



June 6, 2022

Dear Willow School Community,

I am so excited to share our plans for the upcoming school year! We are making some significant changes that will facilitate our growth as educators of young children and as a Reggio Emilia inspired environment.

We are very proud of the work we have done during the pandemic. We have managed to navigate this overwhelming situation, keep the business and school alive, and nurture many children through stressful times. While we are still dealing with issues arising due to COVID, we are ready to fully embrace the vision and mission of the school and bring the Willow School around to its full potential!

There is a great deal of information in this newsletter regarding upcoming changes, the new school year, staffing and calendar. Please read and/or save this newsletter for your reference.

LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The leadership of the school will be changing. We have grown to a size that requires a great deal of oversight and planning. We have put together an amazing administrative team that will create a strong foundation for children, staff and families.

As most of you know, Keli Jackson has been a part of the Willow School since it was just an idea in my mind. She is and has always been an essential member of our school community. I am very happy to announce that she will be taking over the role of Director of the school starting in August. I will step back from the daily operations of the school and focus my attention primarily on the health and well-being of the business and the health and well-being of the pedagogy of the school.

Below are details about our leadership and administrative dream-team and each person's primary roles and responsibilities:

Executive Director, Teresa Cole

- Business and Financial Matters – budgeting, licensing and regulatory matters, marketing/website/social media, policy and procedure development, accounting, payroll, accounts payable/receivable, etc.)
- Program & Pedagogy Development – teacher coaching, training and development, oversight of pedagogy and curriculum, oversight of documentation and visibility of children’s work
- Promotion, Advocacy & Elevation – Participating in and creating opportunities to increase awareness of the importance of Early Childhood Education.

Director, Keli Jackson

- Management of Daily Operations – promoting a nurturing and engaging environment for children, staff and families, sustaining collaboration with the administrative team and staff, maintain staffing schedules, oversight of policies and procedures, procurement of educational materials and supplies, maintenance of buildings and grounds
- Human Resources & Personnel – recruitment of new staff, intake of new staff information, background checks, initial orientation and introduction to school
- Oversight of DECAL Licensing & GA Lottery Pre-K Program Compliance
- Collaboration with Pedagogical Team
- Parent & Staff Communication – create open lines of communication with parents and staff

Director of Music Program, Adam Cole

- Willow Music - management of music programming for extracurricular group and private music lessons
- Music Instruction - providing group music classes and music atelier for children enrolled at the Willow School
- Music Pedagogy – engaging students in music- and sound-based project work and documentation of that work with.
- Administrative support as needed

Enrollment & Family Engagement Coordinator, Melissa Godbee

- Enrollment & Admissions – maintaining school roster and wait lists, initial intake of new family information and introduction to the school, communication to staff regarding roster changes
- Family Engagement – liaison for classroom parents, communication and coordination for parental involvement in daily life of the school, coordination of social opportunities for classrooms and families
- Coordination of Social Events – planning and communication for school-wide social events

Administrative Assistant, Shannon Knighton

- Management of front office and reception
- Maintaining school information via the Brightwheel app, including children and parent information, immunization records and pre-k required documents
- Communication with parents and staff as needed
- Collaboration with the leadership and pedagogical teams

Atelieristas, Amy Fields and Amanda Espinosa

- Introducing art and other process-based materials to children for exploration and proficiency
- Supporting teachers with materials and provocations to invoke critical thinking and problem solving
- Promoting collaborative work across classrooms and age groups
- Making children's work visible through documentation.

STAFFING

We are in the process of finalizing staffing placements for the new school and hiring new staff where needed. We are happy to have all staff returning for the new school year except for Jordan Newnam, who is pursuing her Master's degree and Karen Mayes, who will be helping to care for an elderly parent. We hope to send out a finalized staffing placements by mid-July.

The Willow School will offer staff the option of a 4-day work week starting with the new school year. We expect most staff to take advantage of this benefit. This schedule will allow us to better cover the entire school day and aftercare without multiple staff changes for children. Age level teaching teams will have a support teacher that will be a part of that teaching team to provide consistency in the classrooms.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Our school community is one of the most important aspects of the Willow School. The relationships that we build with children and parents are essential to an outstanding learning environment. We recognize that this aspect of the school has suffered since the pandemic, and we are making plans to remedy that! We will continue with carpool, as it has greatly improved drop-off and pick-up. However, we are looking forward to creating more meaningful ways for parents to be involved in their child's classrooms. We also plan to have social events and times where children, parents and teachers can interact outside of school hours. We value the relationships that we cultivate with children and families, and we look forward to continuing to strengthen our school community!

NEW SCHOOL YEAR CHANGES

There are a few minor changes to the school structure that will be in effect for August as follows:

- Morning carpool will start at 8:00 am and end at 8:45. (afternoon carpool will remain the same)
- Aftercare will close at 5:30 pm
- The Willow School will have 12 classrooms for the new school year:
 - Infant 1 & 2
 - Toddler 1 & 2
 - Twos 1 & 2
 - Early Preschool (older twos/young threes)
 - Preschool 1 & 2
 - GA Lottery Pre-K
 - Willow Pre-K
 - Forest Kindergarten

2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

The 2022-23 school calendar is below. These dates will also be available on our website for future reference.

2022-23 School Calendar

July 14, 2022	GA Lottery Pre-K Parent Orientation (virtual)
July 22, 2022	Last Day of Summer Session & School Age Summer Camp
July 25-29, 2022	Preplanning for all Staff – School Closed
July 29, 2022	New School Year Open House
August 1, 2022	Individual Classroom Visits
August 2, 2022	First Day of School for Students
August 30 – September 1, 2022	Back to School Classroom Meetings (schedules/invitation will be sent via Brightwheel)
September 5, 2022	Labor Day – School Closed
September 19-23, 2022	GA Lottery Pre-K Class Closed for Fall Break (all other classes are open)
October 10, 2022	Early Closure at 3:30 (no aftercare) for whole staff meeting
November 1, 2022	Professional Development Day for all Staff – School Closed
November 21-25, 2022	Thanksgiving Holiday – School Closed
December 21, 2022 – January 4, 2023	Holiday Break – School Closed (January 3 & 4 – all staff workday)
January 16, 2023	MLK, Jr. Holiday – School Closed
February 13-17, 2023	GA Lottery Pre-K Class Closed for Winter Break (all other classes are open)
March 9, 2023	Early Closure at 3:30 (no aftercare) for whole staff meeting

April 3-7, 2023	Spring Break – School Closed
May 26, 2023	Last Day for 10-month students
May 29-31, 2023	Memorial Day Holiday – School Closed (May 31 – all staff workday)
June 1, 2023	Summer Session Starts
June 19, 2023	Juneteenth Holiday – School Closed
July 4, 2023	Independence Day Holiday – School Closed
July 24-31, 2023	Preplanning for all Staff - School Closed

PREPLANNING WEEK & NEW SCHOOL YEAR EVENTS

School will be closed July 25 – August 1, 2022, for preplanning week. This is the time when we prepare for the new school year and participate in orientation, professional development, and team building. There are also a few events for families and children before school starts as follows:

GA Lottery Pre-K Parent Orientation, July 14, 2022, at 6:00 pm – This is a virtual event for parents of children who will be in the 2022-23 GA Lottery Pre-K Class. A zoom link will be sent out closer to the event.

Open House, July 29, 2022 – This event is for all families to come to the school, meet teachers and visit classrooms. To avoid large crowds, we will stagger the event.

9:00 – 10:00 am – Infant 1, Toddler 1 & 2, Early Preschool, Preschool 1 & 2

10:00 – 11:00 pm – Infant 2, Twos 1 & 2, Pre-K (both classes), Forest Kindergarten

Individual Classroom Visits, August 1, 2022, 8:30 am - 3:00 pm – If you are a new family joining the school for the 2022-23 school year, we will schedule a time for your family (including children) to have a 30-minute individual classroom visit in your child's classroom. This will be a chance to meet the teachers, ask questions, explore the classroom, and get acclimated to the school environment before the first day of school. A sign-up sheet will be sent out in advance so that families can pick the time that is most convenient.

As always, I am so appreciative of this school community! I am very excited to begin a new journey with all of you and I hope that this school year proves to be our best yet! If you have any questions, please contact us!

Thank you,
Teresa Cole
Founder/Executive Director