

## **LOWER SCHOOL HANDBOOK**

In grades 1-5, basic academics such as reading, math, English, social studies, and science are stressed. A strong foundation in phonics builds reading and language arts skills. Math is taught with a strong emphasis on concepts, real-life applications, problem solving, and mastery of fundamental operations, as well as computer skills. Students are encouraged to expand and reinforce science skills through experiments and individual exploration. The area of social studies takes into account the various cultures, life in the community, and the history of our country. The curriculum is enriched by many exciting field trips as well as classes in art, foreign language, music, computer, and physical education. Students are motivated to express themselves creatively in oral and written communications and in visual and performing arts. Walker students are encouraged to think for themselves and make intelligent judgments and decisions within an atmosphere of love and support.

### **Physical Education**

Physical education at Walker is a comprehensive program that involves all lower school students. A positive attitude toward one's self and toward a lifetime of physical fitness is fostered. The program reinforces learning through movement and development of physical skills.

### **Art**

Art education is an integral element of our total learning program at the Walker School. We offer regular art classes for our lower school children. Classes are taught in our specially equipped art lab. The students are exposed to a variety of media and art techniques and are encouraged to use their imaginations as they explore materials and tools. At Walker, we encourage the display of student artwork: our halls and bulletin boards provide a showcase for the creativity of the students. Walker students pursue art activities and enjoy experiences that will lead to a positive and creative feeling, about their own individual art work. The Gallery, which is located in the main hall, provides an opportunity for the students to enjoy the work of professional artists as well as that of Walker students.

### **Music**

The Walker School offers a variety of musical activities for the lower school students. In grades 1-5 topics of study include: musical forms, instruments of the orchestra, music history, music theory and songs from around the world. The students study these and many more topics through singing, dancing, writing of music and playing instruments. An annual Spring Play is presented by the elementary grades. This production is a musicaldrama that involves all students in grades 1-5.

The purpose of the music department is to foster in each child an appreciation of various types of music as well as a positive attitude toward music and the ability to perform it.

### **Foreign Language**

Foreign Language classes are provided on a regularly scheduled basis for students in grades 1-5. The purpose of the program is to introduce lower school students to the

spoken language as well as to a unique culture and its customs. The students become familiar with the rhythm of the language which enables them to develop and refine the skills of listening, understanding, and reproducing spoken language.

### **Character Education**

Character Education in the Lower School is a highly visible and cooperative program which is integrated across the curriculum at each grade level and throughout the special areas. Classroom activities and group meetings, bulletin board displays, assembly performances, and closed-circuit video productions are all designed to highlight a special virtue each month. Additionally, student participation in various service projects throughout the school year is a vital component of this program.

### **I. ABSENCES AND TARDIES**

A. Absences—All absences require a written note sent to the teacher specifically explaining the reason for the absence.

1. Repeated Absences—Since Walker has an accelerated program it is necessary that each child be present daily. If a child is absent more than 20 days or misses classes repeatedly, it may be necessary to consider having the child repeat that grade level. That decision will be made by the Principal and the teacher.

2. Requests for Homework—Parents should call the school by 11:00 a.m. in the morning to request homework. Assignments may be picked up in the office after 3:00.

3. Absences during the school day—Absences for any part of a day should occur infrequently and only in the event of compelling circumstances. A parent or designated representative of a parent must sign the child in or out at the office when coming to school after 7:45 a.m. or leaving school before the regular dismissal time. A student who signs in after 11:30 a.m. or who signs out before 11:30 a.m. does not receive credit for the day.

4. Illness—Do not send children to school when they have a fever or a rash of unknown origin. Illnesses are communicated rapidly among younger students. We will call you in case of illness or injury at school. If you are asked to pick up your child, please come to the school office as quickly as possible.

5. Non-illness—Absences during the day and for trips are strongly discouraged. Appointments with dentists and doctors should be made for after school hours, Saturdays, or vacation days. If such an absence is imperative, the student should bring to the teacher a written request signed by the parent or guardian stating the reason. The person who comes for the child must sign the child out in the office. Emergency requests, other than medical, will be handled on an individual basis with the Principal.

### **B. Tardies**

A Walker student learns to be punctual by being in the classroom ready to start the day at 7:45 a.m. Occasional unexpected circumstances may cause tardiness, but habitual late arrival at school is unacceptable. Not only does it defeat the learning of punctuality, but it is also very disturbing to the child and the class. On that rare occasion that a student is tardy, the parent should sign the child in at the office. Parents will be notified if tardiness becomes a problem.

## **II. Updating Information**

It is important to the safety and well-being of your child for the Lower School office to have the most up-to-date information for contacting you in case of an emergency. Any changes in home, business, cell, and other emergency addresses or phone numbers should be shared with us as soon as possible.

## **III. Snacks**

Students in grades 1-5 may bring a nutritious snack to eat in the classroom. Having a water bottle available is encouraged. All students are encouraged to eat a substantial breakfast every morning. Gum, candy and soft drinks may not be sent to school.

## **IV. Carpool**

Every student who goes to 2:45 p.m. carpool goes to Gatti Hall for carpool. **If, on rare occasions, during afternoon carpool (2:35 p.m.) you find it necessary to park and then pick up your child, come to the Lower School office and give your carpool number to Diane Budkoski. Your child will be called and will come up to you. Teachers will no longer release a child to a parent through Gatti Hall doors. Students will only be released to parents in the placePlaceNameLower PlaceType School office area.**

**We are also asking that parents remain off cell phones during morning drop off and afternoon pick up as another way of keeping our carpool safe and running efficiently.**

## **V. Extended Day Program**

The Extended Day Program (EDP) is available from 2:45 p.m.-6:00 p.m. for students in grades 1-5. The program is in session every full school day that regular classes meet. The EDP will not be in session when school dismisses at noon, during student holidays, or when school is cancelled for any reason.

Students in grades 1-5 who are not involved in an organized school activity and who remain on the campus after 3:10 p.m. will be required to attend the EDP and the parents will be responsible to pay the \$9.00 daily fee upon picking up the student. To avoid a fee for the EDP, parents must pick up their children by 3:10 p.m. Please understand that for your child's protection and safety, there is no choice as to whether to attend EDP after 3:10 p.m.

The registration fee is \$18 per student for those attending EDP. The cost for participation is as follows: \$7 per day for each student participating at least three days per week and \$9 per day for each student participating fewer than three days per week. The parents of students attending on a regular basis will be billed at the beginning of the school quarter for the number of EDP days in the quarter. The fees for drop-in students will be billed at the end of the quarter. Both of these fees should be paid within five days. Parents who pick students up after 6:00 p.m. will be charged \$5 for every five minutes or fraction thereof that the student and EDP staff must wait. Habitual tardiness on the part of the person picking the student up could result in the student being dropped from the

EDP program.

If a student who attends the EDP daily is to be late or absent due to illness or for any other reason, it would be most helpful if the parent would write a note or call the school to say the student will be late or absent from the EDP on a given day. If you know ahead of time, please notify the EDP Director in writing. For reasons of safety, it is imperative that the staff know exactly who is to be in attendance each day.

The program will include time for homework, play, snack, projects, story reading and possibly videos. We may be able to arrange for the students to attend some of the athletic events held on campus.

### **VI. Beginning the Day**

The day in the Lower School begins at 7:45 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a non-denominational prayer led via the intercom.

### **VII. Assembly**

An assembly program will be held on most Wednesdays for students in grades 1-5. Students will be involved in many of these programs. Parents are invited to attend any of our programs.

### **VIII. Medication**

When a student is on medication prescribed or otherwise, a parent or designated adult must present to the school nurse the medication in the original container labeled with the child's name and specific instructions for dispensing the medication. Any special conditions required, such as refrigeration, are to be noted by the parent in a note. The nurse will administer the medication to the child according to the directions. Should unused medication need to be sent home, the parent or designated adult must obtain it from the nurse.

### **IX. Discipline**

(See Comportment Section, that appears earlier in the general section of the handbook)

### **X. Dress and Grooming Code**

Grooming is a matter of personal discipline and concern for others. Walker students dress neatly, behave well, and reflect consideration for the values of the Walker community.

Students are expected to follow the school dress code as outlined below. Clothing or hairstyle, which, in the judgment of a school administrator, is inappropriate, calls undue attention to an individual, or interferes with the planned educational program in any way may not be worn to school.

Attire for field trips, as well as for some special events and presentations at school, is the field trip uniform as described below. A few special events at school will be occasions for modification of the dress code. Advance notice of such occasions will always be given.

Students who are not dressed properly will be refused participation in any school function on or off campus.

The school administration reserves the right to authorize or prohibit any individual item of apparel even if it is not specifically addressed by the dress code. The dress code below will be considered in effect each scheduled school day from the time of arrival on campus to the time of departure from campus.

### **Lower School Dress and Grooming Code 2008 – 09**

It is our intention to provide for all our students an atmosphere, which is conducive to learning. With research clearly demonstrating the positive relationship between dress and both behavior and self-concept, we have carefully created a dress code designed to encourage neatness and personal discipline while making allowances for expressions of individuality and personal taste. We solicit the understanding and support of our parents as we endeavor to present fair and consistent guidelines for student dress.

Students and their parents are reminded that, for most students, the lower school years are filled with uneven growth and development patterns. Clothing which fits well in September may be outgrown within a few weeks or months; it is requested that students and parents periodically examine garments which are to be worn to school to ensure their continued proper fit. In addition, because fashions change so quickly, the written dress code guidelines published yearly often cannot address every current fashion trend that may arise in the interim. Because of this, and the almost infinite variety of available clothing styles, ***we appreciate parental support and understanding that the faculty must enforce the dress code using the written guidelines together with their adult and professional judgment.***

Students who violate the dress code requirements of the Lower School will be sent to the office for a change of clothes. These clothes would need to be washed and returned the next school day. In addition, a note will be sent home with the child explaining the dress code violation.

#### **General:**

1. Students are expected to be within dress code between the hours of 7:45 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.
2. Clothes must fit properly (be neither undersized nor oversized), not be wrapped around the body, be tastefully modest, be neat, clean and free from holes, or tatters, frays, or wear. ***Form-fitting clothing is also prohibited.***
3. For safety reasons, shoes must be worn at all times, and shoes with laces, straps, or buckles must have them secured at all times. Shower shoes, ***“flip flops” (regardless of ornamentation level)***, shoes which restrict a student’s safe and orderly movement

anywhere on campus such as backless shoes, Heelie Wheelie shoes, and Crocs are not acceptable. For gym classes, socks and rubber-soled shoes are required for participation in gym classes.

4. Makeup may not be worn to school.
5. Hats, caps, kerchiefs, other head coverings, and sunglasses are not to be worn indoors.
6. The following items are not permitted on campus, or at any school event or activity:
  - potentially dangerous items or accessories
  - earrings for boys
  - see-through clothing
  - suggestive clothing (inappropriately tight or cut)
  - clothing regarding items not allowed on campus
  - clothing bearing distasteful or profane language, drawings, or symbols
7. Jewelry and other accessories should be applied in moderation. Visible tattoos and visible body piercings (with the exception of earrings for girls) are not permitted.
8. Good hygienic practices should be followed; regular bathing, tooth brushing, and so on are required.

### **Clothing for Boys**

1. All **shirts** must have sleeves, be tucked in, and be long enough to remain tucked in throughout the day. Shirts, including tee shirts, may neither refer nor allude to anything that is prohibited on campus or that is offensive to others.
2. **Sweaters and sweatshirts** may be worn alone or over a tucked in shirt. A vest may be worn over a tucked-in shirt. Sweaters must be long enough to completely cover the torso.
3. **Dress pants, jeans, or tailored shorts** may be worn to class. Overalls, sweatpants, wind suits, athletic-type pants or shorts, (bike, tennis, Umbros, etc.), are not permitted. Shorts may be no shorter than mid-thigh in length. Shorts which are unfinished or cut off are not acceptable. The waistline of all pants must be worn at the natural waistline.
4. **Field trip uniforms** will be worn on all field trips unless parents are notified otherwise. This uniform consists of a maroon polo shirt with the Walker logo; khaki pants or shorts; Walker sweatshirt or Walker sweater if required by the weather.
5. On some occasions, boys may be asked to wear the field trip uniform or other attire as specified in advance by the teacher.
6. **Hair** should be neat, clean, and not impair vision. When combed out, hair may not extend below the bottom of a regular shirt collar. Hairstyles must be within traditional parameters; that is, styles such as spiked hair, multi-colored or unusual-colored hair, patterns shaved into the hair, shaved heads, ponytails, and rat-tails are unacceptable. Hairstyles are identified as unacceptable by an administrator on a case-by-case basis.
7. **Fifth Grade Recognition Day** (the last day of school for grades 1-5): Fifth grade boys will wear a long sleeved white or pastel colored shirt, tie, khaki pants, dress shoes, and socks.

## **Clothing for Girls**

1. **Pants, jeans, capri pants, skirts, and dresses** may be worn. The bottom hemline of skirts and dresses worn must fall no shorter than 2 inches above the knee when standing. Overalls and athletic-type pants (exercise, sweat, wind, etc.) may not be worn.
2. **Tights and leggings** are acceptable, but may not be worn as pants.
3. **Shorts, skorts, and divided skirts** may be worn, but must be no shorter than mid-thigh in length. Athletic-type shorts (bike, tennis, Umbros, etc.), overall shorts, and shorts which are unfinished or cut off are not acceptable.
4. A variety of **shirts, blouses, and sweaters** may be worn; they must be modestly cut and appropriately buttoned. If tailored to be tucked in, they must be so, and be long enough to remain tucked in throughout the day. If the top is tailored in such a manner that it is not to be tucked in, then it must be long enough to completely cover the torso at all times and in all body positions. Shirts may neither refer nor allude to anything that is prohibited on campus or that is offensive to others.
5. Tank tops, deep v-necks, low scoop-neck tops, “spaghetti-strap” type tops, and low-buttoned tops are not permitted when worn alone.
6. **Field trip uniforms** will be worn on all field trips unless parents are notified otherwise. This uniform consists of a maroon polo shirt with a Walker logo; khaki slacks, shorts, skirt or jumper; Walker sweatshirt or Walker sweater if required by the weather.
7. On some occasions, girls may be asked to wear the field trip uniform or other attire as specified in advance by the teacher.
8. **Hair** should be neat, clean, and not impair vision. Hairstyles must be within traditional parameters; that is, styles such as spiked hair, multi-colored or unusual colored hair, rat-tails, patterns shaved into the hair, etc. are not permitted. Hairstyles are identified as unacceptable by an administrator on a case-by-case basis.
9. **Fifth Grade Honors Day** (the last day of school for grades 1-5): Fifth grade girls will wear a white or pastel colored dress, and dress shoes.

## **XI. Evaluation and Grading**

A. Evaluation: For evaluation as well as communication purposes, conferences are held after the first grading period. Conference dates are listed on the school calendar. Please make appointments for those days. Other conferences will be held as needed or desired and can be initiated by the school or by the parents. Written progress reports are sent each quarter for grades 1-5. Deficiencies will be sent mid-quarter if necessary. All library books must be returned or fees paid before the final report card is sent.

### **B. Grading:**

Students will be graded using the following scale:

E—(excellent) = 90 - 100

G—(good) = 80 - 89

S—(satisfactory) = 70 - 79

U—(unsatisfactory) = Below 70

Students receive effort and participation marks in the special area subjects.

## **XII. Field Trips**

We offer many educational and cultural field trips throughout the year provided parent drivers are available. On occasion a special vehicle will be used. As representatives of Walker School, the students are expected to exhibit appropriate dress and behavior. Inappropriate dress will result in the child remaining at school. Inappropriate behavior on a field trip will result in losing future field trip privileges. Teachers will give advance notification of field trips, any required fees, and any special requirements of dress. Generally the students will wear their Walker field trip shirts and socks with khakis (pants, shorts, skirts or jumper).

## **XIII. Homework**

Homework assignments will vary according to grade level. Approximate length of assignments for the grade levels is 45 minutes per week for First Grade, 20-30 minutes per night for Second Grade, 45-60 minutes per night for Third Grade, 45-60 minutes per night including Friday for the weekend for Fourth Grade, and 60-90 minutes per night including Friday for the weekend for Fifth Grade. In some instances, class work not completed at school is to be finished at home. The students tend to spend more time on homework earlier in the year while adjusting to the routine than they do later in the year. It is expected that all homework will be completed by the student and turned in on time. Parental participation should be limited to that of consultant.

## **XIV. Lunch and Lunchroom**

Lunch is included in the tuition for all Walker students. A menu will be provided after the first week, and parents should go over it to help the children make their choice before coming to school (especially for students in grades 1-3). Inappropriate behavior in the lunchroom is not acceptable. Students are expected to talk quietly, stay seated, and help clean up at the end of each period. Parents are welcome to have lunch with their children. You may bring your lunch or purchase a lunch ticket in the office. Sign in at the office and go to Gatti Hall. The children will be expected to abide by the cafeteria rules even when they have a special guest.

## **XV. Student Activities**

**A. Patrols** - Students in grade five will assist with morning and afternoon carpool at the carpool circle. Everyone is expected to be cooperative with the patrols and supervising faculty.

**B. Student Council** - This group will act as a service group for the Lower School by handling projects such as the Thanksgiving canned goods donations. Each homeroom in grades 1-5 will have a representative on the council.

**C. Scribe** - This Lower School literary publication is published five times per year.

**D. Choruses** - All interested students in grades 2-5 may belong to these vocal groups . The students must be able to meet at 7:15-7:45 a.m. twice a week.

**E. Service Projects** - Students in the Lower School participate in several service projects during the school year. Examples of these projects are: food drive for the Salvation Army and Cobb Christmas for Children. There are also some service projects that benefit the school in terms of beautifying the campus or purchasing something special to be used and

enjoyed by Lower School students. Information regarding each project is sent home via the children.

## **XVI. Special Programs**

### **A. Fall Festival**

The Fall Festival is a service project of the WSA and is held annually near Halloween. Activities include costuming, games, bouncers, and, as with any festival, much “feasting.” Students in Preschool and Lower School, their parents and younger siblings are welcome. Parents supervise the game booths for the children’s enjoyment.

### **B. Field Day**

Field Day is a special day of games and activities. This event is usually held toward the end of school.

### **C. Graduation and Honors Program**

The Graduation and Honors Day program is held the last day of school. At this time, students in fifth grade are honored. The Father Walker and Citizenship Awards are presented to outstanding graduates. Students in grades 1-5 attend this program.

### **D. Parents’ Night**

Early each year, the Walker Lower School and the Walker School Association sponsor Parents’ Night for parents of the students enrolled in grades 1-5. The purpose of the programs is to acquaint parents further with the facility, the school personnel, and with the particular program in which a student is involved. In addition, parents will be afforded the opportunity to meet and converse with fellow parents, faculty and staff. It is important to attend to understand more fully what is expected of your child and how you can support your child

### **E. Plays**

The Spring Play is a very special event for Walker students in grades 1-5. The play is a musical extravaganza performed each year. Every child is expected to be involved in this production. Costumes for the play are provided by the parents.

### **F. Teacher Appreciation Day**

This day is celebrated in May with a luncheon sponsored by the Walker School Association.

### **G. Grandparents’/Special Friends’ Day**

This is a wonderful day when the children in grades 1-5 invite their grandparents or special adult friends to spend time with them at school. Special activities are planned for the children and their guests to enjoy together. This event is held every two years.

### **H. Birthdays**

The WSA sponsors the Book Endowment Program that allows parents to honor their child’s birthday by placing a book in the library. The book will have a book plate inscribed with the child’s name.

We agree that your child’s birthday is a very special time. We would like to invite the students to celebrate at school in a simple fashion. Birthday napkins and a treat (cookies, cupcakes, popcorn, etc.) may be brought for each child in the homeroom class. Talk with the teacher to find the best time for celebrating. No party favors should be sent. **Private party invitations must be mailed or extended by phone, even if they are extended to all children.** Please consider inviting all the children in the class or a very small group.

Those children not included do not understand and they feel hurt. **Students should not leave from school to attend the party.** Birthday and other special occasion presents may not be brought to, exchanged at, or delivered to school.

### **XVIII. New Students**

- A. Every child has at one time experienced the mixed emotions of being a new student. As parents you wanted the transition to be a positive experience for your child. You can assist us in helping our new students to make a smooth transition to Walker by encouraging your child to include them in their activities at school, to help them find their way around, to answer their questions about Walker and how things are done here. As your child and her/his friends have get together or parties encourage them to include the new students. All children want to have friends and the feeling of belonging. All of us at Walker can help by continuing to extend to new students and their families our hands in friendship and welcome.

### **XVIII. Toys**

No toys are allowed at school unless the teacher has given prior approval.

### **XIX. Parties and Gifts**

The classes celebrate with parties for Christmas, Valentine's Day and at the end of the school year. Parents in charge of these parties will check with the teacher about refreshments, location, activities, and the number of parents needed to help with the party. The parties are to be very simple with no gifts, goodie bags, or favors for the children. Students must report to school the morning of the end of the year party. They will be excused from school to go to the party. (For birthday parties see Section XVI of the Lower School Handbook.)

The exchange or receipt of individual gifts at school can be very distracting to the recipient as well as classmates. The presentation of gifts, other than the organized class holiday exchange, should be done outside of school.

### **XIX. Playground Use**

On most days during the school year, the playground is in use between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. by Walker classes for recess and by the Extended Day Program. There are specific rules for our students during those hours. The playground is usually available, with adult supervision, at times other than those designated above. We ask only that the children be supervised, the equipment be treated respectfully and the space be clean at the end of the play period.

### **XXI. Visitations to the Classroom**

We always enjoy having our parents visit the school. To assist us in carrying out the daily program for the children, we ask that parents prearrange visits to the classrooms between 7:45 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Arrangements for classroom visitation can be made directly with the teacher or through the Principal. We discourage parents from making drop-in visits or daily visits in the classroom as such visits disrupt the daily routine, prevent the teacher

from carrying out his/her duties, and in some cases, prevent students from having the peer contact that is so critical to the appropriate development of social skills.

#### **XXI. Visitors & Parents Signing In**

Visitors and parents are, in the interest of safety, required to sign in at the office and fill out a name tag anytime they are in the building between 7:45 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. Upon leaving, please return to the office to sign out before exiting the building.

#### **XXII. Providing Information to the School**

Walker requests certain information about its students for permanent, medical, and emergency records. Also required is a current immunization form in compliance with state law. Georgia has a compulsory education law that in part requires our knowing the public school system (not school) your child would be eligible to attend if he/she were not at Walker. There are other types of information that you can provide to assist the school in better understanding and working with your child. Examples of such information are an impending move, separation or divorce, remarriage, illness or surgery in the family, new sibling, death of someone or something close, parent(s) going on vacation or an extended business trip, and an upcoming family trip. Such events can, and often do affect a child socially, emotionally and academically. Any such information given to us in confidence will remain so.

#### **XXIII. Questions and Concerns**

If ever you have a question or concern about your child's schooling, contact the teacher or principal. They are always available to listen and help in any way possible. You may call the school and leave a message; your call will be returned. If your questions and concerns cannot wait until the next day, you may call the teacher or principal at school and leave a message or at home PRIOR to 9:00 p.m. or you can e-mail the teacher (e-mail addresses available at [www.thewalkerschool.org](http://www.thewalkerschool.org)). Conferences can be scheduled at mutually convenient times.