



WALDORF SCHOOL on the ROARING FORK

Student Support Program Handbook Waldorf School on the Roaring Fork

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Our Student Support Program

WSRF is committed to providing an engaging environment for students to learn and grow into healthy and responsible citizens. We understand that for children to learn and grow in school they need a strong foundation of healthy neuro-sensory-motor systems including social and emotional health. When a student is having difficulties in one or more of these areas, their learning and perhaps the learning of their peers can be compromised.

We are committed to providing support for those students who are experiencing such challenges. This commitment is the foundation of the curriculum and the heart of our work. We have a Student Support Program which gives as much support as possible for students who are experiencing learning, social and/or behavioral issues.

Our Student Support Values:

- Our task is to remove hindrances to learning. Children who experience learning and/or social emotional challenges present us with a riddle: What is the key that unlocks their capacities? As educators and parents our work is to seek these keys and support the child to find areas of success.
- Empathy is key to success in life. We seek to build empathy in the children so that they can learn to stand in one another's shoes.
- A child who misbehaves is a disoriented child. If we realize that a child who is pushing the behavioral boundaries is disoriented, we approach the child less punitively than we do when we see their behaviors as intentionally naughty or disruptive.



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- Conflict is a necessary part of being human. If we expect that we can remove all conflict from children's lives, we set ourselves up for frustration. Conflict is a given, and most of us have learned our greatest lessons from the conflicts we've experienced. Our task is to let children know that we are there, guiding them through their conflicts so that they may learn constructive lessons from them.
- Support accountability rather than blame. When things go wrong, we set them right. Each person involved takes some of the responsibility.
- We support our students with implicit approaches before moving to explicit approaches. Implicit means "not directly expressed." In other words, it's a process that is there, but the children are not necessarily aware of it. The Waldorf curriculum is rich in implicit approaches to social and emotional challenges. In fact, much of our support work is not apparent to the parent body or the students because it is implicit, embedded in the stories, artwork, speech, music, theatre, and rhythms of the lessons. When the teacher tells the class a story about a character who could never forgive and describes the hardships this caused him in his working life, this is an example of using a story to address the difficulties that one or more of her students is experiencing. On the other hand, an explicit approach directly addresses a situation in the class or with an individual child. Explicit approaches range from whole class strategies ("Children, is this a raising our hands and taking turns time or is it a speaking out time?") to individualized ones, such as a behavior support plan.

Two-Pronged Program for Student Support

Our Student Support Program provides a two-pronged system of support – the Learning Care Group (LCG), which addresses students' learning challenges, and the Social Literacy Care Group (SLCG), which addresses any social or behavioral challenges students experience. These two groups work hand in hand, with the Student Support Executive Group (SSEG) overseeing their work.

The Learning and Social Literacy Care Groups are responsible for:

- Considering students' needs with learning challenges or social/behavioral issues, respectively, and deciding the level of care they require to be healthy and safe at school. Each group follows the Response and Support Level process laid out in each group's policy.
- Providing strategies and strategies to help colleagues support these children.
- Tracking students by documenting goals and outcomes; sharing this information with faculty and parents.
- Initiating and facilitating support meetings and the preparation and follow up needed.
- Supporting intake interviews and other evaluations through whatever level of involvement is needed.

Each care group would include at least one teacher from ECE, grades 1-4, grades 5-6, and subject classes. The full-time Student Support teachers and the School Mentor are members of the Learning Care Group. The Faculty Administrator, School Counselor and Social Literacy Interventionist are members of the Social Literacy Care Group.



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Student Support Executive Group (SSEG)

This group holds the overall authority and responsibility for the two streams. When a student is exhibiting challenges in the classroom or in campus social settings, they are referred to the SSEG (through our MTSS forms and/or incident reports).

Responsibilities include:

- Deciding which student support group will best serve to support the student.
- Ensuring that our *Student Support Handbook*, which includes our *policy, procedures* (communication and responses), and *practice* (action plan), is continually updated to reflect our current practice.

The Student Support Executive Group is made up of the Faculty Administrator and faculty members who chair the Learning Care Group (LCG) and the Social Literacy Care Group (SLCG).

Learning Care Group

- Provides teachers with supports to best meet the needs of students with learning challenges and to support those students who need additional learning challenges. offer suggestions for assessment and therapeutic support for students.
- Oversees the Student Support Team (developmental movement, and academic instructors who work with individual students and small groups).
- Studies to deepen and broaden the group understanding of these issues, including growth and development, child observation and study techniques, learning styles, learning disabilities, and remediation, drawing on Rudolf Steiner's indications on child development, Waldorf pedagogy, relationships to the wellness community, and their own study of relevant topics to this work.

Social Literacy Care Group

- Helps students who need support with social or behavioral issues. These issues may include but are not limited to excluding/being excluded, teasing/being teased, bullying/being bullied, etc.
- Assists teachers in finding appropriate ways to redirect students who are having emotional/behavioral difficulty integrating into the classroom and school culture. Methodologies may include but are not limited to mentoring, recess/aftercare plans, and weekly check-ins.
- Assists and nurtures an environment of mutual respect, safety, and social literacy. This includes fostering a healthy understanding of conflict and resolution strategies.



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Student Support Process for Social Emotional Issues

The student support process aims to move a student's experience from challenge to resolution. Though we cannot resolve all difficulties to the satisfaction of all parties, we strive to address them promptly as they arise and to keep parents informed of our progress through the process. Here's how it works:

- Someone notices that a student has negatively impacted another student, a teacher, the classroom learning environment, or the social environment.

This someone can be a teacher, staff member, parent, or student.

- The teacher uses the Social Literacy Response Levels according to age appropriateness and depending on the impact of the student's actions.

Minimal Impact: If the student's actions were disruptive and possibly inconsiderate but didn't result in any significant harm to another student, teacher and/or the learning environment, the teacher engages in Response Level 1.

Moderate Impact: If the student's actions caused significant disruption to the social environment, and resulted in identifiable harm to another student, teacher and/or the student's own developmental progress, the teacher proceeds to Response Level 2. This action/behavior requires an *Incident Report*.

Serious Impact: If the student's actions caused substantial harm to another student, teacher and/or the school, the teacher proceeds to Response Level 3. It requires an *Incident Report*, notification to a Social Literacy Care group member on the day the actions occurred. Automatic response is a **Formal Restorative Conference** with the student's parents and a Social Literacy Care Group member. The student's actions may result in immediate suspension and/or dismissal.

Response Level 1

- If the teacher engages in Response Level 1, she/he has an informal conversation with the student(s) involved. The teacher uses our *restorative dialogue process* or AADD (Acknowledge, Affirm, Discover, Do-over) method. Intervention strategies such as *The Way We See It* or *Crossing the Line* may also be useful.

If this response doesn't bring about resolution or the student's minimal impact behavior becomes repetitive (for example the child exhibits the same behavior in most class periods or at least 3x/week during recesses/transitions) after four weeks of Level 1 responses, Level 2 response is followed.

Communication Point

The teacher informs the parents of how the student's needs have been addressed, how the classroom strategies have not brought resolution, and that the teacher will ask the Social Literacy Care Group for more support to resolve the issue.



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Response Level 2

- If Response Level 2 is needed, the teacher meets with the Social Literacy Care Group or at least one member of the SLCG.

At this meeting it is decided if a *functional behavior assessment* would be helpful to determine the underlying needs of the student or if specific *Explicit Intervention Strategies* will be employed to support the student(s) involved. Appropriate strategies include but are not limited to: *Crossing the Line, The Way We See It, Playground Support, Goals and Achievement Plan* (See the *Explicit Intervention Strategies* section of this handbook below for descriptions of each strategy.) The tool(s) used depend on the nature of the incident and the student's age. All the student's teachers are informed of the functional behavior assessment or the intervention strategies being used. The assessment or interventions will be used for four weeks.

If this level has not provided resolution, Level 3 is followed.

Communication Point

After the four-week period, the teacher meets with the SLCG to inform them of the functional behavior assessment's results or the student's progress with the intervention strategies. The teacher and SLCG inform the parents to do the same.

Response Level 3

- If Response Level 3 is needed due to a student's actions having a severe impact, the teacher and the SLCG meet to prepare for a *Formal Restorative Conference* with the student and her/his parents.

Move to #7 after this step.

Communication Point

A designated SLCG member informs the student's parent(s) that a *Formal Restorative Conference* is needed and why it's needed.

- If Response Level 3 is needed because of the results of the functional behavior assessment demonstrate the need for one or of a lack of resolution in the use of the chosen intervention strategies at Level 2, the teacher and the SLCG meet to review what strategies have worked and which have not, share any more pertinent observations of the student, brainstorm on how to build on what is working, target a few strategies to explore with the parents, and create a draft *Behavior Support Plan*. Therapeutic supports such as therapy and social skills classes provided by consultants may be strategies in the plan.

Communication Point

A designated SLCG member talks with the parent(s), sharing how the Response Level 2 intervention strategies have not brought resolution, and that a *Support Meeting* is needed to review a draft *Behavior Support Plan* and come to agreement of the plan.



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- If a *Formal Restorative Conference* is needed, a SLCG member facilitates. During the conference the student, his/her parents, and the teacher review what happened, who was impacted, and what the impact was. They create a *Restorative Agreement* which includes specific Level 2 and 3 explicit strategies. Therapeutic supports such as therapy and social skills classes provided by consultants may be used. A timeline is established. All parties sign the agreement.

Communication Point

After the four-week period, a designated SLCG member informs the parents of the student's progress and meets with the SLCG to do the same.

- Once the teacher and the SLCG have created a draft *Behavior Support Plan*, the teacher and a SLCG member have a *Support Meeting* with the parents.

In the Support Meeting the SLCG member will lead a process of review, observations, and brainstorming before sharing the draft *Behavior Support Plan*. While discussing the plan a timeline is established. The plan is adapted if deemed necessary, agreed upon, and signed by all parties. In the upper grades, the student may be present to work on the plan with the adults.

The *Restorative Agreement* or the *Behavior Support Plan* is followed by the student and designated school personnel.

- After the agreed amount of time set in the *Restorative Agreement* or *Behavior Support Plan*, the teacher reports back to the SLCG and parents.

If the situation has been resolved the process is complete.

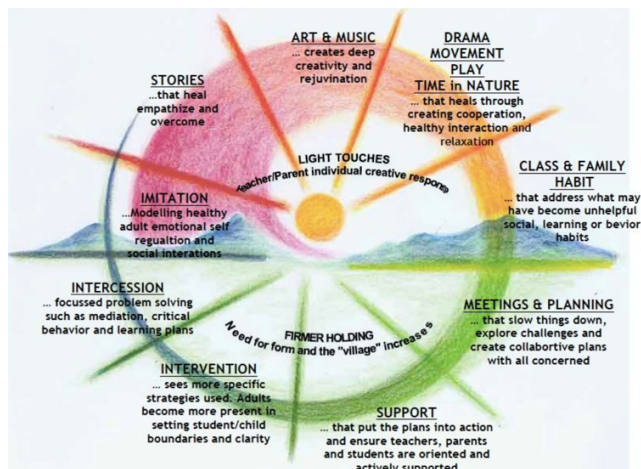
If the issue(s) have not provided resolution, the teacher meets again with the SLCG either to decide to extend the plan or to create a new one with the student's parents. A meeting with the parents, teacher and an SLCG member is convened. It may be that the *Restorative Agreement* or the *Behavior Support Plan* is revised or a decision that the school is not able to support the student's needs is agreed upon.

- These steps are repeated until resolution has been reached.



Explicit Intervention Strategies

There are two levels of intervention used in Grades 1-8 for students in need of more support than the implicit approaches embedded in our curriculum (labeled “Light Touches” in this graphic explicitly shared in our Social Literacy program.



Level 2 Explicit Approaches

If our community building/whole class strategies do not support an individual student to productive learning and relationships, our teachers begin to use direct, differentiated strategies.

When are these approaches be needed?

We know a child needs more support if the following actions by a student become persistent and prolonged as described above in the student support process:

- disruption of the learning environment due to impulsivity, attention issues, anger management challenges, passivity, anxiety, depression, etc.
- rough play, such as pushing, hitting, slapping, biting, throwing objects at others
- overt or covert intimidation, exclusion, harmful teasing, verbal aggression/harassment, defiance, inappropriate gestures, dishonesty, disrespect
- possession of harmful objects, destruction, or defaming property
- not being in class, running away.
- cyber-bullying which includes doing any of the above through electronic means, such as email, instant messaging, texting, etc.

Change of Environment: A teacher has a student visit a designated classroom for a certain length of time for a “re-set” per the Change of Environment schedule found on the inside of each classroom's cupboard door.

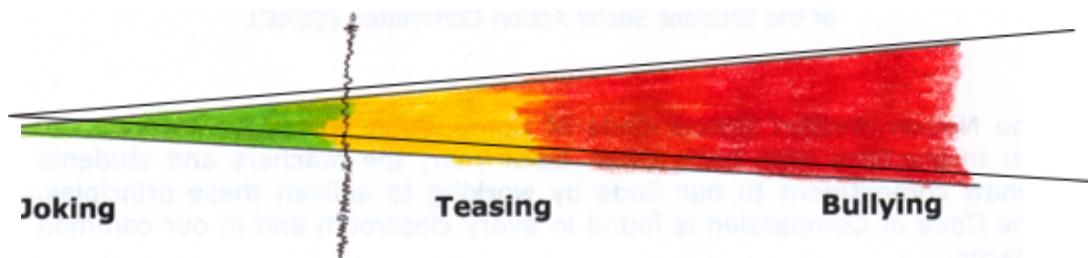
Check In and Go: A teacher meets with a student who is having difficulty in class during a transition to another class, the restroom, or recess to check in before proceeding to the destination. During this brief check-in the student reviews the agreed-upon goals for the transition.



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Circle of Friendship: A small group of school community members who support a child in need. This group may include a classmate, teacher(s), and a member of the 7-8 *Support Crew*.

Crossing the Line: A teacher leads the students in completing a series of sentences she/he shares that probe behavioral or relationship issues. An example is "Joking around crosses the line and becomes teasing when...." This is a graphic of crossing the line.



Goals and Achievements Plan: An agreement between a student and teacher to work on a particular behavior. It assigns a numeric value to how well a student has done. The teacher and student set the goal and both track progress.

Incident Report: A written report completed by a teacher to document an incident with moderate-severe impact and delineate the plan created during the restorative dialogue. The report is given to the SLCG and the parents are contacted about the incident.

Playground Support: The student's play during recess space is clearly delineated by the class teacher. This space is usually a small area that is easily supervised. The activities that can happen in this space are of interest to the student. The student must report to the duty teacher and be reminded of his or her Recess Goal before beginning recess. The duty teacher then ensures that the student remains in the designated play area and communicates this information to the class teacher.

Preview/Review (whole class): A class or specialty teacher shares a description of what is coming (preview) or a look at what just happened (review) at the end of the period with the whole class. Previews usually lower anxiety, and reviews guide students to consider the effects of their actions. A teacher may preview/review long or short periods of time (coming school day or what just happened) depending upon the class's needs.

Preview/Review (individual student): The teacher may employ this approach with just one student who is prone to have high stress responses.

Restorative Dialogue (SHARE): An approach a teacher or staff member uses to support a student or students to resolve a social issue. There are 5 steps. The students involved:

1. **Share** what happened once at a time.
2. **Hear** from and/or about those impacted
3. **Acknowledge** what the impact was to the other person/to other people.
4. **Recognize (R)** what went wrong.
5. **Enroll** in a plan to do it differently next time.



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AADD is usually used in lead grades 1-2 students. The teacher:

1. **A**cknowledges the behavior of the student or the incident that occurred among a group of students.
2. **A**ffirms that the person in the wrong had a need.
3. Helps the individual **D**iscover what that need was ("What do you think your hands were trying to say when they pushed her down?")
4. Brainstorms with the child(ren) what they can **D**o-over the action or incident ("Let's have you use your words to practice telling people what you want them to know.").

Selective Seating: A teacher may move the child's position in the room in relation to the teacher or other students to decrease possible distractions.

Supported Transitions: A teacher or staff member walks with a student during transitions that are problematic for the student.

The Way We See It: A teacher has each student who was in a conflict draw the sequence of events that led up to it with captions below each drawing. The teacher then brings the students together to read the captions and ask for explanations from each student. The students then draw a new set of boxes showing how the situation could have been healthier. Ideas are discussed and a practical plan is created.

Timing Orientation: A teacher may use a visual scale in the classroom that demonstrates for students what type of classroom activity is occurring, how long it will be used for, and what the appropriate noise level is.

No Blame Meeting (for grades 3-8): This meeting brings students experiencing conflict together in a spirit of no blame and genuine interest in exploring solutions. This meeting is called by the SLCG when a conflict is persisting after the students involved have had at least one restorative dialogue.

Who is present at a No Blame Meeting?

- Facilitator (SLCG member or a teacher)
- Students involved in the conflict
- One or two *7-8 Student Team* members who lead meeting

No Blame Meeting Process:

- Introductions, mood of meeting is set (no one is in trouble or being blamed and now is our opportunity to work it out), parameters (we raise hands, no interruptions, we wait if someone gets upset) shared.
- One leader tells what happened, and then asks, "Is this how you saw it? Did I get it right?" *7-8 Student Team* helpers may share their own personal experiences of a situation like the one being worked on in the meeting.
- Brainstorming/Heart Searching: "Can each of you say what it is you need for this problem to get better? How can we make that happen?", encouraging them to speak directly to one another and to get to their underlying needs.
- One leader guides the students to choose ideas that seem to help everybody. An action plan is made with a date to follow-through, which assures that there will be results.
- Facilitator participates at pivotal times with helpful comments.



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Level 3: Intensive Approaches

There may be a need for more intensive intervention to support a student's social emotional development. We would use any or all these explicit strategies to support an individual student:

Behavior Support Plan: This plan is developed to move a student toward resolution if Level 2 explicit strategies have not settled the issue. The plan is drafted by the SLCG and the student's teacher(s) once a *Functional Behavior Assessment* has been completed. It is then presented to, and reviewed and adapted (if needed) with the student's parents at a Parent Support Meeting.

8th Grade Crew Involvement: A member of crew develop a supportive relationship with the student during recess check ins. The crew member may also become a buddy with the student.

Formal Restorative Conference: A facilitated meeting with the student(s), their parents, the student's teacher(s), and a member of the SLCG to review the conflict or discipline issue and create a restorative agreement.

Functional Behavior Assessment: A small team of the SLCG meets with the student's teachers to define the challenge the student is having, gathers information about when and where the behavior is happening, how often it is happening, who is around when it is happening and what tends to happen right before and after the behavior. Then they strive to find out the reason for the behavior, or what we call the underlying need. This assessment informs the creation of the student's *Behavior Support Plan*.

Parent Support Meeting: This is a facilitated meeting of the student's parents and teacher(s), and a member of the Social Literacy Care Group to focus on the student's needs. The aim of the meeting is to find ways to build upon the student's successes and agree to a written Behavior Support Plan that outlines how progress will be sought. This meeting is usually requested by the SLCG or a teacher. It can be requested by a parent. It is coordinated by the SLCG. There is follow-up after the meeting to see what progress has been made.

Restorative Agreement: The agreement is a measurable plan developed during a formal restorative conference. It includes specific and measurable/concrete actions the parties will take to repair any harm, resolve any issues, and strategize for how to keep it from happening again.

Restorative Suspension: If an incident has compromised the well-being and safety of the students, a teacher, and the school social/learning environment a restorative suspension may be needed. The Restorative Agreement is completed by the SLCG, the teacher and student before the student returns to school.

Restorative Dismissal: A restorative dismissal may be needed when all previous attempts to help a student improve his/her behavior have failed and the student needs behavioral support the school is unable to provide. Consistent with the restorative approach, the school will assist the parents in making the transition to another school.



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We are grateful to have used the following school's templates as prototypes for our own:

- Sebastopol Charter School
- Mountain Song Community School

Social Literacy Program

The Importance of Social Literacy

Each of us over the course of our life has an overwhelming desire to make sense of the world and build healthy relationships with ourselves, our surroundings, and with other human beings. Waldorf education acknowledges that for us to “make sense” of the experiences that come towards us we need twelve senses not just five.

In the early years what we learn through our four lower senses of *touch, life, proprioception, and balance* helps us to understand how the world works and what part we play in it. These four lower senses inform our four higher senses. Our three highest senses of *word, thought and ego* are what we view as crucial components of *social literacy* as they guide us to make sense of others' speech, recognize the meaning they wish to impart to us through their words, and lastly be able to experience the ego of another human being.

To bring these higher senses to healthy fruition in adulthood a child needs to develop five core competencies of social emotional learning:

- Self-awareness – identify your own emotions, thoughts and values and understand how to guide your behavior
- Self-management – regulate your own emotions, thoughts and behaviors in different situations and set to and work towards goals
- Social awareness – be able to take someone else's perspective and empathize with others
- Relationship skills – communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflicts well, seek and offer help
- Responsible decision-making – make good choices about your behavior and social interactions based on ethics, safety and social norms

An Integrated Approach to Developing Social Literacy

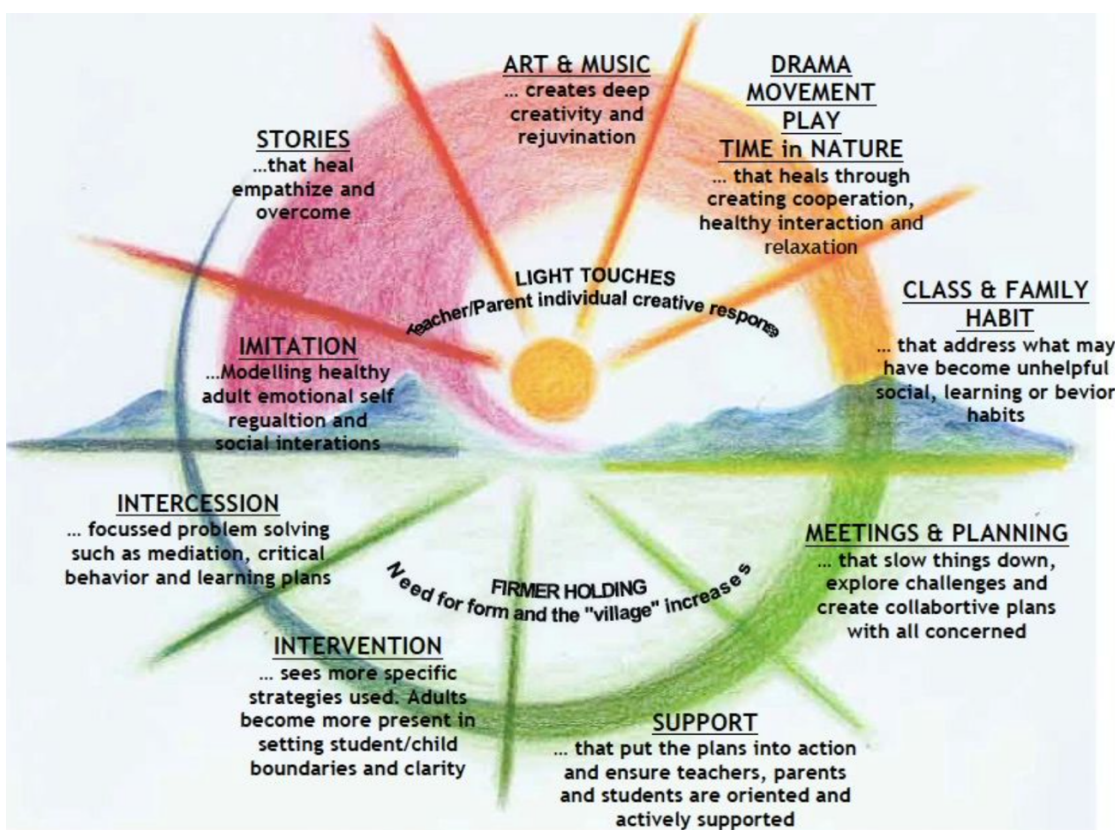
At WSRF we know that an integrated approach over the course of a child's school life is the key to building these competencies. Proactive, developmentally appropriate strategies above the horizon of the diagram below labeled “Light Touches,” are embedded in the Toddler Program to 8th grade to support our students' social emotional learning.

Our students are not consciously aware of these light touches, which include music, painting, drawing, sculpting, speech, drama, storytelling, and movement, since they are built into our curriculum, woven into our everyday school life. All these activities as we know support our social emotional health. The arts provide opportunities to come to stillness, to explore one's feelings and thoughts, and to collaborate and thus listen to others. Pedagogical stories tell of characters that experience struggles, and demonstrate what behaviors work and which don't.



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We design our class habits, rhythms and even our physical classrooms to keep social and sensory complexity at moderate arousal levels, with a high level of form and predictability. Our teachers intentionally lead the class with “loving firmness,” positivity, and a “we’re all learning” attitude. Each day is rich in beneficial movement and a rhythm that moves in and out of focused work. The children engage in meaningful chores which are meant to build their love for hard work and collaboration. Our goal is for these implicit approaches serve to diminish the need for the explicit interventions shown in the illustration on page 1 as “firmer holding.”



Grades 1-8 Social Literacy Program

In the elementary years we implement an explicit Social Literacy program to support our students in understanding and living into our school culture of respect, responsibility, and community. This whole class and whole student body approach supports our view that being responsible to the group is crucial for us to grow as human beings.

Our school agreements are the foundation upon which our program is implemented. We have a whole class component and two whole school components that guide our students to work together to build their five core competencies of social literacy.



School Agreements

The faculty created three agreements which succinctly describe how we aspire to treat each other. The lower grades wording of our 3 Bs is: *Be kind; Be ready; Be safe*. The upper grades wording is: *Be mindful and take responsibility for your actions; Be kind and respect others and yourself; Be ready and put forth your best effort*.

Each teacher leads their students in conversation about how they wish to work together on the 1st day of school. This will culminate with a review of our School Agreements. This collaboration continues throughout each school year based on the students' developing self-regulation and social emotional skills.

Buddy System

This program pairs older mentors (5th-8th) with younger buddies (1st-4th) for regular time together wherein they connect with each other, connect to the campus, and weave the social fabric of community. At the beginning of the school year, 8th graders are paired with 1st, 7th with 2nd, 6th with 3rd, and 4th and 5th with the kindergarten classes and with each other. These mentor assignments last until the end of school year.

Every other week buddies have a planned activity or more that the SLCG plans based on the social-emotional needs of the student community at that time or based on a seasonal theme. These joint activities may include:

- Community service on campus or off campus.
- Games Day of social-emotional and/or cooperative games.
- School assemblies with role-playing exercises, learning sessions, or a guest speaker led by the 8th grade, which would address exclusion, teasing, bullying, impulse control, etc.

In Class Circles

These circles are developmentally appropriate meetings for the class to build their social-emotional learning and explore how to balance their individual needs with the values of cooperation, consensus, fair representation, and justice with their classmates and teacher in a supportive environment. In-class circles are weekly in grades 5-8 (called Class Meetings) and can be less often in grades 1-4 (often called Sun Circles).

In-class circles may include cooperative games, small group and individual activities that allow the students to build the five competencies, conflict resolution, sharing feedback, goal setting.

8th Grade Crew

Building student leadership is an important element of our Social Literacy Program. The 8th grade students train as student mentors and take on an active role in contributing to the healthy social life of the school community. They learn conflict resolution skills and reflect upon their own experiences to bring understanding and empathy to their work with the younger students. The crew's involvement in our Social Literacy Program includes:

1. Lead monthly school assemblies or events
2. Conduct classroom exercises (role-playing and skits) in younger classes.
3. Support small groups of younger students who are experiencing social difficulty by leading No Blame Meetings.
4. Support identified students in a Circle of Friendship.
5. Develop supportive relationships with identified students in need during recess check ins.
6. Possibly become a buddy to an identified student in need.