like resources for further study, please discuss with your class teacher.



# Communication Tools

## Directories and Google Groups

A student directory is available on the school's BigSIS portal (see below). Please only use the school directory for school and personal purposes. We do not allow the directory to be used for commercial purposes.

Our primary method for mass communication is via our class and school Google groups. Our three Google groups have distinct purposes:

**Class group:** Your family is included in the Google group for your child's class which is used to communicate class weekly updates, news, and conversations. The address includes your teacher's name (upws\_teacher's last name@googlegroups.com). Parents may post things of general interest to the rest of the class on this group.

**Urban Prairie group:** Faculty, Administration, and the Board use this all school listserv to send key information to all families in the school -- important updates, school closures, etc. Parents cannot send emails to this list. The "Administrative Weekly" update is sent to this group.

**Bulletin Board:** This Google group is for all Urban Prairie (and non-Urban Prairie upon request) community members to post information of general interest to the whole school. (i.e. Beach Days, organic food vendors in the community, etc.).

## BigSis Portal

The BigSis portal ([www.urbanprairie.bigsis.com/portal/](http://www.urbanprairie.bigsis.com/portal/)) is used for document management, school directory, school calendar, reports, attendance records, and donation management. Please familiarize yourself with your BigSis portal and contact Sophie Baumgartner at [sophie.baumgartner@urbanprairie.org](mailto:sophie.baumgartner@urbanprairie.org) with any questions.

## Operoo

[Operoo](#) is used for daily health-screening and attendance, submitting health and other annual forms, as well as signing up for after school programming, conferences, and more. You will be automatically registered for Operoo when you enroll your student at Urban Prairie. Please contact Sophie Baumgartner at [sophie.baumgartner@urbanprairie.org](mailto:sophie.baumgartner@urbanprairie.org) with any questions.



## Newsletters

Administration provides a weekly administrative update (the “Administrative Weekly”) to keep you informed of important news and events.

Your class teacher will send periodic updates throughout the year, with details of classroom goings-on and upcoming projects or events.

## Social Media

UPWS maintains multiple social media sites for marketing and community-building. We invite you to subscribe to our public social media.

**Facebook:** [UPWS on Facebook](#)

**Instagram:** [UPWS on Instagram](#)

**Linkedin:** [UPWS on LinkedIn](#)

**YouTube:** [UPWS on YouTube](#)



# Information Privacy and Internal Communications

## Information Privacy

UPWS holds data privacy and security in high regard and takes action to ensure that our students' data is handled securely. We do not disclose any personal information, except as permitted by law, such as to our attorneys and certain service providers. For example, contact information is shared with TADS, our third-party tuition management firm, when setting up payment agreements. The school uses the data only in service to your child's education and shares necessary personally identifiable information with carefully vetted third-party service providers using secure data transfer methods in accordance with current industry best practices. We do not share your private data with third-party vendors for commercial purposes.

### Student Files

The school maintains the following files for students:

- Guardian and Emergency Contact Information
- Names
- Address
- Email address
- Phone numbers
- Attendance
- Fees
- Medical Information
- Health Conditions
- Immunizations
- Medications
- Vision and Hearing Screening
- Doctor of Record
- Learning Accommodations
- Disciplinary Incident Reports (only if incident leads to suspension or dismissal)
- Academic Data
- Assessments
- Mid-year and Year-end Reports
- Transcripts
- Currently Checked-out Media

**Note:** Parent and student names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers will be posted in the private school directory unless otherwise indicated on a Bigsis profile.



## Internal Communication

Our teachers work in a collaborative way to provide the best possible educational experience for your child. They regularly communicate and share information with one another about students' experiences. This helps all faculty stay informed of any special circumstances affecting a student. Because of the importance of privacy and security, UPWS has chosen to manage internal communication primarily via secure third-party applications (such as GSuite) rather than email. Any internal communication regarding a student strives to be objective and supportive of your child's successful experience at our school. Because it is an internal communication and not part of a student record, it is not shared with parents. Our faculty and parents work in close partnership. Class and special subject teachers will contact you as needed.



## Conduct Guidelines

Urban Prairie strives to build an environment of mutual respect, reverence, and responsibility. Caring for each other and the environment is integral to our curriculum and is a vital aspect of students growing into responsible adults. When anyone is uncivil, disrespectful, or disruptive, the whole community is diminished. Every member of our community is entitled to a safe and supportive learning environment that includes respect for diverse cultures, backgrounds, and viewpoints.

The following two overarching guidelines strive to protect the health and safety of all students and to provide a school environment that is conducive to learning:

- Speak and act in a courteous way toward students and adults.
- Treat your surroundings with respect.

Mistakes are an opportunity to learn, and we take a developmental approach to behavioral issues. Early Childhood teachers educate students about polite manners and healthy boundaries. In the grade school, teachers approach behavior issues as an expression of unmet needs and an opportunity to teach new skills. “Light touch” classroom management tools are often enough to guide a student. Our Student Support Team fosters an approach based on the principles of inclusivity, restorative justice, and social-emotional learning.

## Disciplinary Procedures

Urban Prairie strives to cultivate an environment where students are supported not only through their learning but also through challenges that arise. UPWS understands discipline to be a creative, positive, and mutually supporting relationship where the student is taught tools to control their own behavior. The Student Support Team is integral in this process. Teachers work collaboratively with each other and the Student Support Team to help students learn self-control as well as conflict-resolution skills. When there are behavioral challenges, the Student Support Team takes the lead in supporting a child.

This group works with faculty to ensure systematic use of a variety of classroom management techniques, such as helping students refocus their attention or redirect their behavior. The teachers work with all students who need guidance in a respectful and effective way, taking the circumstances and age of the child into account. All disciplinary processes are conducted so that the privacy and rights of the individuals involved are protected.

In the beginning and throughout the school year, teachers clearly communicate to the students and their guardians the guidelines and expectations for behavior. These expectations change as the students mature through the grades.



Please direct questions about behavioral guidelines to your class or special subject teacher. General questions about behavioral guidelines may be addressed to the Student Support Team Chair, Candace Choma, at [candace.choma@urbanprairie.org](mailto:candace.choma@urbanprairie.org).

## Behavior Incident Reports

When a student's behavior is disruptive or harmful and has not been curtailed by redirection or basic classroom management tools, the behavior may warrant a Behavior Incident Report.

Hate speech warrants an Incident Report and is defined as speech, gesture, or writing that expresses prejudice or incites violence against a group or individual on the basis of their race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Urban Prairie strives to provide a safe learning environment for all students; as such, we seek to immediately address any such speech through a range of interventions based on the age of the student(s) involved.

Reports will be written within 48 hours of the noted behavior, and the parent/guardian will be notified. Behavior Incident Reports about "Threshold Events" (see below) are maintained in student files. Behavior Incident Reports for other behaviors are not maintained in a student's file; rather these are for the teachers' and parents'/guardians' information in order to support a change in behavior.

## Threshold Events

We recognize that at times an egregious act of disrespect of property, people, community/environment, and/or physical aggression may warrant an immediate reaction.

## Student to Be Sent Home

While we strive to coach-up behavior and work through learning opportunities, there may be situations in which a student's behavior threatens their own safety or the safety of others or interferes with a safe and productive learning environment for others. The following behavior may lead to a student being sent home:

- Physical violence against peers, teachers, oneself, or property
- Leaving the designated area of the class without consent of the responsible adult
- Threats of violence against oneself or others
- Conscious hate speech (depends on grade and situation, and determined by Student Support Team)
- Possession of a weapon (including pocket knives) or illegal substance
- Conscious sexual breach of boundaries



- Threshold event as described above

In such cases, guardians will be contacted by Administration to pick a student up immediately. If a guardian cannot be reached or is unable to pick the student up, then the Emergency Contact on file will be called.

## Bullying and Cyberbullying

Bullying is written, verbal, or physical conduct, including electronic communication, that is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive to limit a student's ability to participate in, or benefit from, a program or activity of the school; or to create a hostile or abusive educational environment, adversely affecting a student's education, including acts of verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression or intimidation. This includes bullying that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, or another distinguishing characteristic. This also may include conduct that targets a student because of a characteristic of a friend, family member, or other person or group with whom a student associates. Bullying is frequently referred to as harassment when it pertains to a characteristic protected by nondiscrimination laws. This behavior is not tolerated and can include any of the following:

- Physical abuse or hitting. Physical fighting may result in immediate suspension. Chronic or egregious fighting is grounds for dismissal.
- Verbal abuse or malicious or hurtful name-calling, verbal threats, or intimidation
- Disrespect of a person's property or stealing
- Incitement or getting someone else to carry out any of the above-listed actions

Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices and the internet. It includes, but is not limited to email, social networking, instant messages, text messages, and other postings whether on a website, social networking page, in a blog, or other electronic communication on or off school campus. Cyberbullying may include but is not limited to:

- Posting slurs or rumors or other disparaging remarks about a student or community member on a website, social networking page, or blog.
- Sending email or messages that are mean or threatening or show ill-intent. Requesting inappropriate messages or photos from fellow students.
- Taking and/or sending embarrassing photographs of a student or posting misleading or fake photographs of a student or community member on a website, social networking page, or blog.

We take bullying seriously. Persistent bullying behavior may result in immediate, explicit intervention including disciplinary action, suspension, or dismissal.



## Probation and Student Dismissal Process

The Student Support Team aims to support students through difficulties or hindrances that may be keeping them from thriving at school. Within this system, there are many tools available to faculty to support students; however, the toolbox is not limitless. Once faculty have determined that the available tools cannot meet the needs of a student, there is a possibility that Urban Prairie cannot serve the student. There are three key points to determine whether a student should remain at the school. These are social health, academic health, and parental support of Waldorf education, the teacher, and the school. Each aspect must be present for the school to best serve the child.

### Social and Academic Health

The teacher identifies and documents classroom challenges and communicates with the guardians in a timely and respectful fashion. If the challenges persist or progress to a higher support level, the teacher along with their colleagues will develop a plan of action with the parents. Once all parties agree to the plan and timeline, it is signed, and the student will be on a Support Plan. The faculty will monitor the situation and when the probationary period is complete, they will determine if the child and school are a good fit for each other.

### Administrative Case (Parental Support)

An administrative case for dismissal occurs when a parent/guardian is in egregious violation of school policies, fails to respond to attempts to address certain issues or situations, engages in inappropriate forms of communication with any representative of the school, and/or undermines the relationship of the teacher to the child. In situations such as these, the faculty member or administrator will fully document the situation and bring it to the attention of the Administrative Leadership. If needed, Administrative Leadership will develop a plan and timeline to address the problems, creating a plan of action and placing the family on probation.

Administration will monitor the situation and when the probationary period is over will determine if the family and school are a good fit for each other. If the plan of action is not signed and returned to the school by the deadline or is signed and not carried out by the parent/guardian, then the situation is brought to Administrative Leadership and the Student Support Team for review. Administration and faculty will come to an agreement regarding whether the student may remain at the school and under what conditions or whether and at what point the relationship with the student and enrollment is terminated.



# Adult Communication Policy

## Conscious Communication Guidelines and Civility Policy

Urban Prairie strives to foster healthy relationships between all members of our community. We ask all members of the Urban Prairie school community to make a personal commitment to undertaking direct and honest communication. The school must stand on a firm moral foundation, and this is best done in an atmosphere supported by trust and compassion.

Differences of opinion do arise and need to be acknowledged. While it is natural for concerns to arise within any community, such concerns should be communicated in a productive and constructive manner. When an issue or concern arises within the school community, we ask that the parties involved first talk directly with each other. We request that all persons engage in honest, respectful, and direct verbal and written communications and assume that all parties involved are invested in the best interests of the children. One of the twelve senses described by Rudolf Steiner is the sense of ego. This is not the sense of self but a cultivation of sensitivity to others.

We genuinely seek to create an environment that supports the growth of all the members of our community. The goal of communication should be to resolve conflicts in a way that ennoble both parties. We recognize that conflicts and concerns provide opportunities for learning. We encourage all persons involved in the resolution of a concern to consider the process an opportunity to be open to self-review and to the viewpoints of others.

The goal of conscious communication is that every UPWS parent/guardian:

- is able to speak their mind in a way that also takes into account the time and space of others and respects the boundaries, thoughts, and feelings of others;
- takes interest in others' opinions and strives for understanding without judgment; speaks in a way that is kind, true, and necessary (does it improve upon silence?);
- is responsible for the consequences of their words and actions.

How do we do this?

- Use "I" statements.
- Ask curious questions.
- Take responsibility for your feelings. No one can make you feel anything you do not choose to accept.
- Be aware of your personal assumptions and beliefs and strive to be neutral in your listening.



- Welcome and find peace with divergent viewpoints (agree to disagree).
- Be as succinct as possible.
- When in a group, engage in one conversation at a time.
- Keep discussion oriented towards solutions and the highest good.
- Focus conversation on people who are present.

Please remember that we are all at different places in our journey with this work, and we are all striving towards the same goal. “Sidewalk talk” that is gossipy in nature is destructive to the social fabric of the school community. Any concerns or comments that you have about the school can be best addressed by bringing them directly to a teacher or administrative employee. Administration will bring uncivil communication to the attention of the parties involved. Repeated incidents of incivility that lead to a breakdown in the partnership with the school may put a child’s enrollment in question.

## Netiquette Policy

“Netiquette” refers to etiquette and behavior guidelines for internet communications. Engaging in community discussions online, adding comments, posting on a blog or social media page is like talking in a shared meeting space. These guidelines apply to all community members who are posting events, topics, comments, and photos that represent or pertain to Urban Prairie.

Please be respectful. Many topics can be controversial, but it is important to be able to disagree without being disagreeable and/or using obscenities. Focus comments on the issue at hand, and under no circumstances are community members to post anything with relation to the school or its employees that might be considered threatening, harassing, bullying, obscene, pornographic, sexist, or racist.

Individuals that break these guidelines will be notified by the school administration. If a parent repeatedly breaks these rules, then this action will be considered in violation of bullying, cyber-bullying, privacy and internet use policies.

## Enrollment

### Non-discrimination in Enrollment

We actively seek and welcome students and staff of all races, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientations and spiritual values. Urban Prairie does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, or physical ability in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial assistance programs, and other school-administered programs.



The Enrollment Office is responsible for managing the recruitment, enrollment and retention of students.

## Admissions Processes

Enrollment staff work collaboratively with faculty to facilitate an admissions process that is professional, meaningful, and pedagogically sound. Comprehensive interview and assessment guidelines are in place to ensure thoroughness and consistency.

The most important criterion in the admissions process is that the student and family value and support our educational philosophy. It is also important to ascertain if the school will be able to meet the needs of the student and the expectations of the family. The Educational Support Coordinator will support the admissions process for applicants who are neuro-divergent learners.

Each level has unique admissions protocols which generally include:

- Early Childhood:** Parents/Guardians and children meet with teachers while children are observed in play to determine physical and social readiness.
- Grade School:** Applicants complete a developmental assessment during the interview. A two-day class visit (either in-person or remote) is requested for grade school applicants following a successful interview.
- Middle School:** Applicants complete a basic math and reading comprehension assessment. A two-day class visit (either in-person or remote) is requested for middle school applicants following a successful interview.

All admission decisions are made by faculty. New students are admitted to Urban Prairie Waldorf School on a three-month conditional basis. This gives both the teachers and the family an opportunity to discuss the student's initial adjustment and develop support plans to ensure a successful transition.

## Enrolling a Sibling

- Siblings of current students must submit the online application to begin the process.
- The family's current tuition account must be in good financial standing before additional children can enroll.



## Kindergarten - 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Transition

The Educational Support Coordinator will conduct readiness assessments for all kindergarten children and provide a summary for each child. If teachers and/or the Educational Support Coordinator have concerns about a child's readiness for first grade, those concerns will be shared with parents. Support plans, if needed, will be developed at this time. Progress will be documented and the family will be informed on a regular basis.

If it is determined that it is in the best interest of the child to have another year in Early Childhood, this will be communicated as early as possible. If it is clear that the school cannot meet the needs of a particular student, a counseling-out process will begin, with the Student Support Team. The early childhood teacher will communicate candidly and regularly with the family.

In the spring, all kindergarten parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the rising first grade teacher to learn more about the grade school. The teacher will discuss the expectations of grade school students and how these may differ from early childhood. The first grade curriculum and experience will also be discussed, and parents will have an opportunity to ask questions. Individual meetings between parents and faculty can be scheduled upon request.

## Tuition

The tuition your family pays not only enables Urban Prairie Waldorf School to provide an outstanding Waldorf education for your child, but it also supports all aspects of the school's operations. Timely payment of tuition is important for the economic and educational health of the school. In order to meet salary and other financial obligations, the school counts on families to pay tuition on time. The tuition is set each winter by the Board for the upcoming academic year. Budgetary demands, projected enrollment, and expected fundraising revenue are all factors in this decision.

## TADS

The school uses an external vendor, TADS, to manage tuition and fees billing and collection. Invoices become available online and are mailed by TADS. The initial invoice will include all current charges (tuition and supply/trip fees). Multiple payment options are available, and families may change the amount and date of any and all payment(s) at any time through TADS as long as the monthly charge is paid in full.



## Other Fee Payments

All fees for programs such as Playgroup in the Wild, after school activities, and aftercare are invoiced as they occur. These fees are billed through TADS and are due and payable upon receipt.

## Variable Tuition

We strive to make Urban Prairie a diverse community. To that end, families with demonstrated financial need may be eligible for Variable Tuition. Variable Tuition applications remain confidential and are reviewed by TADS, our third-party tuition management firm. The award amount is determined by the tuition management company and members of the Variable Tuition Committee.

## Conditional Enrollment & Withdrawals

*New Students:* All new students enter the school on a three-month conditional basis so that Urban Prairie Faculty may identify any changes necessary to ensure the student's successful transition to Urban Prairie. The classroom teacher will meet with parents/guardians during and at the end of this period to discuss the student's progress.

*All Students:* If Urban Prairie asks the student to leave at any time during their enrollment, the parents/guardians will be responsible for prorated Tuition and New Student Fee expenses starting from the first day of school to the date of withdrawal, plus the Supply Fee.

*All Students:* In the event that the Student withdraws from Urban Prairie after the execution of this Enrollment Contract for any reason other than as described in the previous paragraph, Urban Prairie shall be entitled to collect tuition and fees as indicated below. Any decision to withdraw the Student must be communicated to the school in writing.

- *Withdrawal on or after April 1 until August 30:* 60% of Tuition + Deposit of \$1,000 + Supply Fee + 100% of the New Student Fee (if applicable)
- *Withdrawal on or after August 31:* 100% of Tuition + Deposit of \$1,000 + Supply Fee + 100% of the New Student Fee (if applicable)



## Governing Realms, Roles, and Responsibilities

The Governing Realms of the school are Administration, the Faculty, and the Board of Trustees, each with its own area of oversight and authority, as outlined in this manual. The Head of School is positioned between the Board and the Administration and Faculty, ensuring that all areas of the school and all initiatives will serve and ensure the long-term fiscal and legal health and sustainability of the organization.

### Head of School

The Head of School develops and implements UPWS's annual strategy, directing and managing the governance, people, and operations of Urban Prairie. They are responsible for high-level oversight of the school, ensure the health and efficacy of the whole, provide accountability across the organization, and coordinate efficient and effective decision-making. The Head of School is hired by, reviewed by, and accountable to the Board.

### Administration

Administration is responsible for the smooth running of the organization. Through its annual planning and review process, Administration infuses people and resources into our school, enforces systems of checks and balances, aims for equity across all constituents in the school in policy-making, and responds to the needs of the community.

### Director of Curriculum and Instruction

The Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DoCI) cultivates and guides the faculty who educate the students of Urban Prairie Waldorf School. The DoCI provides oversight of the curriculum, the faculty, and the ways in which the school serves the student body; provides efficient, effective pedagogical decision-making; and serves parents/guardians regarding pedagogical issues, including broad oversight of parent/guardian education. They oversee pedagogical decision-making, so that faculty has equity and freedom to collaborate and create a dynamic vertical and horizontal curriculum.

### Faculty

The Faculty is responsible for the cultural life of the school, driving, delivering, and overseeing teaching and curriculum, and the wellbeing of the children. Faculty are the first and constant point of contact with students and families, and share their insights with families, faculty colleagues, and Administration to serve all families in the best way possible. With DoCI



oversight, faculty innovate and improve on the curriculum to constantly improve the school's programs and service.

## Board of Trustees

The Board is the governing body of the school responsible for overseeing the school's activities. It determines the school's mission, vision, and values, selects the Head of School, supports the Head of School and reviews their performance, ensures effective organizational planning, ensures adequate resources, and manages resources effectively. The Board holds accountable all realms, via the Head of School.

## Questions? Contact Information

Sharla Paul, Head of School: [sharla.paul@urbanprairie.org](mailto:sharla.paul@urbanprairie.org)

AJ Lee, Director of Finance and Operations : [aj.lee@urbanprairie.org](mailto:aj.lee@urbanprairie.org)

Jen Kang, Director of Curriculum and Instruction: [jen.kang@urbanprairie.org](mailto:jen.kang@urbanprairie.org)

Jenn Zielinski, Director of Enrollment Management: [jen.zielinski@urbanprairie.org](mailto:jen.zielinski@urbanprairie.org)

Kim George, Operations Coordinator: [kimberly.george@urbanprairie.org](mailto:kimberly.george@urbanprairie.org)

Sophie Baumgartner, Pedagogical Operations Coordinator:

[sophie.baumgartner@urbanprairie.org](mailto:sophie.baumgartner@urbanprairie.org)

Danila Miranda, Board President: [danila.miranda@urbanprairie.org](mailto:danila.miranda@urbanprairie.org)

### 2021-22 Faculty Level Chairs

*Early Childhood:* Caitlin Flannery, [caitlin.flannery@urbanprairie.org](mailto:caitlin.flannery@urbanprairie.org)

*Lower School* (grades 1-5): Mat Riendeau, [mat.riendeau@urbanprairie.org](mailto:mat.riendeau@urbanprairie.org)

*Middle School* (grades 6-8): Megan Cather, [megan.cather@urbanprairie.org](mailto:megan.cather@urbanprairie.org)

*Special Subjects:* Xuefen (Glenda) Ding, [glenda.ding@urbanprairie.org](mailto:glenda.ding@urbanprairie.org)

## School Song

For the seed of love within us,  
For the beauty all around us,  
For the strength of truth before us,  
Praises sing to all.



## School Verse

To wonder at beauty,  
Stand guard over truth,  
Look up to the noble, and  
Resolve on the good.  
This leadeth us truly to purpose in living,  
To right in our doing,  
To peace in our feeling,  
To light in our thinking,  
And teaches us trust in the working of all  
In all that there is in the width of the world  
And the depth of the soul.

