## WSA's Educational Support for Diverse Learning Needs

The Waldorf School of Atlanta is committed to fostering the healthy development of every student in alignment with our mission and the Waldorf educational philosophy. We value the unique strengths that each student brings to our school, and we strive to provide an environment where children can grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

## Our Approach to Learning Differences

We are able to serve students with a range of learning profiles, including students who benefit from classroom accommodations and whose required supports fall within the scope of our program. We make reasonable modifications to our policies, practices, and procedures where necessary to accommodate individuals with disabilities. For applicants whose needs extend beyond what our program can provide, we work with families to determine whether WSA is the best place to serve their child's education. Waldorf education is not a clinical or therapeutic program and we do not provide special-education services as defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). While we offer differentiated instruction, classroom accommodations, and supplemental academic support, we ask families to work with outside professionals for intensive one-to-one remediation, clinical therapy or behavior intervention services, or other services, at the family's expense. We welcome collaboration with outside providers when it supports the student's overall well-being and classroom success.

## Enrollment and Support Decisions

Enrollment and support decisions are made in a collaborative process with families based on:

- The student's ability to access the curriculum with the supports available
- The resources of our Educational Support Department
- Maintaining a healthy classroom environment

Our priority is to serve our students with integrity and compassion. We commit to providing a Waldorf education to each class and, within the scope of our educational program, using differentiated instruction, classroom accommodations, and select supplementary supports to allow it to be accessed by a diverse range of learners

**Educational Support Services at WSA**

- **Differentiated Instruction & Classroom Accommodations (Grades 1-8)**:
    - Teachers provide instructional differentiation and accommodations to support access to the curriculum based on observed needs and professional recommendations.
- **Waldorf Extra Lesson Support (Grades 1-8)**
- Developmentally based movement, sensory integration work, and fine-motor skill support offered through the Waldorf Extra Lesson approach to support students' learning and emotional development.
- **Reading Support (Grades 2-4)**
- Targeted, skill-focused instruction provided by an Orton-Gillingham certified tutor to supplement early reading and foundational literacy. This support supplements classroom instruction, but may not meet the needs of students requiring intensive or long-term remediation.
- **Small-Group Math Support (Grades 2-4)**
- Targeted, skill-focused and small group instruction provided by the Educational Support Department to build foundational math skills and support students' progress towards grade-level expectations. This support supplements classroom instruction, but it may not meet the needs of students requiring intensive or long-term remediation.
- **Math Support for Grade 5**:
- Targeted small-group instruction provided by the Middle School Math Department to reinforce key skills and prepare students for increasingly advanced math concepts.
- **Middle School Math Support**:
- A combination of weekly pull-out group instruction and Math Study Hall sessions provided by the Middle School Math Department to provide reinforcement, guide practice, and support students who need help mastering concepts.
- **School Counselor for Grades 1-8**:

- The School Counselor supports students' social-emotional well-being through individual and group SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) sessions. The School Counselor does not provide clinical mental health treatment; referrals for outside services may be recommended when higher-level care is needed.

**Individualized Educational Support Plans**

Students receiving support may have an Educational Support Plan outlining accommodations and strategies. **These plans are not IEP's (Individualized Education Programs under the IDEA) or 504 Plans under the Rehabilitation Act**, but are tailored to the student's needs through the school's Educational Support process. For more complex profiles, WSA may recommend that families partner with outside specialists, such as tutors or therapists, who can collaborate with the school. Outside specialists may be able to work with students on campus, during or after school hours, as space and schedule allow.

**Family Support**

It is our experience that parents and/or guardians play a crucial role in students' success at The Waldorf School of Atlanta. Outcomes for student success are greatly enhanced when parents value the school philosophy, understand the nature of our curriculum, recognize our strengths and limitations, and work in partnership to provide information and access to outside support services that may be necessary. Regular communication between parents, teachers, and outside support when utilized is critical to the success of all students at WSA."

Finally, we find that our students excel when the curriculum at school is supported by parents in the very nature of the home life that is created for them. We encourage parents to provide rhythm and consistency at home, lots of free, unstructured time (particularly in nature), healthy foods, and regular and adequate sleep schedules, all of which will contribute to a balanced, healthy child that can thrive at our school. In contrast, TV, media, gaming and regular screen-time in general, along with a diet heavy in processed foods, and an overscheduled week with too many extracurricular activities and not enough sleep, are known to contribute to a child's struggles at our school.