

POTOMAC CRESCENT WALDORF SCHOOL

ELEMENTARY GRADES CURRICULUM

“The Waldorf approach to educating the child strives to achieve rhythm and balance in every school day and throughout the school year. The presentation of each subject directly connects with the child, head, heart and limbs.”

from *Rudolf Steiner Education: The Primary Years*, by Carl Hoffmann

As children enter our elementary school, they are guided by a Class Teacher who carries the class from first through third grade. The children and teacher develop a deep and enduring relationship through the shared experience of the main lesson curriculum.

MAIN LESSON

The heart of Waldorf education during the elementary school years is the main lesson. Given first for two hours each morning, the main lesson centers on one subject for “blocks” of three or four weeks in length. This arrangement allows for an intensive, uninterrupted study. When the block concludes, another main lesson subject takes its place. The former study goes to “sleep” and reawakens later in the year.

The main lesson takes into account the subconscious life. It is frequently observed that a child who may, for example, have difficulty in understanding an arithmetic problem will, during the next main lesson block of the same subject several months later, have solved his problem.

The daily main lesson follows the beneficial rhythm of breathing in and out, concentration and relaxation, formal instruction and individual activities. Thinking, feeling and doing are kept in balance. The teacher’s artistic, imaginative faculties make the lessons living and exciting. Rather than relying on text books that make for a common denominator, the students write and illustrate their own workbooks.

First Grade

Form Drawing
Fairy Tales
Folk Tales
Writing
Phonics/Reading
Qualities of Numbers
Addition/Subtraction
Multiplication/Division
Counting
Nature Studies
Music & Singing
Pentatonic Flutes
Speech & Recitation
Drama

Second Grade

Form Drawing
Saint Legends
Aesops Fables
Writing & Grammar
Word Families/Reading
Arithmetic
Carrying/Borrowing
Times Tables
Numerical Patterns
Local Native Folklore
Music & Singing
Pentatonic Flutes
Speech & Recitation
Drama

Third Grade

Form Drawing
Old Testament Stories
Native American Tales
Composition & Parts of Speech
Reading/Spelling/Punctuation
Arithmetic
Weights & Measures
Times Tables
House Building
Farming & Gardening
Music/Singing/Notation
Diatonic Recorders
Speech & Recitation
Drama

Form Drawing

Rudolf Steiner created form drawing; it is done in all the elementary grades. The children begin with straights and curves, and gradually move on to running forms and freehand geometric designs. Form drawing strengthens manual dexterity and trains the child’s sense for form.

Language Arts

Writing comes before reading. The children learn the sounds and shapes of the letters of the alphabet through stories, poetry, drama and many lively activities. Reading happens individually when each child is ready. The children read from material they have copied into their own books from the chalkboards. (It is a phonics approach with rhythm, repetition and speech.) In the spring of first grade, the children make their own “readers.” In the later grades, well-selected books serve as readers.

Arithmetic

The children are introduced to the numbers from one to twelve through stories and active counting games. They learn to write the numbers and to count by ones, fives, tens and so forth. The four arithmetic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) are introduced pictorially and are related to each other. The children recite number rhymes, discover number patterns, and begin to learn the times tables “by heart.” The work in arithmetic builds each year on what was done the previous year. Mental arithmetic is done daily in the morning exercises.

Nature Study

Experience of nature is strengthened by walks, seasonal observations, gardening, and through stories that help explain natural phenomena in a living and imaginative way. In second and third grades, Native American tales and local folklore are included. The children spend a portion of every day outside and are encouraged to become keen observers of the world around them.

SPECIALITY SUBJECTS

Subjects needing regular practice — foreign languages, music, eurythmy, handwork, and games — are given after the main lesson, usually by specialist teachers, in shorter periods of time.

Music

The children sing daily. They play pentatonic flutes in first and second grades and diatonic recorders in third grade.

Eurythmy

A movement class created by Rudolf Steiner and unique to Waldorf schools is done weekly. It is connected to speech and tone.

Foreign Language

Spanish is taught through artistic activities, listening and repetition. The approach is conversational and very lively. The class meets twice a week.

Handwork

The children learn to knit on wooden needles they make themselves. They knit practical items such as crayon bags and scarves. In grade two, they learn to purl, and the projects become more challenging. In third grade the children learn to crochet.

Drawing & Painting and Modeling Beeswax

These activities are connected to main lesson studies as much as possible. The children draw on a daily basis; painting and beeswax classes are usually once a week.

Games

The children have games class once or twice a week. They learn to cooperate with each other while developing balance, dexterity and coordination.

Gardening and Crafts

Both classes are seasonal and complement each other. When the weather is suitable the children work outside, digging and planting in the school garden. In the colder months when the Earth is sleeping, they work on various indoor projects connected to the seasons.



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Financial assistance is available.

The Northern Virginia Waldorf School Initiative (NVWSI) dba Potomac Crescent Waldorf School does not discriminate by race, color, ethnic or national origin, or religion in its admissions, administrative, financial aid or any other policies.

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