



SteinerSchool.org

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Community Compact August 2021

Rudolf Steiner School of Ann Arbor is a unique community and during the spring of 2020 we worked together – as parents, teachers, administrators, and students – to make the unprecedented remote-learning period work as well as possible for everyone.

During the 2020-21 School Year we worked with students in small groups of 8 – 10 students, and with approximately 20% of the student body learning remotely. This was challenging for everyone. For teachers it created significant burdens as they struggled to present multiple main lessons, support students that they could not meet with, and manage to bring classes to students both in the room and on Zoom. It was just as difficult for students who struggled with the academic challenges of learning in unconventional, and much less than ideal, ways, the social issues of being limited to very small social groups, and the personal struggles of isolation, anxiety, and separation. We are very glad that the science that has developed over the past year has shown that with the use of the layers of protection, explained in detail below, we can return to a full curriculum, to full-size groups of children, and to a fully in-person curriculum.

This time last year we brought the following principles to the community around how we wanted to work together to get through what we knew would be a challenging 2020-21 School Year. Now, as we face, in many ways, an even more difficult 2021-22 School Year, we ask that everyone recommit to them. The pandemic has become a point of political and philosophical controversy as well as a health emergency. We, as a school, know that there is no way that we will be able to create an approach to the school year that will meet every community member's ideal and that we are very likely to lose community members over the decisions we make as we enter this fall. This is extremely regrettable, and we are working intently to avoid it, but we are making the best possible decisions for our community – with a focus on science and the health of teachers, students, and community members.

Thank you for continuing to work with these principles:

- Having patience with each other as we learn a whole new way of being at school, yet again. The more patient and caring we can all be for each other as we experience the stress and anxiety of returning to school again, the more we will be able to come together and make this as nurturing an experience as possible for the students, teachers, parents, and staff.
- Following the Health Department guidance around health and when to stay at home. This means that faculty members (who may be tempted to work through almost any illness) need to again take the time off this year, and parents need to keep children home when they are unwell, and we understand how hard this can be at times. To be true partners with the Washtenaw County Health Department we all also need to be responsive to them if they contact us, usually by phone. Please answer any calls from the Washtenaw County Health Department and cooperate with them if they ask you to quarantine or share contact information.
- Refraining from judgement and curiosity when someone does test positive for COVID-19. It is easy to assume that they were doing something risky, and that they are unvaccinated, but they may have just been going to the grocery store or to work, and it may well be a break-through case. We need to be supportive of anyone in the community who is taken ill.
- Considering how our personal behavior may open up risk for the community members we are in contact with. The choices we make in our personal life will have more of an impact on those around us than usual, so please make every effort to limit your exposure to COVID-19 to protect the school community. This is especially

important as we come back together as a community this fall, making sure that we are taking COVID-19 precautions in other settings to avoid transfer of COVID-19 into our classrooms.

- Sharing when things are not working well for us – whether it is school related or more general. We all need to be able to ask for support when we need it, and your coordinators, teachers, and fellow parents can all work to solve problems, address concerns, and give a physically-distanced hug.
- Talking with your level coordinator – Abby Kurlfink for the Early Childhood Program; Peggy Wilson for Grades One to Eight; and Ann Brennan, or Heather Lomason for the High School – whenever you see or experience something that you think could be handled in a way that would be more supportive of members of our community. All the coordinators are working to ensure that the plan is followed and that we meet all of our commitments to health and safety protocols, and if you are aware of something that is being overlooked or not fulfilled, please share that directly with them.

Together we can get through this coming school year in the best way possible – one that supports and nurtures our children and each other. We appreciate all your involvement and support in making this school year successful.