



July 5, 2023

Dear Willow School Community,

As we approach another new school year, I would like to thank all of you for being a part of the Willow School Community. Whether you have been with us for a while or you are just joining us in August, we are excited to be on this early education journey with you! We have been planning for the upcoming year with the goals of continued growth and improvement. This correspondence contains important information about the 2023-24 school year. Please bookmark for future reference.

## **LEADERSHIP AND PEDAGOGICAL TEAM**

Last year, we expanded the administrative team to provide better support for staff, children and families. After identifying areas in which we want to continue to grow and improve, we are expanding the leadership and pedagogical team just a bit more.

Below are details about the amazing individuals who will make up the leadership of the school 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, oversight of policies and procedures, procurement of educational materials and supplies
- 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 administrative and pedagogical team
- Parent & Staff Communication – create open lines of communication with parents and staff.

### **Assistant Director, Lenoir Stallings**

- Maintaining daily staffing schedules and substitute teachers, ensuring proper classroom coverage and teacher/student ratios
- Communication with teaching staff, oversight and support of daily classroom routines
- Ensure compliance with DECAL licensing rules and regulations
- Collaborate with administrative and pedagogical team
- Maintenance of buildings and grounds

### **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
- Collaborate with administrative and pedagogical team

### **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, Dale Mergenthaler**

- 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 administrative team

### **Atelieristas, Amy Fields and Amanda Espinosa**

- Introducing art and other process-based materials to children for exploration and proficiency

- Support teachers with identification of projects and/or threads of interest and planning provocations based on observation of the children
- 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
- Collaborate with administrative and pedagogical team

**Environment & Documentation Specialist, Keiran Flynn**

- Ensure an engaging, organized and aesthetically pleasing environment that supports children’s educational processes
- Conduct small group work with children to further the explorations of the classroom
- Support teachers with identification of projects and/or threads of interest and the documentation of those experiences
- Collaborate with administrative and pedagogical team

**TEACHING AND SUPPORT TEAM**

As you know, the teaching and support team is the backbone of the school. We have an excellent and dedicated team and are excited to have most of our staff returning for the new school year. We are in the process of filling a few teaching positions and hope to identify our new team members soon. Below are the tentative classroom placements as they stand at this moment. There may be some last minute changes as we add additional staff. We will send updates if changes occur.

<b>CLASSROOM</b>	<b>TEAM MEMBERS</b>
Infants (Seedlings Room & Sprouts Room)	Angella Smith, Essence Gaynor, Danielle Pritchard (new teachers will be added)
Toddler 1 (Wildflower Room)	Vincetta Johnson, Kimberly Blake
Toddler 2 (Sunflower Room)	Margaret Levin, Synai Ingram
Twos 1 (Honeybee Room)	Antoria Cooley, Lili Alexander
Twos 2 (Sunshine Room)	Christopher Sowell, Sophie Goodman-Merel
Early Preschool (Rainbow Room)	Andreia Thompson, Cadesha Harrison
Preschool 1 (Garden Room)	Kara Williams, Tyra Carlis
Preschool 2 (Sunset Room)	Cheri Byrd, Corinda Matthews
GA Lottery Pre-k (Treehouse Room)	Karen Keller-Collins, Rashida Slaton
Forest Class (Butterfly Room)	Drew Mergenthaler, (new teacher will be added)
Support Teachers	Sebastian Cloyd, Alex Lindsay, Nancy Guarnieri
Substitute Teacher	Savannah Pittman
Kitchen Atelier Team	Kayla Evans, Odessa Williams, Miriam Russoniello
Facilities Caretaker	Leandra Labad

## **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. During the past school year, we had several social events and community gatherings for the first time since the pandemic. For the 2023-24 school year we have added events to our school calendar, so please mark these dates your personal calendar and join us for great times!

We will continue with morning carpool but will have afternoon pickup in the classrooms so that parents have an opportunity to see the classroom and talk with teachers each day. We will continue with our mystery reader program and create additional ways for parents to be involved in the daily life of the school. We look forward to getting to know all of you and strengthening our school community!

## **NEW SCHOOL YEAR SCHEDULE**

We will follow the same basic schedule for the coming school year:

- Morning carpool will start at 8:00 am and end at 8:45.
- Afternoon carpool will start at 3:15 pm inside classrooms and end at 3:45.
- Aftercare will close at 5:30 pm. Pickup for aftercare will be inside the lobby of the school.
- The Willow School will maintain 12 classroom groups 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
  - Forest Class (4- and 5-year-olds)
  - Elementary Afterschool Program

## **TUITION & FEES**

The new tuition rates for the 2023-24 school year are posted on our website (<https://willowschoolga.com/enrollment/tuition-and-fees/>) and will take effect on August 1, 2023. Tuition is billed around the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month and is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Late fees will be applied for tuition not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month.

If you are a new family that will start school in August, you have been invoiced the for your tuition deposit. This payment is due July 1 and must be paid in order for the school to continue to hold your spot for August. In the case that you are not able to attend school, there is a 30-day notice policy for withdrawal.

## **2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR**

The 2023-24 school calendar is below. These dates will also be available on our website for future reference.

July 13, 2023	GA Lottery Pre-K Orientation
July 21, 2023	Last Day of Summer Session & School Age Summer Camp
July 24-31, 2023	Preplanning for all Staff – School Closed
July 28, 2023	New School Year Open House
July 31, 2023	Individual Classroom Visits – School Closed
August 1, 2023	First Day of School
August 12, 2023	Colors of Willow -Popsicle Party at the Park
August 29-31, 2023	Back to School Classroom Meetings
September 4, 2023	Labor Day – School Closed
September 16, 2023	Community Workday
September 18-22, 2023	GA Lottery Pre-K Class Closed for Fall Break (all other classes are open)
October 14, 2023	Family Social at the pumpkin patch
October 25, 2022	Early Closure at 3:30 (no aftercare) for whole staff meeting
October 28, 2023	Trunk or Treat at Willow School
November 20-24, 2023	Thanksgiving Holiday – School Closed
December 2, 2023	Willow Winter Fest
December 20, 2023	Early Closure at 3:30 (no aftercare) for whole staff meeting
December 21, 2023 – January 3, 2024	Holiday Break – School Closed (January 2 – all staff workday)
January 15, 2024	MLK, Jr. Holiday – School Closed
February 10, 2024	Cupid’s Cuties Family Dance
February 12-16, 2024	GA Lottery Pre-K Class Closed for Winter Break (all other classes are open)
March 2, 2024	Willow School Birthday Party
March 27, 2024	Early Closure at 3:30 (no aftercare) for whole staff meeting
April 1-5, 2024	Spring Break – School Closed
May 6-10, 2024	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 18, 2024	Spring Fling
May 23, 2024	Last Day for 10-month students Early Closure at 3:30 (no aftercare) for whole staff meeting
May 24-28, 2024	Memorial Day Holiday – School Closed
May 29-31, 2024	Mini Camp
June 3, 2024	Summer Session & School Age Summer Camp Starts
June 19, 2024	Juneteenth Holiday – School Closed
July 4, 2024	Independence Day Holiday – School Closed
July 29 – August 2, 2024	Preplanning for all Staff - School Closed
August 5, 2024	First Day of 2024-25 School Year

## **PREPLANNING WEEK & NEW SCHOOL YEAR EVENTS**

**School will be closed July 24-31, 2023, 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 13, 2023, at 6:00 pm** – This event is for parents of children that will be in the Georgia Lottery Pre-K class for the 2023-24 school year. We will host this event at the school in the upstairs piazza. This is an informational meeting for adults. If you need to bring your child that is fine but we will not be able to provide babysitting.

**Open House, July 28, 2023, 4:00-6:00 pm** – This is a casual event for all families to come to the school, meet teachers and other families and visit classrooms. Please come any time between 4:00-6:00 pm. To respect teachers' time, please arrive at the school in time to conclude your visit by 6:00 pm.

**Individual Classroom Visits, July 31, 2023, 8:30 am - 3:00 pm** – If you are a new family joining the school for the 2023-24 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! Keli and I are very, very excited about the coming year! We have big plans and big goals and an amazing team to make it all a reality! We are embracing the words of Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the schools of Reggio Emilia, **"Nothing Without Joy!"**

If you have any questions, please let us know!

Thank you,  
Teresa Cole  
Founder/Executive Director